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Daniela Véliz-Calderón Ph.D.
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Elizabeth J. Allan Ph.D.
University of Maine

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Véliz-Calderón and Allan: Defining Hazing: Gender Differences

DEFINING HAZING: GENDER DIFFERENCES

DANIELA VÉLIZ-CALDERÓN, PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE
AND ELIZABETH J. ALLAN, UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

This paper provides an analysis of a sub-set of data gathered by Allan and Madden (2008) in the National Study of Student Hazing that included 11,482 survey responses from undergraduate students enrolled at 53 colleges and universities and more than 300 interviews with students and campus personnel at 18 of those institutions. Findings from an analysis of the student interview data to explore how students define hazing and the extent to which their definitions may be gendered. Binary constructions of harm, building friendship, and compulsion/opting are key themes described; implications and recommendations for practice and future research are also discussed.

Psychological and physical harm are commonly reported outcomes of hazing, and sometimes this behavior can be deadly (Allan & Madden, 2012; Finkel, 2002; Nuwer, 2004, 2017). Public accounts of hazing deaths, sexual assaults, and other incidents continue to make national headlines in the U.S. and Canada. Generally defined as any activity expected of someone joining or maintaining membership in a group (such as a club, organization, or team) that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers, regardless of a person's willingness to participate, hazing can be understood within a spectrum of interpersonal violence (Allan & Madden, 2012; Allan, Payne, & Kerschner, 2016; Hoover & Pollard, 1999). As such, hazing impedes the missions of colleges and universities by threatening the health and safety of community members. Other potential consequences of hazing include student attrition, abusive school and campus climates, and negative publicity to name a few (Campus Safety, 2016; Nuwer, 1999, 2004, 2017). Stereotypes continue to shape perceptions of hazing as simply harmless antics and pranks and only a problem for fraternities. Such views are shortsighted and may jeopardize the health and safety of students and hinder the overall quality of learning environments in schools and postsecondary institutions. Professional staff and administrators who encounter hazing among students are often discouraged and perplexed by entrenched attitudes and beliefs that support a

culture where hazing can be normalized as part of college life (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012).

Significance

Perceptions of hazing are important because they provide insights about student expectations of group membership in the context of higher education and how students define hazing and understand its place in college life. Hazing occurs in a larger social context and intersects with power dynamics related to gender, race, socioeconomic status, and other aspects of identity (Allan & Kinney, 2017). Though both men and women report hazing experiences, data indicate that there are some gender-based differences (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012; Nuwer, 2017) and that, of the hazing deaths documented, the vast majority are male students (e.g., Nuwer, 2017).

Underscoring conclusions drawn in other studies of hazing, a key finding from Allan and Madden's (2008) study was that while 55% of students belonging to student clubs, organizations, or teams experienced behavior that meets the definition of hazing, only one in ten identified it as such. Said differently, 90% of students who were hazed did not label their experiences as hazing. When students' definitions of hazing were explored in research interviews, they frequently used words and phrases like "initiation," "bonding," "tradition," and "building group unity" as aliases for hazing. Additionally,

students often failed to account for the power of coercion in peer group environments where there was a strong desire to belong. For instance, a student might have defined hazing as, “forcing someone to do something in order to become a member of a group,” but when asked to describe “force,” students typically offered depictions of physical force (e.g., being tied or taped up, held down, locked in car trunk or closet). Students often overlooked hazing if they perceived their peers were “choosing” to participate in the activities. However, when defining hazing, students rarely described the more nuanced power dynamics of group behavior where peer pressure and coercion can diminish the veracity of consensual behavior (Allan & Madden, 2008).

With increasing media coverage of hazing in both college and high school contexts, public attention to hazing and hazing prevention is growing. Analyzing how students define hazing, and the gendered nature of those definitions, may help illuminate why some students minimize and normalize hazing, adding to the knowledge-base about hazing and its prevention.

Review of Literature

Although the practice of hazing has been documented for well over a century (e.g., see, Barber, 2012; Nuwer, 2000), the study of hazing is emergent. Hazing came into more public view with the death of a first-year college student in the late 1800s, and in 1905, *The New York Times* published the first documented newspaper account of hazing with the headline, “Hazing Kills Schoolboy” (Nuwer, 2000). Recently, headlines point to persistent problems with hazing and the tragic toll it can take in fraternities (Hayden, 2017) and in other organizations as well (Montgomery, 2012).

Studies of hazing based on a national sample have been few. Prior to Allan and Madden’s (2008) study, a pioneering 1999 study co-sponsored by Alfred University and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

explored experiences of hazing among varsity athletes in NCAA Division I athletic programs (Hoover, 1999). Data collected from middle school and high school athletes in the suburbs of New York City found that 17.4% had been subjected to practices that would qualify as hazing (Gershel, Katz-Sidlow, Small, & Zandieh, 2003). A random sample of undergraduates surveyed at one research university revealed 36% had participated in a hazing activity (Campo, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005). Another survey of 440 students at a different university, found fraternity members experienced the greatest number of hazing behaviors, but that hazing was also reported to occur in several other types of student groups (Owen, Burke, & Vichesky, 2008).

Some studies have examined hazing in particular contexts including within fraternities (Nuwer, 1990; Sweet, 1999) and sororities (Holmes, 1999; Lee-Olukoya, 2010; Shaw, 1992), among athletes (Johnson, 2007; McGlone, 2005; Waldron & Kowalski, 2009; Waldron, Lynn, & Krane, 2011), in marching bands (Silveira & Hudson, 2015), and in the military (Keller et al., 2015). Other studies have established the occurrence of hazing in a wider range of student groups; however, as single-campus studies, the findings may reflect hazing within the context of a particular campus culture and may not be generalizable to a broader group of college students (Campo et al., 2005; Owen et al., 2008). A growing body of work examines hazing within historically Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs) (e.g., Parks, Jones, Ray, Hughey, & Cox, 2015; Parks & Spencer, 2013). Specifically, Jones (2000) reported that BGLO fraternity men were strongly committed to pledging models that included “physical hardships” (p. 121), and Parks et al. (2015) argued that hazing in BGLOs was more violent in nature than their historically White peer organizations. Other accounts of the nature and prevalence of hazing have been depicted in the news and popular press. For example, author

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and journalist Hank Nuwer (1999, 2004, 2017) has documented numerous hazing incidents spanning many decades.

A range of hazing behaviors has been documented in the literature. In a 2002 review, Finkel described common injuries and types of hazing practices including beating, paddling, whipping, and striking; blood pinning; branding, tattooing, cigarette burning, and burning; excessive calisthenics; confinement to restricted areas; consumption of nonfood substances; forced swimming and circumstances leading to drowning and near-drowning; blunt trauma from falls after having to climb roofs, ledges, and bridges; immersion in noxious substances; psychologic abuse; and sexual assaults. Sexualized and sexually abusive hazing has been a focus of scholarly attention (Kirby & Wintrup, 2002), and was also described extensively by Robinson (1998) and Stuart (2013), with Stuart describing how sexually exploitive hazing and sexual assaults served as a means for team leaders to disempower younger athletes by “feminizing them or otherwise challenging their ability to conform to a hegemonic masculine sports stereotype” (p. 374).

Hoover (1999) found that more than half of varsity athletes were involved in alcohol-related initiation activities; 20% were involved in activities labeled “unacceptable” because they carried a “high probability of danger or injury, or could result in criminal charges” (p. 10); and more than 65% reported involvement in “questionable activities” such as head shaving, personal servitude, sleep, food, or hygiene deprivation, consuming disgusting concoctions, or being forced to wear embarrassing clothing. Hoover and Pollard’s investigation (2000) of hazing among high school students in the U.S., grouped behaviors into three categories including: humiliation (i.e., socially offensive, isolating, or uncooperative behaviors); substance abuse (i.e., abuse of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs); and dangerous hazing (i.e., hurtful, aggressive, destructive, and disruptive

behaviors). Overall, in their study, 48% of students belonging to groups reported being subjected to hazing, with 43% experiencing behaviors categorized as humiliating, 29% as potentially illegal, 23% abuse of substances, and 22% dangerous. Nearly ten years later, Allan and Madden’s (2008) study found that 47% of college students reported experiencing hazing during their high school years.

Student participation in hazing is sometimes justified by the claim that hazing promotes group cohesion (Allan & Madden, 2008; Keating et al., 2005). To test this claim, VanRaalte, Cornelius, Linder, and Brewer (2007) gathered data from 167 athletes representing a range of sports at six U.S. colleges and universities and found an inverse relationship between hazing activities and team cohesion in sport-related tasks. Yet some students to continue to cite “group bonding” as one reason for participating in hazing alongside feeling a sense of accomplishment and strength (Allan & Madden, 2012). Cimino (2011, 2013), drawing on perspectives from evolutionary psychology, contended that group solidarity and the cultivation of committed group members are adaptive outcomes of hazing and may explain student motivation for participating in hazing.

Some explorations of gender differences in hazing posit that men are more often associated with hazing practices that demonstrate their strength and dominance, sexually objectify women, and humiliate via same-sex sexual harassment and assault (e.g., Allan & DeAngelis, 2004; Allan & Kinney, 2017; Anderson, McCormack, & Lee, 2011; Johnson & Holman, 2004; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Stuart, 2013). In a study of female athletes, Johnson and Holman (2004) found that women tended to engage in less violent forms of hazing and were more likely to accept their peers’ decisions to avoid hazing. More recently, noting an increasing flexibility of gender norms, Anderson et al., (2011) concluded that as homophobic attitudes decreased, so did same-sex hazing behaviors for intercollegiate male athletes. These studies indicate that the

power abuses of hazing are shaped by the larger social context in which hazing occurs.

As noted previously, researchers have identified a gap between students' firsthand experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as such. Echoing results from the Alfred University-NCAA varsity athlete study (Hoover, 1999), Campo et al. (2005) found "a clear discrepancy between self-identification of participating in hazing and participating in hazing as defined by university policy" (p. 146). A similar pattern had emerged in a study of 6–12th graders in one school district where only 3% of the 22% who had experienced hazing with the potential for serious harm actually described the activities as "dangerous" (Gershel et al., 2003). Similarly, based on data from focus groups with student-athletes and coaches/administrators at one university, Crow and MacIntosh (2009) found a lack of correspondence between experiences of hazing and students' willingness to use the term "hazing" to characterize those experiences. Some research indicates a possible explanation for the reported gap between experience of hazing and self-reports of hazing is that students ascribe to a narrow definition that emphasizes physically violent forms of hazing including being tied up, beaten, or sexually assaulted (e.g., Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012; Campo et al., 2005).

Gender Theory

To further explore the ways in which students understand and define hazing, we drew upon gender theory for this analysis. Using this lens, it can be understood that people make assumptions about gender identity based on the perception of social cues and behaviors associated with what it means to be a woman (femininity) or man (masculinity) in a given society (Valian, 1999; 2005). Building on research in social psychology, Valian referred to these largely unconscious mental constructs as *gender schemas*. According to Allan (2004), "a social-constructionist view of gender posits that masculine and feminine behaviors are largely a result of learning what

is expected in a particular culture (rather than what is imprinted on one's genetic material)" (p. 279). These mental maps or gender schemas help individuals make judgments about how boys/girls or men/women should or ought to act in a given context. Gender schemas include expectations about male and female behavior and appearance. For example, the predominant schema of masculinity constructs the *real man* as someone who takes independent action, is a rational and logical thinker, is *in control*, and appears physically strong. In contrast, the predominant schema for femininity constructs the concept of womanhood in opposition to manhood (Gergen, 2009). For example, some girls learn at an early age that being too strong may be interpreted as non-feminine, and therefore *unattractive*. Largely, ideal femininity constructs women as nurturing, as communal, and as doing things out of concern or care for other people.

Although they are not necessarily operating at a conscious level, gender schemas are powerful because they help individuals interpret the social world and bring order to complexity by providing a means to categorize people and explain human behavior (Valian, 1999, 2005). Given this, college students are likely to employ gender schemas as they make sense of human behavior involved with hazing. Considering the predominant perceptions of gender differences in society, it follows that notions of gender may play a role in how hazing is understood and defined by college students. This study sought to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the role gender may play in how students define and make sense of hazing.

Research Design and Analysis

Informed by public accounts and empirical research related to hazing, Allan and Madden (2008, 2012) designed a descriptive study to examine the occurrence of hazing among students involved with groups at multiple colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

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More specifically, the investigators sought to examine the nature and extent of student hazing across a range of student clubs, organizations, and teams located at different types of four-year colleges and universities (e.g., public and private and research intensive universities and smaller colleges with a strong liberal arts tradition) and in different regions of the U.S. The study was a mixed-methods investigation where data were gathered by survey, interviews, and focus groups. A descriptive statistical approach was used to analyze the survey data as it is most appropriate when there is a shortage of facts or when previous findings are inconclusive (Frankel, 2003). Inductive analyses of qualitative data extended findings from the survey data in that investigation.

Student participants for the interviews were identified by a key contact (professional staff member) from student affairs departments at 18 U.S. colleges and universities located in five NASPA regions (see www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/regions). In each case, the key contact was asked to identify student leaders who, in aggregate, would reflect a range of membership groups including: athletes, fraternities and sororities, resident assistants, student government, performing arts organizations, honor societies, recreation/sport clubs, and academic clubs. Of note, key contacts were not asked to identify students who had experienced hazing. Rather, Allan and Madden (2008, 2012) sought to interview students who were involved on campus and were likely to have an understanding of the predominant student culture, institutional history, and traditions.

Interviews were conducted in-person by the lead researchers and trained research assistants and ranged from 30–60 minutes in length. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by professional transcriptionists (Allan & Madden, 2008). For the purpose of the analysis described in this paper, we sought to learn more about how college students defined hazing and to explore the extent to which definitions of

hazing may be gendered. Analysis was based on data produced from 188 student interviews conducted as part of the National Study on Student Hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008). Building on prior research, hazing was defined as “any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person’s willingness to participate” (Hoover, 1999).

The research team for this analysis was comprised of the lead researchers from the national study and four education doctoral students from the University of Maine. Researchers began the coding process for this study with the entire set of student interviews ($n = 188$). For the purpose of this study, we focused our specific analysis on the theme *defining hazing*. To establish inter-rater reliability, the research team analyzed a common subset of transcripts to begin the coding process and develop an emergent codebook. When agreement was reached about the preliminary codes for this subset of transcripts, the remaining transcripts were divided among four members of the research team. Each researcher read the transcripts separately and then met on four occasions to compare codes and clarify discrepancies. This peer debriefing is an important process for strengthening trustworthiness of the analysis.

Through the coding process, the following themes emerged: (a) binary constructions of harm, (b) bonding/building friendship, and (c) compulsion/opting out. These themes were then analyzed using the lens of gender schemas.

Findings

Binary Constructions of Harm

This analysis revealed that students described hazing activities in gendered terms that reflected the binary of emotional/physical. When defining hazing, male students often invoked images of alcohol abuse and/or physical strength. Illustrating the latter, one fraternity member

defined hazing in terms of his experience, which included “physical things we had to do - calisthenics with push-ups, sit ups, jumping jacks, and cardio.”

Physical activity was present in definitions of hazing provided by women, however, female students tended to describe physical activities differently. In this sample, female students described experiences of hazing that involved food or sleep deprivation. For example, one female student said hazing involved “being forced to eat certain things that are disgusting or being made to get up at all hours of the night.” Similar to male students, women also referenced hazing practices relative to alcohol consumption; however, female students were less likely to describe physical effects of excessive drinking as compared to male participants. Particularly, female students included alcohol consumption in their definitions of hazing, but tended to focus on the act of drinking, as opposed to the result of excessive drinking (e.g., vomiting and passing out). In sum, the research team noted differences between how male and female college students referenced physical strength and physical harm in their definitions of hazing. Male students in the study more frequently defined hazing experiences and activities as displays of physical strength and physical effects of alcohol abuse, while female students tended to focus more on physical effects of sleep deprivation or food-related hazing.

Both male and female participants described emotional harm from hazing. One female student described emotional harm of hazing in this way:

It was more psychological honestly. You just feel beat up psychologically. People constantly telling you to do this and this and you have to make decisions, snap decisions, and late nights. . . but it’s definitely a psychological hardship more than anything.

In contrast, when describing non-physical aspects of hazing, male students tended to focus on practices that humiliated others. We interpreted the inclusion of power and hierarchy

within male college students’ definitions of hazing as evidence of how culture socially constructs femininity and masculinity. In American culture, masculinity is typically associated with attributes like being in control, strong, or dominant (Tong, 2009; Valian, 1999). As a way to describe the power imbalance between old and new members a male student stated:

I would say any sort of action whether it’s mental or physical or it is something that you have a group of whether its new members or whether it’s a requirement to join the group and you have people beneath you to kind of make them feel like there is this hierarchy of people. I’m above you and can make you do these things because I can; because you’re less than me. So we want to make you feel part of this group, and I’ve gone through it, and I can make you do it. I think that’s kind of where hazing comes in and the struggle for power and this is the way things are done. And you have to listen to me and I’m going to make you feel like this. . . and you have to do this and I don’t because I’m older and I’m going to make you.

Another male student described it this way:

Personally, describing hazing would be and I would say for all of the new guys on the team any downgrading job or . . . not necessarily job or making them perform specific tasks to you know just humiliate them in front of other people and examples. . . you know make somebody or some of the new guys get drunk or make fools out of themselves or run around naked or stuff like that.

In some cases, participants specifically pointed out gender differences in hazing. For instance, in trying to define hazing, one male student shared the following:

I guess any action intended or unintended that causes physical or mental harm that can be done between new members or active members or something like that very very close to that. . . I think hazing is and what

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comes to me are the paddling or the walls sits or like studying tables late at night and *girls circling fat* [emphasis added] and things like that. I guess in those are the ones that immediately pop into my head.

A female student described the implications of this type of practice in the following quote:

It happened once after the “circle of shame” and she was asked to do a line of coke that night and I could tell because one she was acting completely bizarre. I remember that she was wearing a skirt and one of the things I could see was the side of her leg and they’d taken a sharpie and marked it as cellulite.

Though both male and female students defined hazing in ways that invoked examples of physical and emotional harm, men were more likely to emphasize the harm from physical types of hazing including alcohol abuse. A closer look at student references to emotional or psychological harm revealed some gendered aspects of hazing where dominant beauty ideals for women can play a role in hazing.

Bonding/Building Friendships

Echoing findings from Anderson et al. (2011), gender schemas were also evident in how students described bonding and building friendships through hazing. In defining college-student hazing, numerous male students touched upon the concept of friendship, indicating that the entire fraternity experience, including the hazing, was worthwhile due to the lifelong nature of friendships formed. For example,

We really try to build brotherhood up and you know and this is our main thing is that these are the guys who are going to be at your wedding and your funeral you know and they are brothers for life.

When interpreted through the lens of gender schemas, the roughness of the hazing experience is understood as an expected part of masculinity and friendship between men. The social construction of masculinity as tough, self-reliant, and strong may help men to justify abuses

of hazing as the following data excerpt suggests:

They might say stuff to deteriorate you and try to lower your self-esteem and make you feel bad about yourself that you cannot get through this process. They get you to lean on the other people you’re going through the process with so that you have to depend on each other, and then you start depending on each other then there’s that uplift in a positive reinforcement so that you can all make it through and work together.

When female participants described friendship, they were more likely to emphasize non-harmful activities:

I just think that being in a fraternity or a sorority can help some people out. I think it gives you a sense of family and belonging, because you have those new friends. Especially if you are shy, you are kind of reserved and all that it can help you out because it gets you with a group of people and it gives you something to do and stuff like that.

In other cases, female participants described group bonding they perceived to occur as a result of the secrecy of hazing. For instance, one participant noted,

I think they believe it’s going to make the group more cohesive and that you have the secret and not a lot of people know that it is not right but when you know it’s not right it’s even more secret almost because you know you should not be doing it but you are anyway and so it’s like a secret that is keeping you together.

While both male and female participants described bonding and friendship when defining hazing. Gender schemas were noted with male participants who were more likely to emphasize group bonding perceived as an outcome of shared *toughness* of enduring the hardships of hazing. Female participants were more likely to describe friendship outside of hazing activities although some referenced friendship bonds perceived as an outcome of sharing the secret of

Compulsion/Opting Out

The concept of force emerged as another theme in this analysis. Nearly all interviewees indicated that an element of force was implicit in their definitions or experiences of hazing. However, a closer look at how male and female participants described this aspect of force revealed some differences. Most notably, women were more likely to describe opportunities for opting out of hazing. For instance, the following female student described how discomfort could create an opportunity to decline the activity, “but they always say that if you are uncomfortable then you can stop at any time. So, I think there is kind of an opt out of the whole process.”

When hazing involved alcohol, some female participants also described the option to decline. For example, one participant explained, “I know everyone is supposed to [drink] but really if anyone doesn’t want to drink then they don’t have to, and we make that clear that if anyone is uncomfortable, then say no.” Another female participant described how easy it is to speak out when a woman faces hazing and feels discomfort with the activity, whether it is a tradition or not:

I’ve been very lucky that my sorority, and I know others on campus, it [hazing] has never been condoned and it’s never been practiced and I don’t personally think I’ve ever been a part of anything like that and I think any time that they’re doing even more ritualistic type things they’re making sure that no one is doing it against her will and if someone is ever uncomfortable it’s easy to speak up.

A similar sentiment was noted by a female athlete who said:

I think it depends on the person. I have girls on my team that are so confident they don’t care. They’ll go out and pretty much do anything you tell them to do. But it depends on the person and their comfort level. I mean as soon as someone says no, you don’t

push and you don’t cross that line for them.

Conversely, some male participants defined hazing experiences as including the presence of a *false option* to decline involvement in the activity. These male participants reported that a social stigma and unspoken agreement existed where the refusal to participate in the hazing experience resulted in loss of membership opportunities. For instance, one male participant defined a voluntary activity as being compulsory:

Any sort of group or organization either that is done voluntarily or I guess against the person’s will...It’s a very fine line I suppose. Things can be voluntary but it can be quote unquote ‘voluntary.’ It’s voluntary but it’s not.

Another male participant defined hazing as including the unwritten rules involving the hazing of male team members, “No they didn’t have to, but I guess it was hazing, because everybody on the entire team was expected to.”

Moreover, male participants defined college hazing as “volunteering” for compulsory activities if one wanted to gain access into a fraternal organization:

Obviously if you get real and you’re hurting someone physically it is just not right obviously but if you volunteered to do this and they make you carry some bricks in your book bag for a week and make you swim in the freezing Delaware water gap, which are two things that always happen on this campus every year, then you either do it or you don’t, and if you don’t, then you don’t join a fraternity.

Similarly, the following male student shared the following perspective on opting out of hazing:

This happens sometimes, I hear people say, ‘Well it’s optional. Everyone was told that they didn’t have to do this.’ But say it involves something like standing out in the cold that you as a reasonable person would say, and everyone is given the option, but it turns out that everyone does it.

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Discussion

This analysis revealed that college student definitions of hazing can reflect common gender schemas (e.g., behaviors associated with socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity). Both men and women described emotional and psychological implications of hazing practices. For male students, hazing practices were more likely to be associated with humiliation and articulated as a loss of power and status. For female students, it was more common (than among male counterparts) for bodies to be the focus of scrutiny and for female bodies to be objectified in hazing resulting in emotional harm or the threat of emotional harm.

Additionally, this analysis revealed that male students were more likely to express the building of lifelong friendships through hazing experiences that included expectations for enduring abuse and proving one's mental and physical toughness. In contrast, female students were more likely to describe friendship outside of hazing or as an outcome of the sharing the secret of hazing. This finding aligns with predominant perceptions of ways in which gender norms are performed and understood in the dominant culture in which students are immersed (Allan & Kinney, 2017).

Lastly, we also found that perceived social obligations to conform to gender norms may have a perpetuating effect within hazing activities. For instance, it seemed female students possessed a contradictory awareness of force within hazing, namely that force was implicit within hazing but that opting out would not necessarily result in negative social consequences. Alternatively, male students expressed more rigid and compulsory expectations to perform masculinity by participating in hazing that required physical endurance or abuse. Through the lens of gender, opting out of hazing experiences is likely to be considered feminine, passive, and weak. This coincides with Anderson et al. (2011) who found that hazing activities reinforced masculinity and heterosexuality for male participants. Thus, the

ways in which students make sense of hazing, including the understandings and experience of emotional and physical harm, bonding and friendship, and the power dynamics of compulsion versus opting out of hazing, appear to be shaped by predominant gender schemas.

More research is needed to better understand how students make meaning of hazing activities since these behaviors are widespread in colleges and universities and it is clear they are dangerous and potentially illegal. Although this study contributes to the literature, the data are qualitative and derive from interviews conducted with students at a subset of colleges and universities in the U.S., and are therefore not generalizable to all students. However, the findings are likely transferable to other settings and can also serve as a platform for further research that will continue to expand knowledge about how college students make sense of hazing. More research is needed to better understand how other identity categories (e.g., race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation) as well as particular contexts (e.g., high prestige versus lower prestige groups and social media) influence the way hazing behaviors are perceived and how hazing is defined by students.

These findings hold implications for both practice and future research. For practice, campus professionals involved in hazing prevention work can strengthen their efforts with attention to the subtle yet powerful influence of gender schemas. For example, in designing prevention efforts it is important to consider gendered aspects of hazing and how gender norms may serve as a powerful motivator in students' desire to participate in particular kinds of hazing, and also to explain how hazing can be understood differently by male and female students. Understanding these differences may help students be more prepared to name hazing when it occurs rather than accepting it as part of the college experience (Allan & Kinney, 2017). Developing opportunities for students to explore gender norms, specifically how social expectations of masculinity and femininity can

impact decision-making, can provide students with another tool for making sense of hazing and information regarding some of the taken-for-granted assumptions that may lead to the normalization or minimization of hazing. Further, discussing topics such as gender schemas in safe and open environments is crucial to disrupting stereotypes and promoting communities that foster social justice. Considering this, we recommend the following for hazing prevention trainings: (a) incorporate learning objectives aimed to help students understand and identify gender schemas (see Valian 2005, 2016; Kimmel, 2004); (b) incorporate content that helps students consider how gender schemas can influence and possibly normalize different types of abuse in hazing; (c) and, drawing on Jones, Abes, and McEwen's (2007) model of multiple dimensions of identity and the work of Cromwell (2015), incorporate content to help students explore how hazing is shaped by other aspects of identity and context. To do this, we recommend drawing on established approaches in the field of Gender Studies by partnering with faculty who teach in this area, and students studying in related disciplines, to assist with developing a hazing prevention training that takes into account an analysis of gender as well as other identity-based differences. Building on suggestions provided by Allan and Kinney (2017), campus professionals can work alongside students to ensure that non-hazing alternatives provide opportunities to disrupt harmful gender norms (e.g., expanding images of ideal beauty and positive body image as well as strengthening emotional competency for students whose socialization minimized its importance). We also urge campus professionals to evaluate trainings and other prevention initiatives to determine effectiveness and whether responses differ on the basis of gender.

Similarly, integrating understandings of gender and gender schemas in leadership education and leader development programs can help students broaden their understanding of

how gender norms shape social interactions. We contend that this scaffolding can help students be better prepared to identify the gendered aspects of hazing when they occur, and can help them to disrupt environments where rigid gender norms may provide fertile ground for certain types of hazing. Further, integrating a gender lens can strengthen bystander intervention programs. For example, students who acquire a sharpened understanding of gender schemas may be more likely to recognize a greater range of hazing behavior that includes both emotional and physical harm and will thus be better prepared to intervene or report hazing incidents.

For research, we recommend further analyses that incorporate gender theory to understand hazing and strengthen its prevention. Similarly, as a social and cultural practice, hazing can also reflect other aspects of identity and social status. Some researchers have explored hazing in BGLOs, revealing some distinctions in types of hazing in comparison to predominantly White groups (e.g., Jones, 2004; Lee-Olukoya, 2010; Parks, Jones, & Hughey, 2014). Building on this foundation, researchers can do more to explore if students from a range of identity groups understand hazing differently and how the lens of intersectionality might be helpful in developing training programs that avoid a *one size fits all* approach. We recommend that researchers partner with campus professionals to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of employing gender theory and an intersectional approach to educating about hazing.

Unfortunately, hazing continues to place college students at risk of harm in colleges and universities. Research-based findings and recommendations like these are vital to consider as part of a comprehensive approach to prevention that includes assessment, culturally competent capacity building, planning, and the implementation and evaluation of strategies to reduce these dangerous and sometimes lethal behaviors.

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Author Biographies

Daniela Véliz-Calderón is Assistant Professor and Vice-Director of Teaching and Learning at the School of Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Her research interests relate to the academic profession, internationalization, student affairs and gender. Dr. Véliz-Calderón earned her Master of Arts in Student Development in Higher Education, and Ph. D. in Higher Education from the University of Maine.

Elizabeth J. Allan, Ph.D., is Professor and Program Director of Higher Education at the University

of Maine. Allan's scholarship focuses on campus cultures and climates including campus diversity, equity, student engagement, and hazing. She is the author of two books, co-editor of a third, and has authored or co-authored more than 25 research-based articles.