

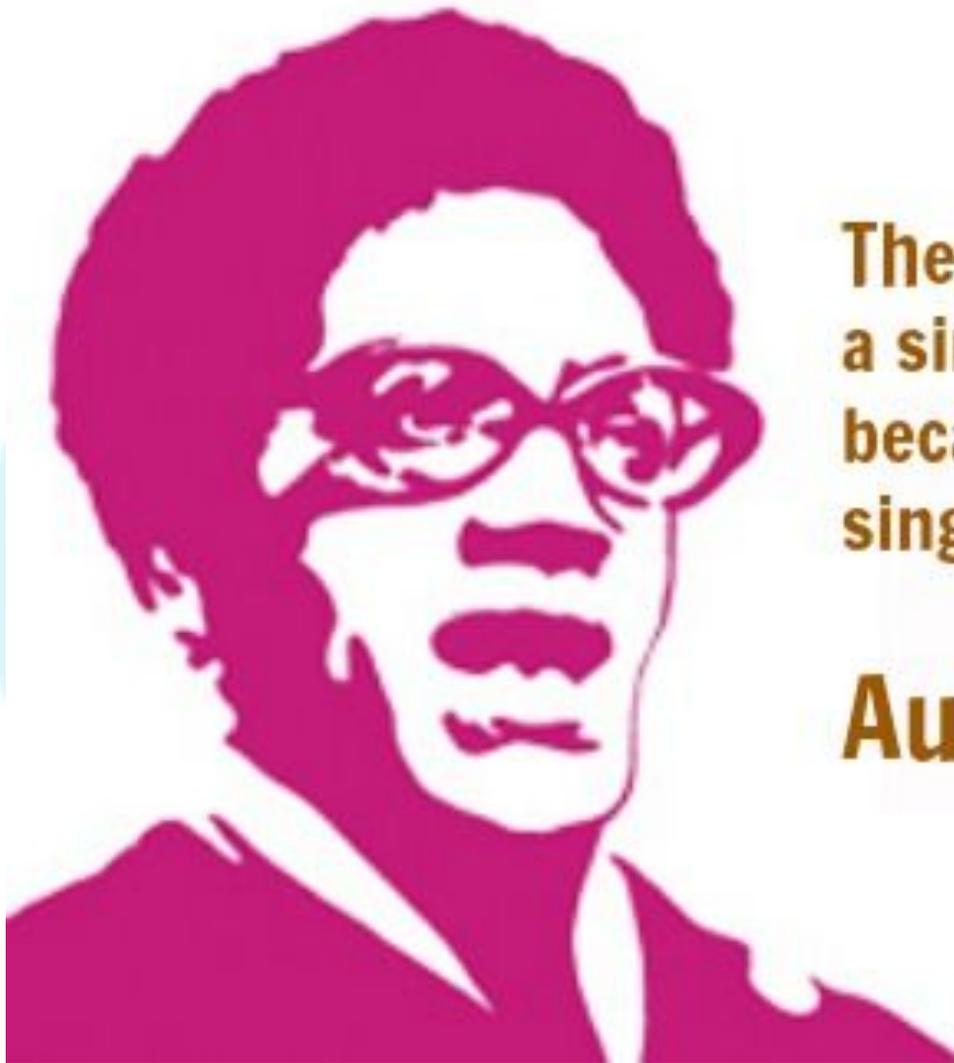
# **Intersectional Minority Stress and Alcohol Use among Queer\* Latinx and African Descent Women**

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# Step 3 in Trajectory

- Cerezo, A., & Morales, A., †Quintero, D., & †Gebhardt, S. (2014). Trans-Migrations: A Qualitative Exploration of Life at the Intersection of Transgender Identity and Immigration. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 1(2), 170-180.
- Cerezo, A. (2016). The impact of discrimination on mental health symptomatology in sexual minority Latina immigrants. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 3(3), 283-292.
- **\*\*Cerezo, A., † Williams, C., †Cummings, M., †Ching, D., & †Holmes, M. (in preparation). Intersectional stress, trauma and alcohol use in a community sample of Latinx and African American queer women.**
- Cerezo, A & Zhang, X. (in preparation). Examining relations between intersectional minority stress and alcohol use and alcohol related problems in sexual minority Latinx and African American women



**There is no such thing as  
a single-issue struggle  
because we do not live  
single-issue lives.**

**Audre Lorde**

# Understanding Intersectionality

Choo and Ferree (2010) state that intersectional stigma and/or stress requires...

*“an analytic shift from addition of multiple independent strands of inequality toward a multiplication and thus transformation of their main effects into interactions; and a focus on seeing multiple institutions as overlapping in their co-determination of inequalities”*

# Intersectional Minority Stress

- Minority stress (Meyer, 1995) is experienced at both distal and proximal levels (micro)
  - While also creating barriers to access of supports that would reduce the experience of stressors and responses to those stressors (macro)
- Intersectional experiences of discrimination uniquely impact SGM WoC, thereby placing them at disproportionate risk of facing social and health disparities

# Intersectional Minority Stress & Coping...

- Several research studies have linked minority stress and stigma to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as alcohol use
- SM women face a heightened risk of substance abuse as compared to heterosexual women (Cochran et al., 2000; Drabble, & Eliason, 2012; Drabble, Midanik, & Trocki, 2005)
- SM women are also more likely to experience adverse consequences related to alcohol and drug use than heterosexual women (Ridner, Frost, and LaJoie, 2006)

# Alcohol Use, Specifically

- Drabble et al. (2005) found that LGB women were approximately 6-7 times more likely to meet the diagnosis for alcohol dependence than heterosexual women
- Lesbians were 11 times more likely, while bisexual women were 8 times more likely, to experience negative social consequences related to drinking than heterosexual women
- \*\*McCabe et al. (2010) found that while sexual orientation discrimination alone was not significantly associated with substance use disorders, sexual orientation discrimination in combination with racial/ethnic or gender discrimination—and racial/ethnic discrimination alone—was associated with greater substance use disorders among LGB adults.

# What Contributed to Alcohol Use...

- Drinking was an active, known coping mechanism – for several participants it was used as a sleep aid to combat racing thoughts and anxiety
- Drinking connected to entrance to social life – cultural experience in a couple ways
  - Very present in family of origin (race, ethnicity)
  - Alcohol was part of queer experience (social; bars)
  - Alcohol helped ease anxiety related to sex with women
- Drinking became a problem/more severe when major stressors appeared – health and social support weren't available or used as a coping outlet

## Initiation of Alcohol Use:

"I was away from my very stifling environment. I hung out with guys all the time and that's what they would do, you know, they would go out and drink, so they'd always invite me, because I was used to being their little sister or their wingman and I would just end up drinking."

"I drink to numb myself out. I drink because it feels more normal than being sober, especially when something doesn't feel right emotionally. I drink sometimes to get to the point that I know I'm not going to remember anything that I say or do, because I really want to do or say something stupid or hurtful, or self destructive at times. If I didn't have nearly as much stress, I wouldn't have any reason enough or the desire to drink... I didn't really have anyone to talk to or accept me for who I was because they wanted to be whiter than I was. They wanted me to be straighter than I was, and it caused a lot of conflict. I think that that actually played a bigger role in my past than I realized, before this very moment."

“So, being that I am of Mexican culture at 15, there's like this big celebration called a Quinceanera that would, it's like a sweet 16, welcoming of age, you know introduction to society is what it used to be used for. Like, "Oh, this is my daughter she is, she's 15." I had a Quinceanera. I didn't really want one, but my mom wanted me to have one and you know, that's just what you do. Because, I didn't want to wear the big dress and she didn't understand why. I remember drinking excessively at that party and that was probably one of the first times I had like binge drank excessively so, I mean to the point where I was like vomiting, and it was just a terrible experience.”

“I do have a lot of alcoholism traits in my family from my dad being an alcoholic and all those things' kind of follow you, you know. So, it's like I feel like if I don't take care of those things and I'm not conscious of it, then I can become like my father, you know, be like a serious alcoholic.”

# Methods Notes

- Grounded theory approach
- Modified protocol to include how women understand social support and resilience
  - Particularly what's the threshold for "stress" and what is considered resilient
  - Several women faced recent homelessness due to familial rejection; Several women described abuse in family – potentially connected to gender presentation...
- Challenge – seeing one's life as regularly stressful may foster hopeless / not resilience

# Thank you!

- College of Health and Social Sciences grant to complete 20 interviews
- SF BUILD grant – step 2 complete
  - Collected 220 surveys with Latinx and African descent women about stigma, stress and alcohol use and dependence
  - Questions had intersectional prompt
  - Used visual scale to capture participants' perceptions of how discrimination was connected to race, gender identity and sexual orientation