

**An Exploration of College-educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's  
Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy**

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***“Perhaps we can bring the day when children will learn from their earliest days  
that being fully man and fully woman means to give one’s life to the  
liberation of the brother who suffers.”***

## **Dedications**

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**Abstract****An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's  
Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy**

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The experience and meaning of manhood is varied and complex. For Mexican-American men in the United States of America, many circumstances complicate the development of a healthy sense of manhood. Social science literature contains a historical and ever-present tendency to use the concept of *machismo* to describe Mexican-American masculinity as the sum total of the meaning and experience of manhood. Although an expansive literature attributes *machismo* to Mexican-American men, few empirical studies seek to understand the meaning and experience of masculinity in this population (Bitar, Kimball, Gee & Bermúdez, 2008; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008). To fill empirical gaps in the meaning and experiences of manhood among Mexican-American men, this heuristic inquiry explored the meaning and experiences of 10 first-generation, college-educated men between the ages of 25 and 40. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of Chicana feminism (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009) and symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2007), this heuristic inquiry also captured how participants interpreted the relationship among their ethnic identity, academic success, and experiences of manhood. Participants identified significant influences on their identity such as role models and sociocultural factors. Findings illustrated that the concept of *machismo* impacted participants' experience of manhood. Participants' education and level of consciousness mediated their ability to define manhood. Furthermore, the findings illustrated that being educated influenced their relationship to themselves, others, and their community—a process described as *El Deber* or “the duty” to give back to others and be positive role

models in their communities. Based on the findings of this study, implications for clinical practice, training, and future research are provided.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

A few years ago, I began the task of supervising a Marriage and Family Therapy intern at my place of employment. Securing this employment was a significant professional and personal accomplishment. This employment allowed me to follow my passion for providing high-quality, culturally sensitive, bilingual family therapy services to Latino families. As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, the fabric of my ancestral DNA led me to pursue a profession serving disadvantaged and marginalized populations. I found a professional home that combined my personal identity as a bilingual Chicana and role as a family therapist. For the first time in my career, I was providing bilingual family therapy services to Latino families. I also had the unique opportunity to work with a bilingual staff that represented the uniqueness and diversity that exists in the Latino culture.

Subsequently, I was hired as the lead to begin a school-based family therapy program at a charter school in eastern North Philadelphia. The racial and ethnic demographics of eastern North Philadelphia have dramatically changed since 1990. Local news agencies have used the term, “White Flight,” to describe the overall decrease of the White population in Philadelphia (Chang, 2011), decreasing by 33% since 1990, whereas the Hispanic/Latino population increased by 11% (The Philadelphia Research Initiative, 2011). Given the significant number of Latino students attending the charter school, a major focus upon supervising an intern was to address cultural differences between my White, non-Latina intern, and the largely Latino population we served.

Several weeks of intense supervision sessions brought about conversations between the two of us that began to explore the intersection of race, ethnicity, culture,



stereotypes, values, bias, and therapy. Our supervision peaked as we narrowed our conversation to the particular stereotypes and biases that my intern held regarding a new Mexican family that had been assigned to her. It became apparent that my intern's views of this family were inspired by a set of beliefs and preconceived notions she held about Mexican men. My intern's interaction with Mexican men thus far had been predominantly relegated to her encounters with mainly kitchen staff at restaurants where she had been employed over the years. She courageously shared with me her thoughts and biases toward Mexican men, stating they often saw women as objects and frequently were disrespectful by making suggestive comments.

Throughout this process, she was able to admit that her lack of encounters and experience with Mexicans limited her understanding of them and their culture. Most poignantly, she was aware that she was completely influenced by these biases, stating that if she walked onto a subway or train and there was an empty seat next to a Mexican man, she would not take that seat. We connected these biases to her current work with the Mexican family and the ways the father challenged all of these stereotypes. The man she was working with was caring, loving, concerned, and committed to the well-being of his son, who he brought to therapy every week—her most consistent family. This father and son singlehandedly challenged all of the perceptions, biases, and stereotypes she had of Mexican men. “I didn't stop to think of them as fathers, sons, and brothers,” she shared with me. “And certainly not as fathers who brought their sons to therapy,” I added. The tears of embarrassment and shame flowed down my intern's face as she came to terms with the devastating impact that her own biases and stereotypes could have on one family and an entire culture.

The depth and complexity of this experience was further compounded by my unapologetic identity as a Chicana. I further pursued my intern's thoughts and reactions to having a Mexican-American supervisor such as myself. She quickly explained to me all the ways *I was not like them*. She explained that I dressed nicely, had nice things, and was successful; therefore, she did not see me like the families with whom we worked. Internally I felt the knot in my throat choking me and my lips quivering as the words, "Well, you should," spilled out of my mouth. I proceeded to "come out" and describe to her the many ways I am just like *them*. As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, in a family where my father had a second-grade education and a mother who completed high school with additional vocational training as a hair dresser, *I am them*. Although I have been very blessed in my life, I know the truth. I know the little *Meji* (Mexican) girl inside the successful woman she saw sitting before her. With tears in my eyes, I shared the social and cultural context in which I grew up and which makes me who I am. "*I am them*," I made clear to her. I shared the blessings and opportunities I have been privileged to accrue that have led me to "success." Additionally, I explained that the most important thing I can attribute to some of my success is the difference that mentors and role models have made in my life and their unwavering belief in my abilities.

I recall leaving my office that night in a state of confusion. On one hand, I was proud of the interaction and impact that I believed I had on my intern and consequently the work that she was doing with this family. However, I felt a sense of loss, disconnection, and bewilderment with myself. I was curious about my own process and how I was able to lead us through that supervision session, even though I felt emotionally attacked. At my own subsequent supervision session with Dr. Hardy, I began to recount

the events and conversation that had transpired with my supervisee. As the words rolled out of my mouth, tears escaped my eyes. A consciousness rose to the surface—the man she would refuse to sit next to on that train is my father; my brother. The tears were now uncontrollable. The deep emotional wounds that were uncovered that day have changed me dramatically.

Soon after these events, as I struggled to focus on a more specific and manageable topic for my dissertation, I realized the direction for study. I imagined my father as a young man, immigrating to this country, working demanding jobs from cotton fields to curtain factories, chicken farms to vineyards. The story I knew of my father did not match the story my supervisee imagined of him as a Mexican man. Moreover, I thought of my only brother: an honorably discharged Army veteran who, despite serving in the military, has struggled to become a U.S.A.<sup>1</sup> citizen. Last, I thought of my nephew—the next generation of Mexican-American men in my family. I was curious about the struggles he would face throughout his life. I wondered how he would manage to navigate the difficult terrain of becoming a man in our family's cultural context and that of the larger society, and more importantly, how others' views, perceptions, and biases of him would knowingly and unknowingly change him forever. Therefore, although I do not have the direct experience of becoming and being a Mexican-American man in the U.S.A., I have had close second-hand experience, beginning in my familial context and in the larger society, of the difficulties Mexican-American men experience in the U.S.A.

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<sup>1</sup> The term United States of America (U.S.A.) will be used versus "United States" (U.S.), unless otherwise citing a previous source. It is important to bring attention to this detail, since "Estados Unidos Mexicanos" (Mexican United States) or Mexico could also be referred to as "United States" (Falicov, 2014). Increased awareness and sensitivity to this matter allows us to have a worldview that challenges narratives of dominance that are pervasive in claiming terms such as United States or "America"; there are two major continents that constitute the "Americas," not one country (Parra Cardona, Wampler, & Busby, 2005).

Thus, I understand deeply that my fate is integrally tied to the experience and survival of men such as my father, brother, and nephew because, after all, *I am my brother's keeper*.

Peering at the young man sitting in the supervision videotape, my heart became heavy. I imagined what would become of this young man if someone did not believe in him. I imagined the future that lay before him as he developed into a Mexican-American man living in the U.S.A. The drastic statistics he would face came flashing to my mind: he has a 1 in 4 chance of finishing high school; and the likelihood that he will continue into college is only 17%, but has a similar chance of being incarcerated (1 of 5 Latino youth are incarcerated; Mendel, 2011). Black and Latino youth under the age of 18 represent 30% of this population in the U.S.A.; however, they also represent 60% of all incarcerated youth. In contrast, Whites represent 60% of all youth, ages 18 and under, but only comprise 37% of incarcerated youth (Mendel, 2011). Youth of color also face harsher punishment in schools than their White counterparts, accounting for 70% of school-related arrests or referrals to law enforcement (Kerby, 2012). Given the likelihood of a dismal future, the importance of creating an opportunity for him to have a chance at a positive future was imperative.

“I never thought to ask him what he wants to be when he grows up,” my intern stated of the fifth-grade Mexican boy to whom she was providing services. Before him was not a future of accomplishments, but a future of discrimination, racism, stereotypes, and adversity. This young boy is one of many Mexican-American boys and men living in the U.S.A. who could be impacted dramatically by perceptions similar to that of my intern. Perceptions such as hers have the potential to plague the perceptions of an entire culture, its people, and its men. As the young Mexican-American population of men in

the U.S.A. matures into adulthood, their growing statistics will be a major force contributing to a broader phenomenon of Latinos in the U.S.A.

More poignantly, this young man was being treated in the context of family therapy. Despite ethical standards of family therapists to advance the welfare of individuals and families without discriminating by race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status (AAMFT, 2015), what was operating for my intern were deeply-embedded and unexamined biases about Mexican-American men. The sum of my intern's beliefs not only reflected a broader discourse about Mexican-American men, but more importantly a common theme in the social sciences and family therapy specifically. This common understanding has come to be used to describe, understand, and treat Latino men broadly, and Mexican-American men specifically, through the prism of *machismo*. When unexamined, the concept of *machismo* perpetuates a narrow depiction of Mexican-American men as aggressive, domineering, authoritarian, promiscuous, emotionally unavailable, and sexist (Arciniega et al., 2008; Baca-Zinn, 1982; Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Levant & Pollack, 2003; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Such a broad and sweeping characterization of Mexican-American masculinity has vast implications for the training, research, and practice of family therapy with Mexican-American men.

The remaining sections of this chapter introduce the popular nomenclature that social science literature references when referring to Latino culture. A brief context of the relationship between Mexico and the U.S.A. is presented to provide a historical context to the study. Furthermore, a brief discussion illuminates the pervasive deficit and

pathological model people apply when working with Mexican-American men. Further, in this chapter I state the goals of this investigation, and present an overview of the study, the research questions, and the theoretical frameworks I employed to guide this study. Lastly, I discuss the relevance of this study to the field of couple and family therapy.

### **Overview of Terminology Related to Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S.A.**

Many authors discussed the origins and difficulties of using the terms Hispanic and Latino in the U.S.A. (Alcoff, 2005; Allen, Lachance, Rios-Ellis, & Kaphingst, 2011; Comas-Díaz, 2001; Garcia-Preto, 1996). Beginning in the 1970s, the U.S. Federal Office of Management and Budget created the term *Hispanic* to refer to “a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race” (Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987, p. 64). Issued in Directive No. 15, after new immigration laws were meant to curtail immigration from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean, the term Hispanic was created to name and govern the newly immigrated populations (Alcoff, 2005). Subsequently, in 1997, the Office of Management and Budget officially released *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*. In the revisions the Office of Management and Budget accepted two recommendations and modified the racial category of “Asian or Pacific Islander” into “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.” In addition, the term “Hispanic” was changed to “Hispanic or Latino” as an ethnic classification.

The term Hispanic was used originally to delineate a cultural heritage to Spain. However, several individuals (Acuña, 2011; Alcoff, 2005) have criticized the term, arguing that individuals who chose this classification attempted to promote a more middle-class “Anglo” accepted term that obfuscated their native prequest roots. The

category Hispanic also excluded those persons with ties to Portuguese-speaking countries such as Brazil. Garcia-Preto (2005) clearly distinguished between Hispanic and Latino stating,

Latino/Latina does not refer to Spain, but rather to Spain's former colonies in Latin America, indicating people who come from South America, Central America, and Mexico, including territories in the United States that were taken from Mexico, and some of the Caribbean islands. (p. 155)

The word Latino, as a derivative of the Latin language, creates some of the same difficulties, mostly due to language. Spanish is a romance language that was brought to the Americas by the Spanish. Prior to the Spanish conquest, indigenous groups did not speak Spanish; instead they spoke their native languages and were forced to learn the new ruling language. Additionally, under such definition, individuals from Italy and Portugal could also call themselves Latino, given that Italian and Portuguese are derivatives of Latin. However, these individuals are not classified as Latino, according to the U.S. Census, unless individuals themselves identify in such a manner (Passel & Taylor, 2009).

Several writers described the political and regional associations for the preference of each term (Alcoff, 2005; Falicov, 1998). Members of conservative political groups and in regions such as New Mexico, Texas, and Florida prefer the term Hispanic. In contrast, members from more liberal political groups and states in the Pacific Northwest and Southwest have an allegiance to the Latino classification. Additionally, in the State of New York, more individuals preferred the term Hispanic to Latino (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez & Velasco, 2012). However, Allen, Lachance, Rios-Ellis, and Kaphingst (2011) have noted that the terms Hispanic and Latino are most significant in relation to immigration to the U.S.A. and have no real meaning in the original countries of origin. The National Research Council (2006) commented that the use of the terms Hispanic or

Latino to describe Americans of Spanish origin or descent is unique to the U.S.A. and their meaning continues to change and evolve.

In addition to the complexity of using the terms Hispanic or Latino, it is also important to note that many individuals described as Hispanic or Latino in the U.S.A. would most likely not describe themselves as such. The Pew Hispanic Center, an affiliate of the Pew Center Research, provides demographic research based on the U.S. Census and concurs on the terminology explicated in the census. Recently the Pew Hispanic Center conducted the National Survey of Latinos (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, & Velasco, 2012). The survey explored the attitudes of 1,220 Latinos, 18 years and older, regarding their identity, language-usage patterns, core values, views about the U.S.A., and families' country of origin. Findings relevant to identity revealed that 51% of Latinos preferred to identify by their family's country of origin such as Mexican, Cuban, or Dominican; 24% preferred to use the terms Hispanic or Latino; and 21% used American. Moreover, when asked specifically if they preferred to identify as Hispanic or Latino, 51% stated they had no preference, whereas 33% preferred Hispanic and 14% preferred Latino.

This process of self-identification is significant in the lives of Latinos in general and Mexican-Americans specifically, as it describes their identity in a larger sociopolitical context (Comas-Díaz, 2001). An additional identifier that has particular salience in the lives of some Mexican-Americans living in the U.S.A. are the terms Chicana (female) and Chicano (male). This personal sociocultural identifier is embedded in a deep history between Mexico and the U.S.A. Although the identification as Chicano is a more popular personal identification for many first-generation Mexican-Americans, for older Mexican generations, Chicano was used as a derogatory descriptor to denigrate



Mexicans prior to the Mexican-American civil rights movement of the 1960s. Given the long history between Mexico and the U.S.A., it becomes imperative to understand the influence of personal identification in the overall identity of Mexican-Americans.

Understanding the history of how Latinos in general and Mexican-Americans in particular have been labeled and described is significant, due to the heterogeneity that exists in popular culture.

The terminology used in the U.S. Census (2010) intensifies the complication and confusion when discussing *Hispanics*, *Latinos*, *foreign born*, *native born*, *immigrant*, *first-generation*, *second generation*, and so on. It is important to highlight the authors' "note on terminology," where they state, "first-generation refers to persons born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen" (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez & Velasco, 2013, p. 6). Also, second generation refers to those born in the U.S.A. with at least one parent born outside the U.S.A. Although the U.S. Census and the Pew Hispanic Center noted this terminology, they made additional reference to using the terms first-generation, foreign born, and immigrant interchangeably. However, there is consistent mention to this group as "foreign born" and "immigrant," whereas first-generation is seldom used. Given that 52% of all Latino children under the age of 18 are the first-generation to be born in the U.S.A., this study used "first-generation" and "native born" interchangeably to describe this population (Fry & Passel, 2009). Further, for this study, foreign born and immigrant were used interchangeably to refer to individuals born outside the U.S.A. Lastly, the term Latino because of its ability to acknowledge the Spanish invasion in the Western hemisphere, will be used throughout this study, except when quoting original references in which authors used Hispanic.

Individuals of Mexican heritage comprise 64% of the 50.5 million Latinos living in the U.S.A. (Motel & Patten, 2012). In the discussion below, I provide information that specifically highlights the experiences of Mexican-Americans when available. However, due to the measurement inconsistency of the U.S. Census, data pertinent to specific Latino subgroups is not always available and is further reported into the larger “Hispanic or Latino” category. Given the overwhelming percentage of Mexican-Americans in the Latino category overall, the reader can assume that Mexican-Americans represent the majority of individuals reported in the following statistics, unless otherwise specified.

### **Historical Relationship Between Mexico and the U.S.A.**

According to the U.S. Census (2010), individuals of Mexican descent are those who can trace their family’s origin to Mexico (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). Therefore, this estimation includes people who were born in Mexico, any other country with parental heritage to Mexico, or in the U.S.A. On its southern boundary, Mexico shares a border with Guatemala and Belize, and on its northern border, it shares a 1,952-mile border with the U.S.A. (Acuña, 2014). Mexico’s southern border separates North America from Central America. Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, and Albert (2011), in a 2010 Census brief stated the following:

Central American Hispanics, including Mexicans represented 71 percent of the total Hispanic population residing in the United States. . . . Central American groups were concentrated in the West. About two-fifths of people with origins from Guatemala and El Salvador (38 percent and 40 percent respectively) and half with Mexican origin (52 percent) resided in the West (p. 4).

The propensity to cluster Mexico and Central America in the statement above is problematic for several reasons. First and foremost, Mexico is indeed part of North America, not Central America. Further, according to the *World Atlas* (2015), the seven countries (Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and

Panama) that constitute Central America are also on the North American continent. However, creating a false separation between Mexico and the U.S.A. conceals critical historical, social, political, and economic histories between the two countries. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement characterized a portion of the past and current economic relationship between Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.A. (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2015).

In addition, clustering Mexicans and Central Americans into one larger group perpetuates the theoretical myth of sameness (Hardy, 1990) among Latinos and minimizes important within-group differences (Hernandez & Curiel, 2012). Furthermore, Mexico is the only Latin American country for which its previous territory currently comprises part of the continental U.S.A. (Acuña, 2014). The Mexico/U.S.A. border has been the source of much controversy in the history of these two countries regarding trade and commerce, migrant labor, drug-related violence, and, most of all, immigration (Acuña, 2014).

Migration patterns from Mexico to the U.S.A. have been closely linked to the economic status of these two countries. The relationship between Mexico and the U.S.A. is characterized by economic instability, supply and demand, immigration, corruption, and violence. Prior to February 2, 1848, more than 500,000 square miles of U.S.A. territory (present day California, New Mexico, Nevada, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Oklahoma) belonged to Mexico (Acuña, 2011). While ceding over half of its territory, Mexico ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the Mexican-American War (1846–1848). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo remains a controversial aspect of the relationship between Mexico and the U.S.A. Land disputes, such as the

Texas annexation and the U.S.A.–Mexico border, were quite influential in this agreement. Mexico argued for placing the U.S.A.–Mexico border at the Rio Nueces; however, the U.S.A. maintained the border be established 150 miles south, at the Rio Grande, in Mexico known as the Rio Bravo (Acuña, 2011).

Articles VIII, IX, and X comprised a critical aspect of the treaty. These articles specifically referred to the citizenship rights of Mexicans in the newly acquired land in addition to “comprehensive guarantees protecting all prior and pending titles to property of every description” (Acuña, 2011, p. 52). Subsequently, the U.S.A. omitted Article X of the treaty and later violated many obligations pledged to Mexicans in these territories. This history has vast repercussions for the political, economic, and social conditions of the U.S.A., Mexico, and more importantly, Mexicans residing in both countries. As the historian Rodolfo Acuña (2011) stated,

Mexico was left with its shrunken resources, to face the continued advances of the United States. In the next century, it would be severely hindered in its ability to build a strong economic infrastructure to keep up with the population growth that began to approach pre-conquest levels. (p. 53)

Combined with many other historical events, this hindrance has shaped the lives of many Mexican-Americans living in the U.S.A.

### **Cultural Values of Latino/Mexican-Americans**

One particular area in which authors fail to recognize the variability in Latino groups occurs when they discuss the cultural values that are important to Latino families (Ho, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2004; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005; Paniagua, 2014). Commonly, the values such as *familismo*, *personalismo*, *machismo*, *marianismo*, and *respeto* are deemed necessary to consider in promoting clinical and research effectiveness when working with Latinos. Despite widespread support for the importance

of these values when working with Latino families, a few scholars argued that these constructs lack empirical support and clear, validated operational definitions (Domenech-Rodriguez, Zayas, Schwartz, & Baumann, n.d.; Dumka, Lopez, & Carter, 2002; Guarnaccia & Rodriguez, 1996). Particularly, Domenech-Rodriguez et al. (n.d.) asserted that, given the lack of conceptual clarity, the accuracy in measuring and accurately observing behavioral representations of these values is compromised. More importantly, a scarcity of empirical evidence explores how specific Latino groups define each value, limiting the external validity of these values among specific groups (Domenech-Rodriguez et al., n.d.). Specifically, the cultural value of *machismo* has been extensively used in the social science literature to describe male gender roles and define masculinity among Latino and Mexican-American men. Moreover, the imposition of the concept of *machismo* to quantify the total lived experience of Latino and Mexican-American manhood needs to be re-examined.

### **Conceptualization of Latino/Mexican-American Masculinity**

Social scientists have long questioned the negative effects of perceiving, describing, and treating men through a singular paradigm of masculinity<sup>2</sup> (Connell, 1995; Connell & Meserschmidt, 2005; Levant, 1996; Shek, 2006). As research on masculinity increased, much of the focus was on White/European, middle-class, American men. Qualities such as assertiveness, individualism, aggression, competition, adventurousness, and achieving power or status were highlighted as important in male masculinity (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank & Tracey, 2008; Falicov, 2010; Levant & Pollack,

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<sup>2</sup> The terms masculinity and manhood will be used interchangeably to describe the sum total of all psychological, emotional, societal, and emotional experiences associated with being a man, that is, gender norms (Levant, Hirsch, Celentano, & Cozza, 1992), male sex roles (Pleck, 1981), and gender stereotypes (Connell, 2005).

2003; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). However, when the same characteristics are applied to Latino masculinity, they are often wrought with negative connotations (Bacigalupe, 2000; Mirandé, 1997; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Historically, Latino men, regardless of ethnic background, have been categorized as aggressive, domineering, authoritarian, promiscuous, full of bravado, emotionally unavailable, and sexist (Arciniega et al., 2008; Baca-Zinn, 1982; Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Levant & Pollack, 2003; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). The aforementioned characteristics used to describe Latino masculinity can be summarized into one concept that is commonly associated with Latino masculinity: *machismo*.

The concept of *machismo* is described as cultural attitudes about gender norms, roles, behaviors, and expectations; in addition, it is said to reflect a male's strong orientation toward domination and having control (Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010). The most common preconceptions and descriptions of *machismo* include images of men being dominant over women, defending himself to other men, and proving his manliness through fighting, drinking, and overt male bravado (Mirandé, 1997). Additional descriptions include having increased sexual drive and seducing women (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002).

Falicov (2010) specifically stated that the representation of Latino men in U.S.A. society and the social sciences specifically has derived from a pathologizing and stereotypical portrayal. The mystique of manliness among Latino men described as *machismo* includes additional characteristics such as hypermasculinity, overindulgence in alcohol, and exuding sexual prowess (Falicov, 2010; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Authors agreed that the literature on the interpretation of *machismo* is largely based on

stereotypes and anecdotal observation, and has led to an inconsistent, negative, oversimplified, and monolithic representation of Latino men (Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, Delgado-Romero, & Zapata, 2014; Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). A significant problem with the concept of *machismo* is that it is used as an all-encompassing concept to describe Latino masculinity (Felix-Ortiz, Ankney, Brodie, & Rodinsky, 2012).

However, recent scholarship has highlighted that *machismo* also entails positive characteristics (Arciniega et al., 2008; Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2010; Mirandé, 1997). As a positive value, *machismo* has been related to a father's responsibility in taking care of and providing for his family, bravery, honor, respect, generosity, and loyalty (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2010, 2014; Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012). The concept of *machismo* needs to be understood as a multidimensional concept. As outlined by Arredondo et al. (2014),

gender socialization is complex and must be understood as it relates to an individual's entire upbringing and other dimensions of his or her identity (i.e., geographic origins, parent's education, generational and socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and status as an immigrant or non-immigrant. (p. 26)

Regardless of the many attributes described by the literature on *machismo*, Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus (2012) assert there is a glaring lack of research on Latino men. Authors focused on Latino populations have argued that, despite long-standing scholarship challenging unidimensional models of masculinity, Latino men, specifically Mexican-American men, are still treated through the prism of *machismo* (Arciniega et al., 2008; Falicov, 2010; Torres, Solberg, & Anderson, 2002). Several authors proposed that Mexican men in particular condone and subscribe to particular notions of masculinity, referenced as *machismo* (Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 1998, 2010; Mirandé, Pitones & Diaz,

2011; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Unfortunately, these pervasive stereotypes have developed into what Falicov (2010) and Mirandé (1997) critiqued as the “deficit model,” which used Mexican masculinity as the source of various pathologies in the Mexican family. Thus, Mexican masculinity, and by extension the Mexican family and culture, was seen as pejorative in comparison to the normative, dominant, White, middle-class, Anglo-American family culture. Researchers continue to neglect the nuanced experience of masculinity, especially in the ways various cultural groups define and experience manhood.

In contrast, researchers suggested that many characteristics of masculinity labeled *machismo* are not unique cultural variables pertaining to Latinos, but common themes that can describe manhood in many cultures (Gilmore, 1990; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). The dichotomous position on whether *machismo* is a quintessential Latino value or a generic descriptor of masculinity yields a polarized argument. A more productive discussion is to highlight the ways a Latino man is like all men, like some men, but like no other man (Hardy, 1990). Furthermore, teasing out within-group similarities and differences is also important. For example, examining how a Mexican-American man is similar to all Mexican-American men, similar to some Mexican-American men, but like no other Mexican-American man, allows for a multidimensional understanding of how Mexican-American masculinity is defined, experienced, and understood. However, it is important to recognize that values are dynamic and context dependent. The social, economic, and historical setting helps determine how society constructs and develops values such as *machismo* over time for a specific population, which is critical to understanding. Thus, even in the Mexican culture, masculinity can be



defined and experienced in various ways, based on a host of contextual variables: generational cohort, country of birth, immigrant status, languages spoken, level of education, and many other factors.

### **Academic Success**

A recent report on higher education by the Pew Research Center outlined the rising value of obtaining a college degree. The report outlined several key findings, highlighting the following: (a) a college education is worth more today, (b) college benefits go beyond earnings, (c) college graduates are more satisfied with their jobs, and (d) the cost of not going to college has risen. For adults aged 25 to 32 who are employed full-time, the median annual earnings for those who are high school graduates is \$28,000 compared to \$45,500 for people with a bachelor's degree or more. This wage-earning gap between college-educated and those who are less educated is the widest gap recorded, compared to past tabulations in 1995, 1986, 1979, and 1965 (Taylor, Fry, & Oates, 2014). Additional socioeconomic values of a college degree compared to a high school diploma for adults aged 25 to 32, demonstrate that people with degrees are less likely to be unemployed (3.8% versus 12.2%), less likely to live in poverty (5.8% versus 21.8%), less likely to be living in parents' home (12% versus 18%), and more likely to be married (45% versus 40%).

Furthermore, those who have graduated from college are more likely to be "very satisfied" (53%) with their current job and report having enough education and training to get ahead in their job (63%) compared to those without (37% and 41%, respectively). Lastly, those born after 1980, called the millennial generation, when compared to previous generational cohorts such as early boomers (born 1946–1954), late boomers (born 1955–1964), and Gen Xers (born 1965–1980), fare worse. Millennials with only a

high school diploma have a decreased median household income, are more likely to live in poverty, and are less likely to be employed full time, compared to previous generations. Thus, the value of only attaining a high school education is steadily decreasing, and the value of a college education is on the rise (Taylor, Fry, & Oates, 2014). More notably, key determinants of quality of life, such as the likelihood of living in poverty, being employed, and wage earnings intrinsically relate to educational attainment.

On October 19, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 1355, renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, originally established in 1990 by President G.H.W. Bush (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Twenty-five years after its initial establishment, educational disparities faced by Latinos in the U.S.A. persist. Latinos continue to have the lowest completion rate of bachelor's degrees through doctoral degrees. Although Latinos can be of any race, the U.S. Census Bureau (2013) lists four major racial groups: White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic. Among these groups, for adults 25 years and older, 24% of Asians completed a bachelor's degree, followed by 16% of Non-Hispanic Whites, 10% Blacks, and only 8% of Latinos. Also, 15% of Asians have earned a master's degree, followed by 9% of Non-Hispanic Whites, and 6% of Blacks. Only 3% of Latinos earned a master's degree. Lastly, for those obtaining a doctorate or professional degree, only 1% of Latinos are awarded this degree, compared to 7.9% of Asians, 3.5% of Non-Hispanic Whites, and 1.5% of Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

However, the stark reality is that Latino men lag significantly behind Latinas beginning in pre-kindergarten enrollment and continuing through college-degree attainment. In 2009, 44.4% of Latinas under the age of 5 were enrolled in school,

compared to only 39.4% of Latino men males (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Continuing through the educational pipeline in public schools, in grades K–12, Latinos are more likely to have repeated a grade, been suspended, or expelled than their female counterparts. Notably, Latino men not only lag behind Latinas in educational milestones, but also in comparison to the overall male population. For example, in the 2010 U.S. Census, for individuals between the ages of 18 and 24, 34% of Latinos had less than a high school education compared to 27% of Latinas and 22% of men in this age group. In contrast, Latino men (3.2%) had lower rates of obtaining a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to Latinas (5.2%) and all men regardless of race (7.9%) between the ages of 18 and 24 (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

The age group of 25 to 39 follows the same pattern, with more Latino men having less than a high school education and fewer college degrees compared to Latinas and their male peers of the same age (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). A remarkable difference in generational cohort is that for Latinas/os between the ages of 40 and 59 and 60 years or over, no significant differences emerged between genders in educational achievement. Although the educational achievements of these age groups are extraordinarily low, the data demonstrates the growing gender gap between Latinos and Latinas is most prevalent in younger age groups, those aged 18–24 and 25–39 (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Therefore, “the lesson is this: in the coming years, the perpetually young Latina/o population will continue to drive population and labor force growth. Therefore, improving the educational success of the Latina/o population is imperative to ensure America’s future prosperity” (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011, p. 5).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences and meanings of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American college-educated men.

Additionally, in this study I explored participants' perceptions of the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experience of manhood.

**Research Questions**

The primary research questions that guided this study follow:

1. How do college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men define and interpret their lived experience of masculinity?
2. What meanings do Mexican-American college-educated men attribute to the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experiences of manhood?

**Overview of the Study**

This qualitative investigation explored the lived experiences of masculinity among 10 first-generation Mexican-American men between the ages of 25 and 40. The use of heuristic inquiry was used to explore participants' meanings attributed to the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experiences of manhood. Those qualifying as first-generation Mexican-American were individuals whose parents were both born and reared in Mexico. Individuals themselves must be the first-generation born in the U.S.A. (Krogstad, Lopez, & Rohal, 2014). Through in-depth, open-ended interviews, this study sought to capture and understand the meanings and experiences of manhood among a select group of Mexican-American men.

## **Heuristic Inquiry**

There is limited empirical research that thoroughly examines the meanings and experiences of manhood among Mexican-American men (Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). I used heuristic inquiry as the method of inquiry and analysis in this study to explore the in-depth meaning and lived experience of manhood among college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men. I chose the heuristic-inquiry methodology due to its ability to portray not only composite depictions or the overall essence of the phenomenon, but additionally to render individual depictions and exemplary portraits that are able to retain individual participants' experiences within the essence of the group's overall experience.

Heuristic inquiry, as outlined by Moustakas (1990), is similar to phenomenology in that both qualitative methodologies seek to examine the essence and meaning of participants' lived experience. However, heuristic inquiry retains the personal experience and significance of the researcher at the forefront, whereas, a phenomenological researcher maintains a bracketed relationship to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). The final analysis, which results in a creative synthesis of the researcher's relationship and meaning making of the essence of the phenomena, is a defining characteristic of heuristic inquiry. The aim of this study was to understand the composite depiction of participants' lived experiences and meanings attributed to education, culture, and masculinity, while simultaneously maintaining their individual depictions of the phenomenon.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

This study used two primary theories to discuss and interpret the findings: Chicana feminism and symbolic interactionism theory.

**Chicana feminism.** The tenets of Chicana feminism, as outlined by Lucero-Liu and Christensen (2009), served as one of the conceptual frameworks for this study. The development of Chicana feminism is two-fold. Among other civil rights movements, such as the Black civil rights movement, the Chicano civil rights movement in the 1960s sparked national attention, highlighting the vast and unjust experiences of Mexican-Americans in U.S.A. from leaders such as Reies Lopez Tijerina, who called attention to the unfulfilled promises of land grants after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzales' writing of *I am Joaquin*, a dramatic and powerful poem, created a sense of a Chicano national identity. Cesar Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and the United Farm Workers led powerful strikes, boycotts, and fasts to demonstrate a commitment to nonviolence in obtaining fair and humane working conditions for farm workers across the Central Valley of California. Among the most fearless leaders were the countless numbers of students who staged walkouts, protests, and sit-ins to call attention to unequal conditions in the educational system for Chicano students (Rosales, 1997).

However, the Chicano Civil Rights movement was not without scrutiny. Among its followers, Chicanas soon began to feel passed over and marginalized in their own national movement. Although the Chicano movement identified race and ethnicity as the primary forms of oppression, Chicanas began to feel subjugated due to the movement's desire to adhere to traditional Mexican cultural values regarding male-female gender roles. Chicanas who desired to bring attention to the ways of "the ideal Chicana," reinforcing an image of deference and a self-sacrificing nurturer, were soon labeled as "sell-outs" or lesbians (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). Feeling they were asked to accept sexism to accept freedom from racism and classism, many Chicanas turned to the

liberal feminist movement. Traditional feminist ideology has long been critiqued for upholding White Eurocentric values as essential truths for all women. Insensitivity to race, ethnicity, and class challenged the applicability of feminist theory to the lives of Chicanas (Comas-Díaz, 1991). Chicana feminists felt marginalized in the broader feminist movement, as it did not highlight the unique challenges Chicanas faced due to race, ethnicity, and class; they quickly realized that the mainstream feminist movement was not a place for them (Noguera & Hurtado, 2012). From exclusion in these two movements, Chicana feminist thought evolved (Arrellano & Ayala-Alcantar, 2004; Baca-Zinn & Dill, 1996; García, 1997; Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009; Zavella, 1989).

Beginning in the 1980s, Chicana feminist scholars Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa began placing the experiences of Chicanas at the center of national discourse. Their influential works, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Anzaldúa, 1987) and *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings from Radical Women of Color* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981), challenged traditionally held notions about gender in the Chicano movement. Additional scholarship on multiracial feminism (Baca-Zinn & Dill, 1996) and scholars, such as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) and Hurtado (2006), served as the foundation for the Chicana feminism set forth by Lucero-Liu and Christensen (2009).

Applying the major tenets of Chicana feminism as it relates to its gendered male counterpart serves to fulfill the critical foundation that Chicanas seek to establish in the lives of Chicanos in general. At its core, Lucero-Liu and Christensen explained, “The ultimate purpose of incorporating Chicana feminism into family research includes finding strengths within the Mexican origin community” (p. 105). Therefore, attempting to counterbalance deficit-based perspectives regarding Mexican-American masculinity by

exploring their in-depth meanings and experiences of manhood serves to fulfill the aforementioned purpose of Chicana feminism. In this framework, several themes underscore the importance of applying a Chicana feminist agenda to this study. The theme of multiplicity is significant in this study with Mexican-American men. Feminists Baca-Zinn and Dill (1996) referenced the notion of multiplicity as Collins' "matrix of domination" (1990). The "matrix of domination" and multiplicity each help explain that women of Mexican origin, and by extension men of Mexican origin, occupy various social locations in their identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, immigration status, language, and sexual orientation. Each one of these social locations impacts the manner in which people experience other social locations. More importantly, for this study, it is significant to understand that although Mexican-American men embody a position of status and privilege, due to their male identity, this experience is obfuscated by statuses pertaining to marginalized groups based on their race, ethnicity, and often socioeconomic class, among other factors. Therefore, an integral aspect of this study was to understand the meaning and lived experience of manhood among a specific population of Mexican-American men.

Consistent with the tenets of Chicana feminism, Anzaldúa (1987) proposed the powerful notion of borderlands theory. The concept of borderlands was used to describe the impossible task of understanding and developing a Chicano identity. Borderlands signified the rubbing of two cultures, those of the U.S.A. and Mexico, literally and figuratively. Literal borders referred to the borders between the U.S.A. and Mexico, which created a borderlands culture, and the figurative borders applied to the internal



processes that were created within Chicanos in feeling a sense of isolation and ambiguity of never quite belonging to the dominant “American” culture or the Mexican culture.

**Symbolic interactionism.** Symbolic interactionism also was used to interpret the findings and promote an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. George Herbert Mead (1934) generated the major assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2007). The theory suggests that in order to understand human action, one must focus on social interaction, human thinking, and how individuals define a given situation. Through shared meanings and interaction, individuals are socialized into their particular context. In the course of these interactions, individuals reciprocally shape their society and create a shared culture.

Culture, according to symbolic interactionism, is a shared perspective, a consensus of the group, encompassing the agreements, goals, knowledge, shared language, and values that merge together (Charon, 2007). Culture comprises shared signs and symbols from which members of a society construct meaning in their lives. Thus, a primary focus of symbolic interactionism is to construct and obtain meaning. Therefore, applying the assumptions and tenets of symbolic interactionism in exploring the shared meanings and experiences of manhood among first-generation Mexican-Americans allowed for a rich understanding of this phenomenon.

### **Significance of the Study**

Organizations, such as the Pew Hispanic Center, have begun to devote close attention to the rise of second-generation Latinos in the U.S.A., of which Mexican-Americans constitute more than two thirds of the population. The Pew Hispanic Center stated, “one prediction about second-generation Latinos, however, seems safe: Given their numbers, their future will be a matter of national interest” (Suro & Passel, 2003,

p. 9). Based on sheer demographic size, Mexican-Americans are positioned to continue to influence and to be influenced by the social, economic, and political climate of the U.S.A. So far, the demographic growth of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.A. has not directly translated to social and economic power for this population. Mexican-American men in particular continue to face severe adversity pertaining to educational outcomes and subsequent quality of life.

Authors who promote culturally responsive therapeutic services for Latinos specify several reasons why therapeutic services need to become more Latina/o-centered. First, mental health services will be impacted by the “demographic imperative”: “The sheer numbers of Latinos, larger families than non-White Latino families, high birth rates, and a lower average age of parents mean that the future of the United States is tied to the Latino population” (Arredondo et al., 2014, p. 206). Second, the economic imperative demonstrates the economic viability of clinical services, research, and outreach. Therapists who are culturally competent in working with Latino clients will be sought by future employers and thus procure economic stability in their careers. Lastly, helping professionals, regardless of profession, are bound by a code of ethics to address the needs of society in a culturally competent manner (Arredondo et al., 2014).

Given the pervasive negative perceptions of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A., copious research would further aid in understanding the vast and complex experiences of Mexican-American men, specifically as it relates to their masculinity. It is of grave importance that the field of Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) strives to understand Mexican-American men in their context and challenge rigidly held beliefs about their experience and meaning of masculinity. Understanding the experience of a

diverse population of Mexican-American men allows mental health professionals to gain a multifaceted view of Mexican-American men that helps inform training, research, and clinical interventions that are more sensitive to the diverse needs of this population. This study helps fill the gap in the field of Couple and Family Therapy that was created by the lack of empirical studies exploring the experiences and meanings of masculinity among first-generation Mexican-American men.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The review of literature presented in this chapter focuses on several key areas that constitute the basis for this study. This chapter is organized into six major sections. The first section provides a brief summary of the demographic trends pertaining to the Latino and Mexican-American population in the U.S.A. The second section highlights several critical issues that affect Mexican-American men in the U.S.A. Subsequently, I provide a historical context of the development of men's studies, followed by an in-depth look at Latino masculinity. The fifth section provides a historical and current conceptualization of Mexican-American masculinity. Lastly, I review the literature on Latino and Mexican-American masculinity.

### **Demographic Trends of Latinos/Mexican-Americans**

In the past few decades, the Latino population in the U.S.A. has grown at a historic rate. In the year 2010, the U.S. Census reported 50.5 million Latinos living inside this country's national borders (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Representing 16.3% of the entire population, the Latino population accounted for 56% of the nation's growth since the year 2000 (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Although the intense population growth of Latinos in the U.S.A. has been at the center of attention, other significant patterns are compelling. The Latino population is the largest and most rapidly growing ethnic minority in the U.S.A.; however three important trends pertain to this population growth: geographic dispersion, rise in native-born children, and the immigrant paradox.

Among Latino subgroups, the three largest groups in population size are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. However, Puerto Ricans are technically considered citizens of the U.S.A. and native born, regardless of their nativity on the U.S.A. mainland or island of Puerto Rico. As stated previously, two-thirds of the overall

Latino population is of Mexican heritage (Motel & Patten, 2012). Many demographic shifts in the overall Latino population are due to births among Mexican-Americans (Motel & Patten, 2012). Careful attention is given to providing detailed information regarding the Mexican-American population specifically, however it can be assumed that those of Mexican heritage comprise a large majority of the trends that will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

**Geographic dispersion.** The dynamic and geographic dispersion across the U.S.A. is important to note. In states that have traditionally held the highest Latino populations, such as Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, and Texas, Latinos account for one in four residents (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). However, states such as South Carolina (148%), Alabama (145%), Tennessee (134%), Kentucky (122%), Arkansas (114%), and North Carolina (111%) have experienced the largest Latino population growth since 2000 (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Maryland and South Dakota have more than doubled their Latino population.

The geographic regions<sup>3</sup> of the South and Midwest experienced the most significant Latino population growth overall. In the South, the Latino population grew by 57% compared to an overall 14% population growth in the South (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). Similarly, in the Midwest, the Latino population increased by 49%, more than 12 times the growth of the overall population in the Midwest (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). Latino growth in the Western and Northeast regions of the U.S.A. was

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<sup>3</sup> The Northeast census region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest census region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South census region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The West census region includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

slower than in the South and Midwest; however these regions experienced a 34% and 33% increase respectively (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

**Rise in native-born children.** Another vital demographic trend to consider is the growth and current state of Latino children in the U.S.A. According to the U.S. Census (2010), a child is considered an individual under the age of 18 years old. In 2000, there were 12.3 million Latino children, accounting for 17.1% of the child population of the U.S.A. (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). By 2010, there were 17.1 million Latino children in the U.S.A., representing a 39% population increase (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Latino children now account for almost 1 of every 4 children in the nation (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). A more detailed description of Latino children demonstrates that: 32% are younger than the age of 5, 53% are between the ages of 5 and 14, and 15% are between the ages of 15 and 17 (Fry & Passel, 2009). Combined, 85% of Latino children are currently under the age of 14. According to the U.S. Census, 11% of Latino children are first-generation (foreign-born), 52% are second generation (U.S. born), and 37% are third generation or higher. Over half of Latino youth are born to parents of immigrants in the U.S.A., and more importantly, 89% of Latino youth are U.S.A.-born citizens; only 11% of Latino youth are actually immigrants in the U.S.A. (Fry & Passel, 2009). Furthermore, an important characteristic of this population is that 69% of Latino children are of Mexican origin (Fry & Passel, 2009). Among all three generational levels, first, second, and third, children of Mexican descent make up 66–75% of each generation. A defining characteristic of those of Mexican heritage in the U.S.A. is that they are, on average, younger (25 years old) compared to the overall U.S.A population (37 years old; Motel & Patten, 2012). Therefore, understanding the contextual world of this particular

population and the ways their current lived experiences may influence their future in society is critically important.

**Immigrant paradox.** An additional theme significant to understanding the overall population growth of Latinos is how generational status among Latino children produces conflicting outcomes. Several social and economic advantages accrue for U.S.A.-born children of Latino background. Among these benefits are increased English proficiency, decreased poverty, and increased likelihood of having parents who have at least a high school education (Fry & Passel, 2009). However, one major factor that negatively impacts Latino youth is “the immigrant paradox” (Cook, Alegría, Lin, & Guo, 2009). The immigrant paradox explains the decline of the social and health-related status of U.S.A.-born adolescents compared to those of immigrant status. Several researchers (Cook et al., 2009; Flores & Brotanek, 2005; Horevitz & Organista, 2013) showed that Latino immigrants have overall better health and even lower mortality rates compared to Latinos born in the U.S.A. (Vega, Rodriguez, & Gruskin, 2009). Latino adolescents who are born in the U.S.A. have higher rates of mental health and mood disorders, higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse, and are more likely to engage in sexual intercourse (Flores & Brotanek, 2005). For example, several studies demonstrated the adverse impact of acculturative stress on mental health outcomes for Mexican-Americans (Miranda & Matheny, 2000; Virruella-Fuentes, 2007). Despite higher acculturative stress, first-generation Mexican-Americans (defined as those immigrating to the U.S.A.) reported better mental health outcomes than their second-generation (those born in the U.S.A.) English-speaking counterparts (Miranda & Matheny, 2000). Furthermore, a study of second-generation Mexican-American women (those born in the U.S.A.) described

experiences of discrimination and stigmatization, referenced as “othering,” by which women developed feelings of not “fitting-in” (Virruella-Fuentes, 2007). The experiences of discrimination and inequality associated with “becoming American negatively impacts the health of immigrants and their descendants” (Virruella-Fuentes, 2007, p. 1531).

### **Critical Issues in Latino/Mexican-American Communities**

The lives of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.A. are deeply rooted in a rich historical legacy. The presence of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.A. predates the origin of the borders that comprise the continental U.S.A. Therefore, numerous generations of Mexican-Americans have had a dramatic role in the shaping and history of the U.S.A. Brown and Patten (2014) indicated that Mexican-American men constitute 49.2% of the entire Latino population in the U.S.A. However, Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus (2012), challenged this population estimate, given the underrepresentation of undocumented Latinos in the U.S. Census. Although the rapid and multitudinous growth of the Latino population continues to shape the history of the U.S.A., a number of critical trends and social issues influence the lived experience of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A.

**Income and poverty.** In 2010, the poverty rate in the U.S.A. was 15.1% (Lopez & Velasco, 2011). However, the poverty rate among Blacks (27.4%) and Latinos (26.6%) was considerably higher than that of Whites (9.9%). A debilitating shift in the U.S.A. economy began in 2007. Known as the “Great Recession,” this historical time period dramatically affected the future of the U.S.A.’s fastest growing demographic group: Latino children. From 2007 to 2010, the number of Latino children in poverty experienced an exponential growth of 36.3%, compared to 17.6% growth among White children and 11.7% among Black children (Lopez & Velasco, 2011).



Among Latino children living in poverty, a few striking characteristics emerged, notably: 79% have parents with less than a high school education, 68% have at least one parent born outside of the U.S.A., and 45% are between the ages of 5 and 12.

Nonetheless, the most prominent characteristic of poor Latino children is that 75% are of Mexican origin. Families of Mexican background are twice as likely to live in poverty compared to all families in the U.S.A. (American Community Survey, 2010).

**Education**—“*Educate para que no sufras como nosotros.*” In the year 2012, the status *drop-out rate*, referring to individuals aged 16 to 24 not currently enrolled in high school and who have not earned a high school credential, was highest among Latinos (13%) compared to Whites (4%) and Blacks (8%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Among men, drop-out rates for Latinos continued to demonstrate higher levels (13.9%) than for Whites (4.8%) or Blacks (8.1%). Furthermore, Latino men surpassed the drop-out rates of Latinas (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Overall, among adults 25 years and older, 37.1% of Latinos did not complete high school, almost three times as many as Whites (12.4%) and Asian/Pacific-Islander (11.1%) and more than two times as many as Blacks (15.8%; U.S. Census, 2012). A closer look at education and gender among Latinos reveals that 38.6% of men have not completed high school compared to 35.4% of Latinas.

Furthermore, the statistics comparing specific Latino subgroups presents an even more alarming picture. Cubans are more likely to have completed high school (81%) compared to 75% of Puerto Ricans. However, only 57% of adults, aged 25 years and older, of Mexican heritage complete high school. This disparity is further compounded in the baccalaureate college years.

Asian/Pacific Islanders (52.4%) are the most likely racial group in the U.S.A. to graduate from college, followed by Whites (30.3%) and African Americans (20.0%), with Latinos the least likely to graduate from college (13.9%). Latinas (14.9%) are more likely to graduate college than their male counterparts (12.9%). A closer analysis of Latino subgroups graduating from college revealed that 26.2% of Cubans graduate from college, compared to 17.5% of Puerto Ricans. Lastly, only 10.6% of Mexicans complete college (U.S. Census, 2012). A high correlation exists between educational attainment and employment opportunities and employment outcomes highly correlate with quality of life. An associated and equally compelling statistic revealed that among college-age Latino men, the ratio of Latino men in jail dormitories versus college dormitories was 2.7 to 1 (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

**Incarceration and violence.** Ethnic minority men, including Blacks and Latinos, experience higher rates of arrests, imprisonment, longer prison sentences, and higher recidivism rates than Whites in the U.S.A. (Torres & Fergus, 2012). One of six Latino men will serve prison time during the course of their lives (Torres & Fergus, 2012). Between 2000 and 2008, the Latino male prison population grew by 42%. Furthermore, Latino men between 20 and 34 years account for 35% of the overall population growth of imprisoned Latinos. By the age of 18, 26% of Latino men have been arrested, and by age 23, 44% have been arrested (Brame, Bushway, Paternoster, & Turner, 2014). Additionally, Latino men between the ages of 20 and 35 represent 49% of the overall Latino prisoner population in the U.S.A. (Carson, 2014; Torres & Fergus, 2012).

Contact with the criminal justice system during adolescence and early adulthood has vast implications for an individual's ability to develop a healthy sense of self and

participate successfully in opportunities such as school, work, or community. Among Latino subgroups, Mexican-Americans often are underemployed, plagued with the lowest salaries when they are employed, and least likely to own a home (Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012). The deleterious social circumstances to which Mexican-American men are exposed during their development are highly detrimental to a positive overall sense of manhood.

**Employment.** In the year 2011, 58.9% of Latinos, aged 16 years and older were employed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Given that Latinos are less likely to have a college degree than Asians, Whites, and Blacks, their wage earnings are significantly impacted. Although Blacks suffer from higher unemployment rates than Latinos, when comparing all groups, Latino earnings are significantly lower. Averaging \$541 weekly earnings, Latinos earn 71% of wages earned by Whites (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). In addition, although unemployment rates between January 2007 and February 2012 peaked at 9.3% among Whites, Latino unemployment rates peaked at 13.1% in 2010 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). A common explanation for the disparity in employment rates between Latinos and Whites is the gap in educational attainment between these two groups. However, even when Latinos have completed at least a bachelor's degree, compared to Whites, Latinos are still observed to have a 2% higher unemployment rate (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Additionally, Latinos are overrepresented in industries losing jobs in the U.S.A., such as construction and manufacturing, but are underrepresented in the nation's fastest growing industries, including science and technology, government, education, and health services (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

**Immigration.** Immigration has immense implications for the relationship dynamics of Latino men and women. Through the process of migrating to the U.S.A., several circumstances drastically change the lives of immigrants and their relationship dynamics. Falicov (2010) described this as “gender renegotiations.” Many times, upon coming to the U.S.A., Latinas find increased employment opportunities, often in informal arrangements such as housekeepers, contributing to changes in the economic pattern in a relationship. This changing dynamic negatively impacts men’s role in their families, where they lose a substantial amount of power and leverage in the family context. At the exterior, issues of racism, discrimination and degradation also challenge Latino men’s perceptions of power and control. In turn, Latino men may experience a range of reactions to these drastic changes. One common reaction is to become more entrenched in “traditional” gender roles and efforts to maintain a semblance of power in intimate relationships (Falicov, 2010).

As a result of understanding various issues including incarceration, education, employment, and immigration, scholars are able to gain a more thorough understanding of the various factors contributing to the overall development of manhood for Mexican-American men. Pedro Noguera, New York University Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, remarked,

The dilemma faced by boys of color is not a Black problem, or a Latino problem, or some other community’s problem. It is not even an American problem; it is a global problem. It will take political and personal will and the best efforts of all of us to overcome the challenges posed by this truly human dilemma. (as cited in Hileman, Clark, & Hicks, 2012, p. 2)

Given the dearth of research and literature on the lived experiences of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A., this study aimed to highlight the diverse and unique experience of manhood among this population.

## Development of Men's Studies

Men are not born, growing from infants through boyhood to manhood, to follow a predetermined biological imperative, encoded in their physical organization. To be a man is to participate in social life as a man, as a gendered being. ... Our sex may be male, but our identity as men is developed through a complex process of interaction in which we both learn the gender scripts appropriate to our culture and attempt to modify those scripts to make them more palatable. (Kimmel & Messner, 1992, pp. 8–9)

In the 1970s, the subject of men and masculinity attracted much attention and gained force as an area of study (Fasteau, 1974; Farrell, 1975; Pleck, 1981; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974; Tolson, 1977). Men's studies were conceived as a result of the feminist critique that highlighted the erroneous assumption that all human development should be based on the male gender. The resulting men's studies focused on "the emasculation of patriarchal ideology's masquerade as knowledge" (Brod, 1987, p. 40). In an anthology related to the study of men, Kimmel and Messner (2013) described three models by which men and masculinity have been studied in the social sciences: (a) the biological model, (b) the anthropological model, and (c) the sociological model. The biological model compared innate biological differences that lead to varying social behaviors. Anthropological models studied masculinity cross-culturally and examined variations in behaviors and attributes of being a man. The more recent sociological models emphasized the role of gender socialization of boys and girls to accommodate a specific role according to one's biological sex.

The first-generation of research on men's studies produced significant scholarship examining traditional gender role prescriptions. In *The Male Machine*, Fasteau (1974) analyzed the costs to men's physical, psychological, and relationship health in adhering to a traditional male sex role. Tolson (1977) specifically advocated for "consciousness-raising" as an important element in challenging patriarchal notions about masculinity. A

defining piece of scholarship of this generation was Pleck's (1981) *The Myth of Masculinity*. Through analysis of the elements that constituted the traditional male sex role, Pleck posited the male "sex role strain." A major thesis of the sex-role strain was that the male sex role was an unattainable ideal.

Beginning in the 1980s, feminist scholarship once more surpassed research on men. Women scholars of color, such as Maxine Baca Zinn (1982), Angela Davis (1983), and bell hooks (1984), called attention to the dynamics of race in essentializing the experience of men, solely on the basis of gender. Thus, a second wave of research emerged pertaining to the different ways men from various social groups experienced masculinity. The unexamined assumption was that White, middle-class, heterosexual men defined masculinity, and any deviation from this "norm" was perceived as problematic. Therefore, by challenging the inherent power structure in this hierarchy, men's studies began to examine "masculinities: the ways in which different men construct different versions of masculinity" (Kimmel & Messner, 2013, p. xv). In *The Making of Masculinities*, Brod (1987) specifically asserted that men's studies should be specific to include the varying social-historical formations of masculinity.

While seemingly about men, traditional scholarship's treatment of generic man as the human norm in fact systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men [being] men. The overgeneralization from male to generic human experience not only distorts our understanding of what, if anything is truly generic humanity but also precludes the study of masculinity as a specific male experience, rather than a universal paradigm for human experience. The most general definition of men's studies is that it is the study of masculinities and male experiences as specific and varying social-historical-cultural formations. Such studies situate masculinities as objects of study on a par with femininities, instead of elevating them to universal norms. (p. 40)

## **Latino/Mexican-American Masculinity**

Among social scientists, many authors agree that *machismo* has long been synonymous with Latino masculinity (Arciniega et al., 2008; Beattie, 2002; De La Cancela, 1986, 1991; Gutmann, 1996; Mirandé, 1997; Mirandé, Pitones, & Díaz, 2011; Ramírez, 1999; Saez, Casado, & Wade, 2009; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Throughout the years, *machismo* has described traits of masculinity that are most often derogatory and pejorative (Falicov, 2010). The most common negative characteristics of *machismo* include violent, aggressive, domineering, authoritarian, self-centered, womanizing, fighting, drinking, hypermasculine, promiscuous, and emotionally restricted (Arciniega et al., 2008; Cervantes, 2006; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). More recently, several scholars emphasized positive qualities such as honor, nurturance, protecting the family, dignity, responsibility, hard-working, self-confident, bravery, family oriented, affectionate, and caring for the welfare of those less fortunate (Arciniega et al., 2008; Arredondo et al., 2014; Bitar, Kimball, Gee, & Bermúdez, 2008; Falicov, 2010, 2014).

Although studies have highlighted negative and positive facets of *machismo*, some researchers agree the concept lacks an operational definition, which has led to incomplete measurement and analysis, thereby limiting its applicability (Domenech-Rodriguez et al., n.d.; Felix-Ortiz et al., 2012; Saez et al., 2009). Furthermore, despite the rampant use and application of the concept of *machismo* to describe Mexican-American masculinity, few scholars provided a thorough explanation of the concept's origin or situated it in a historical context (Bitar, Kimball, Gee, & Bermúdez, 2008). The following section provides an explanation of the origin of the word *machismo* and how the concept

has evolved over time. Additionally, a historical context of the concept of *machismo* as it has been observed in Mexican culture is offered.

**Etymological roots of *machismo*.** Despite a plethora of texts using the concept of *machismo* to describe Mexican-American masculinity, theoreticians, such as Gutmann (1996) and Ramírez (1999), provided a critical deconstruction of the concept's development. Merriam Webster's online dictionary states the origin of the word *machismo* as Spanish, signifying "a strong sense of masculine pride, an exaggerated masculinity or an exaggerated or exhilarating sense of power or strength." However, Gutmann (1996) described the origins of *machismo* as Latin meaning "masculine" and Portuguese meaning "mule."

An examination regarding the use of words that describe Latinos and, by extension, men of Mexican heritage, is essential. Several authors provided a critical deconstruction of the terms *varon*, *hombre*, and *macho* (Bepko, Almeida, Messineo, & Stevenson, 1998; Falicov, 1998; Mirandé, 1997). *Varon* or male, in Spanish can be used to describe a male who exudes masculinity, is irresponsible, uncontrollable, and a womanizer. *Un hombre* or "a true man" is one who is protective of his woman and family, self-sacrificing, and respectful (Mirandé, 1997). Lastly, the use of the word *macho* to describe an aggressive, excessive drinking, disrespectful man who is denigrating to women is thought-provoking (Bepko et al., 1998). The word *macho* in the Spanish language is often used to describe male animals (*The Free Dictionary*, 2014). For example, a bull would be considered the "*macho*" in reference to the male version of a cow, whereas female animals are described as "*hembra*."



The word *macho* was not widely popular in Mexican folklore until the early 1940s following the presidency of Avila Camacho (1940–1946), in which Mexican songs and *corridos* (folk ballads) began to use the word *macho* to rhyme with *Camacho* (Mendoza, 1962). Similarly, De la Mora (2006) described the inception of the *macho* characters during the Golden era of Mexican cinema in the 1950s. In this era of Mexican cinema, a few characters were born; the Mexican *bandido* (bandit), a mythical character that donned a large sombrero, often drunk, carrying pistols, ready to fight to defend his honor or to attract the woman of his dreams (Falicov, 2010).

This era of Mexican cinema also portrayed another important character, the “*macho among machos*.” This character was the handsome *charro* (Mexican cowboy) often portrayed by Jorge Negrete. This actor portrayed a singing *charro*, who, often honorable, became a swaggering depiction of *Mexicanidad*. The *charro* character depicted a Mexican man as humble, honest, and hardworking.

The Mexican man also has been identified as the “noble man” (Falicov, 2010; Mirande, 1997). In contrast, the noble character has not received the same level of attention or popularity in U.S.A. media. Falicov (2010) provided a poignant explanation: “One might speculate whether this oversight is based on the need to reinforce the prejudice that all Latinos are uncontrollable ‘machos’ or perhaps, whether glamorizing the mean characters projects the dis-avowed masculine fantasies of American audiences” (p. 312).

Ramírez (1999) provided a thorough trail of various uses of the term *machismo*. Among the sources provided, Bermudez (1955) and Stycos (1955) are the most significant. The description provided by Bermudez (1955) defined *machismo* as the

tendency of Mexican men to hide any unconscious feminine tendencies. Through Bermudez's explanation, the concept of *machismo* continued to be analyzed as an intrapsychic phenomenon and devoid of any social, cultural, or historical context.

Similarly, upon conducting research in Puerto Rico in order to give recommendations for birth control programs and address lowering Puerto Rican birth rates, Stycos (1955) examined the sociocultural factors under which intercourse occurred. Participants included 322 Puerto Rican men answering questions referring to "how one shows they are a '*macho completo*' or a 'complete man'" and further, "How does one show it?" Results demonstrated that 79% of participants endorsed qualities such as honor, courage, and honesty; 39% also endorsed qualities related to sexuality and virility (Stycos, 1955).

Despite the abundance of positive qualities that were endorsed, Stycos's (1955) results emphasized that *machismo*, along with an over focus on the development of little men into males through "penis adulation," was a value of the lower class of Puerto Ricans. Ramírez (1999) provided a critique to this conclusion, stating that "penis adulation" is not only a value of the lower class of Puerto Rico, but of all classes. Hill, Stycos, and Back (1959) conducted further research to validate the "*machismo* complex" put forth by Stycos (1955) and concluded,

The alleged masculinity drives, which are supposed to lie behind the Puerto Rican male's opposition to family limitation, appear largely the figment of [the imagination of] novelists and others who have stereotyped all Puerto Rican men with the macho stamp. In Puerto Rico men are authoritarian, dominant, and distant, but not virility obsessed. (p. 375)

However, subsequent literature, such as Stevens (1973), contributed to the flawed basis on which our current understanding of Mexican-American masculinity and the concept of *machismo* are based. Stevens (1973) described the "cult of virility" as one that featured

aggressiveness, dominance, and concern with producing male offspring. From its inception, the concept of *machismo* has been partial and often erroneous when describing Mexican men's masculinity.

**Mirandé's alternative explanations of hypermasculinity.** Despite the ambiguous roots and meanings of the term *machismo*, Bitar et al. (2008) described Mirandé as “the leading scholar in examining masculinity in Latino culture” (p. 26). Mirandé (1997) provided a critical and historical examination of relevant geneses associated with the concept of *machismo*, which are presented in the following section.

***Hijos de la chingada.*** *Hijos de la Chingada* (Children of the Great Whore) is the first view presented by Mirandé (1997). This view is deeply seated within a negative and pathological context in reference to not only the conquest but also spiritual rape of Mexico by the Spanish. In *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Nobel laureate Octavio Paz (1961) explained that all resulting anxiety and tension can be captured in the phrase, “When anger, joy, enthusiasm cause us to exalt our condition as Mexicans: ‘¡Viva México, hijos de la chingada!’” (Long live México, children of the great whore!; p. 74). Paz (1961) described *La Chingada* as the metaphorical mother of all Mexicans, symbolizing the native women who were raped by the conquistadores. The *Gran Chingón* is the powerful and aggressive great *macho*—the *conquistador*. Mirandé (1997) further extended the sexual analogy, providing more context to describe the Mexican men's distrust of others “*para que no se lo chinguen*” (so that he is not fucked over). This explanation of *hijos de la chingada* assumes that the Mexican man experiences a sense of inferiority that needs to be counteracted by an overt, aggressive, and hypermasculine presentation of manhood. As further explicated by Mirandé, an additional note about the use of language is striking.

Mexican men, who are considered womanizers or *mujeriego*, also are referred to as *conquistadores* for their ability to conquer the hearts of women.

***Caballeros con huevos de oro.*** A second view to explain the genesis of *machismo* also implicated the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The expression *Caballeros con Huevos de Oro* (Men with Golden Balls) considers that the cult of *machismo* was introduced by the Spanish *conquistadores*. Like many aspects of the conquest, such as the spiritual conversion of the native peoples, authors such as Paz (1961) once more argued that the ideal of *machismo* and masculinity were a part of the *conquistadores*' worldview that they brought to the "New World." Paz (1961) claimed,

It is impossible not to notice the resemblance between the figure of the macho and that of the Spanish conquistador. It is the model—more mythical than real—that determines the images the Mexican people form of their men in power. ... They are all machos, chingones. (p. 82)

Therefore, the natives and their subsequent descendants sought to emulate the horsemen. The arrival of the Spaniards coincided with Aztec mythology that prophesized the arrival of the deity, Quetzalcóatl, which foretold the demise of the Aztec empire and would subsequently facilitate the overtaking of the Aztec people. The force, violence, and ruthlessness of the Spaniards were previously unseen by the Aztec empire before and were thus summoned as only the work of Gods (Mirandé, 1997). Thus, the Spaniards represented "fifty-foot caballeros with golden huevos."

***Pre-Columbian roots.*** The last view presented by Mirandé (1997) is that the patriarchal, warring, and territorial qualities of *machismo* were inherent in Aztec society. The Aztec empire was a great ruling nation in the history of the Americas. The Aztecs conquered and ruled many neighboring tribes, except for the Totonacas and Tlaxcaltecos, who subsequently assisted the Spaniards in conquering the Aztecs. Aztec men were first

and foremost warriors (Mirandé, 1997). The Aztec codices, such as the Florentine Codex, described social roles, vocations, and the moral philosophy of the people (Mirandé, 1997). Above all, Aztec men were considered warriors, and women's domain was defined by how well they performed their feminine and domestic duties. Nowhere was the role of men more engrained than in the lives of young boys. Their duty and role as men is summarized as follows:

Your true land is not here; you are promised everywhere, on the field where wars are waged, where battles are fought, you are to be sent there, your calling and duty is war, you are obliged to quench the sun's thirst with the blood of thine enemies and feed the earth ... with the bodies of thine adversaries. (Mirandé, 1997, p. 50)

However, an analysis of gender roles and relations in Aztec society focused solely on the principles of Aztecs being warriors is incomplete. The Aztec empire also was ruled by a strong sense of spirituality. Although the woman's domain focused on domestic duties, the Aztecs recognized women's ability to procreate as sacred. Therefore, women who died in the course of childbearing were revered as the equivalent of brave warriors and received a special kind of immortality (Mirandé, 1997). Furthermore, values such as fidelity strongly were upheld for both common people and members of nobility. The Aztecs also upheld strict codes about the overconsumption of *pulque* (an ancient alcohol beverage made from agave). *Pulque* was sacred and drinking to excess could result in being stoned or hung (Mirandé, 1997). Lastly, although the Aztec empire was hierarchical and patriarchal, the role women served, such as midwives, were held in high esteem. Women also contributed in the battlefield alongside men, and nowhere is the regard for women more palpable in the Aztec empire than in the area of spirituality. There were female goddesses and deities, such as Coatlicue, the "Lady of the Serpent Skirt" who was creator and destroyer of human life, and Tonantzín, an Indian goddess.

Each view presented by Mirandé (1997) provides significant merit in the historical context of the development of *machismo*. Current research promotes the view that current conceptualizations of *machismo* hold substantial resemblance to the European importation of manhood and manliness (Bitar et al., 2008; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Bitar and colleagues (2008) specifically agreed with the assertion of Paz (1961), highlighting an undeniable resemblance between the negative macho image of the Spanish conquistador and current mythical beliefs about Mexican-American masculinity.

### **Current Conceptualization of Mexican-American Masculinity**

The popular narrow denigrating depiction of Mexican-American men continues to be perpetuated in modern-day culture. Images of the drunken Mexican, *bandidos*, bandits, or cowboys shockingly still infiltrate the U.S.A.'s consciousness and popular media. For example, in October of 2012, students from major universities, such as Penn State University and Baylor University, publicized racist images from Halloween parties where students dressed up as Mexicans. The women of Chi Omega sorority at Penn State University posted photos on social media wearing sombreros, sarapes, dark, thick mustaches, dirty faces, and held signs stating, "Will mow lawn for weed and beer," and "I don't cut grass I smoke it" (Basu, 2012). Students at Baylor University donned similar attire, holding makeshift cardboard covered in green paint, with the words "green cards" inscribed. Additional photos included students climbing over a metal fence to represent Mexicans climbing over the Mexico-U.S.A. border. It is customary in social media to include captions, descriptions, and hashtags, and this photo included the following description, "Best entrance ever #lodge #mexicans #hoppinthe fence viva mexicooooo!!"

To fully understand the multifaceted experience of Mexican-American men living in the U.S.A., a critical examination of the complex sociocultural lives of this population

is necessary. Mexican-American men living in the U.S.A. experience unique social circumstances that contribute to the wide variety of hardships in their lives. What is most significant, despite the abundance of scholarly writing that describes, measures, and applies *machismo* to define Mexican and Mexican-American masculinity, is that little research and few empirical analyses adequately understand the meaning and experience of masculinity among men of Mexican heritage.

### **Empirical Research on Latino/Mexican-American Masculinity**

In the social sciences, scholars have produced substantial scholarship regarding the topic of Latino families (Arredondo et al., 2014; Baumann, Domenech-Rodriguez, & Parra-Cardona, 2011; Bermudez Parra-Cardona, Córdova, Holtrop, Villarruel, & Wieling, 2008; Falicov, 1998, 2014; Paniagua, 2014; Ramos-Sanchez & Atkinson, 2009; Rodriguez, Mira, Paez, & Myers, 2007; Santiago-Rivera, 2003; Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009; White, Roosa, Weaver, & Nair, 2009). However, authors agree that there is a lack of literature pertaining to Latino men and masculinity specifically (Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012). In the past decade, a burgeoning body of literature dedicated to examining Latino and Mexican-American manhood, explicitly, has emerged (Arciniega et al., 2008; Falicov, 2010; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012; Torres, Solberg, & Anderson, 2002). These studies underscore the heterogeneous experiences of masculinity among Mexican-American men, emphasizing the strength-based approach presented in the following section.

In a quantitative, cross-sectional study, Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) explored the construct of *machismo* as it relates to the measurement of *machismo*, masculinity, and gender-role identity. The goal of this study was to explore whether *machismo* could be conceived as a multidimensional construct and to what degree Latino

men subscribed to different types of masculinity, including *machismo*. Study participants included 148 Latino men who ranged in age from 18 to 81 years old, with an average age of 36. The ethnic compositions of these men were Mexican-American (39%), Puerto Rican (30%), Cuban, Central, and South American (15%), interethnic/mix (9%), and American (7%). Although 38 (26%) participants did not report their place of birth, the remaining participants varied in birthplace. Almost half, 45%, were born in the U.S.A., 11.5% migrated from Puerto Rico, 9% immigrated from Mexico, 5.5% from South America, and 3% from Central America. Of participants, 46% were married and 25% had never been married. However, the study did not report the marital status of the remaining 29%. Additional demographic characteristics reported included that 55% earned below \$30,000, 16% did not finish high school, and 37% had completed college. Moreover, 95% of the study's participants identified as heterosexual, whereas 5% identified as homosexual or bisexual.

Participants completed three questionnaires pertaining to masculinity, gender roles, and acculturation (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). The short form Personal Attribute Questionnaire is a 24-item scale that measures the psychological dimension of masculinity and femininity. Participants rated on a 5-point Likert scale the traits meant to differentiate the sexes (e.g., assertiveness, independence, competitiveness, warmth, and devotion). The Macho Scale, a 28-item instrument, measured personality correlates of *machismo*. Using a Likert scale, participants indicated the level of disagreement or agreement on themes related to work roles and responsibilities for women, career choices, and parental responsibilities between men and women, as well as expectations of marital roles in public.



The Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS 1) also was used as a part of the study. The GRCS 1 is a 37-item measure to assess personal dimensions of gender-role patterns. This scale defines “a pattern of gender role conflict as a psychological state arising from the inherently contradictory and unrealistic messages found within and across the standards of masculinity” (Thompson & Pleck, 1995, p. 150) The GRCS 1 has been translated to Spanish and used with Latino men (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002).

The last instrument measuring *machismo* administered was the Mirandé Sex-Role Inventory (MSRI). This instrument was normed on a sample of Latino men and created by statements based on *dichos* (cultural sayings), *consejos* (advice), *cuentos* (stories), and *corridos* (folk ballads). Statements on the MSRI are reported to reflect traditional Latino values pertaining to the role of men and women in Latino society. The four major categories of the MSRI include (a) a double sexual standard for men and women, (b) the idea that man is or should be the dominant figure in the home, (c) the importance of maintaining honor and integrity in the family, and (d) toughness and the notion that men should be tough and not cry or be too emotional (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002).

Lastly, Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) administered the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics. The Short Acculturation Scale is a self-report scale. The scale evaluates Latinos adherence to American society through themes such as English-language proficiency, preference for language, and preferred ethnicity of people with whom to interact.

Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) suggested that Latino men subscribed to a multidimensional concept of *machismo* that included positive and negative elements, formerly thought to be mutually exclusive. An additional finding from this study was the

nonsignificant relationship observed between acculturation and gender-role identity, which others had previously hypothesized (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). A primary hypothesis of prior studies was that more acculturated individuals would be least likely to reinforce traditional conceptions of *machismo*. Additionally, a small subset of participants supported the traditional stereotypical views of *machismo* as male dominance and female submission.

Further, a cluster analysis supported the multidimensionality of *machismo* and masculinity. Subsequent patterns emerged into the following five groups:

(a) contemporary masculinity, (b) *machismo*, (c) traditional *machismo*, (d) conflicted/compassionate *machismo*, and (e) contemporary *machismo*.

1. Contemporary masculinity meant having characteristics such as being family-oriented, endorsing collaborative gender roles, and acting cooperatively and harmoniously with a perceived harmony with life roles. The majority of the individuals in this group were Mexican-American men. Overall, the contemporary masculinity group demonstrated a more egalitarian perspective than traditional men and was less geared toward individualism. The entire ethnic composition of this group was not reported.
2. *Machismo* meant demonstrating lower levels of traditional *machismo* but demanding family respect and obedience. Participants also reported more empathy, emotional expression, and sensitivity, but showed some conflict with life roles. This was the largest group, represented by mostly Mexican-American and Puerto Rican men.

3. Traditional *machismo* meant reinforcing negative views of *machismo* and traditional views of men and women, while remaining less emotionally expressive. Five Mexican-American and six Puerto Rican men comprised this group.
4. Conflicted/Compassionate *machismo* comprised four Mexican-Americans, five Puerto Ricans, and two South Americans. Although the characteristics for this group included being authoritarian, demanding, and subscribing to traditional views of gender roles, it also included being kind and thoughtful. Conflicted male identities were dominant in this group, as group members attempted to meet cultural, relational, and societal life roles.
5. Contemporary *machismo* provided similar characteristics as its traditional counterpart in the areas of authoritarianism, gender roles, and a demand for respect and obedience. Although this category demonstrated lower empathy, higher emotional expressiveness, and increased sensitivity, this group also reported lower conflictual life roles while effectively balancing work, family, and societal demands. The patterns in this group suggested having a strong connection to family that is less dominant, while remaining emotionally expressive, allowing for an effective blend of masculinity.

Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) advocated that binary cultural comparisons between liberal gender relations in the U.S.A. and *machista* relations in Latin America be challenged. They posited that conventional conceptualizations and measures of gender-role identity might have limited applicability to Latino populations. Given such results of the multidimensionality of this construct, *machismo* should be conceptualized in a

framework of positive and negative qualities. Moreover, when described in its ethnic and cultural context, Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) concluded that *machismo* can be seen as a “normative cultural value and set of behavioral indicators that define public and private gender roles and family relationships for Latino men” (p. 175).

Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) also espoused several recommendations for those working with Latino men. First, the authors suggested that adopting a feminist or social-constructionist perspective when working with Latino men would allow practitioners to consider the importance of historical, social, structural, economic, and political elements that help shape gender roles. The researchers also suggested the importance of being knowledgeable about the changing demographics of Latino men. A cluster analysis produced significant patterns of *machismo* based on the ethnic and generational makeup of participants. Finally, the authors recommended further research to deconstruct meanings of *machismo* in the context of cultural values, such as familism and *respeto* (Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002).

Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, and Tracey (2008) conducted a cross-sectional, quantitative study to construct a measure (The *Machismo* Measure) that best represented the construct of *machismo* and to further explore its relationship to psychological well-being among Mexican-American men. Support and evidence for The *Machismo* Measure was developed through two studies with Mexican-American men. Participants for Study 1 consisted of 154 men of Mexican heritage. The average age of participants was 32.3 years old, and they had a range of educational attainment: 29 participants had a high school degree or less, compared to 85 with some college, 19 who had a bachelor’s degree, and 21 who had some graduate training. The majority (73%) of

participants were born in the U.S.A., and 56% learned to speak Spanish first, but (55%) preferred to speak English. The researchers provided all questionnaires in English.

Study 1 results showed the development of a *Machismo* Measure and demonstrated construct validity in emotional connectedness, antisocial behaviors, and psychological well-being (Arciniega et al., 2008). The results of Study 1 produced a shorter measure of the *Machismo* Measure comprised of two subscales: Traditional *Machismo* and *Caballerismo*. The subscale of Traditional *Machismo* can be described as aggressive, sexist, chauvinistic, and hypermasculine. The authors recommended that the construct *caballerismo* be associated with the positive representations of *machismo* promoted by many scholars (Casas, Wagenheim, Banchemo, & Mendoza-Romero, 1994; Mirandé, 1997). Thus, *caballerismo* described the elements of *machismo* that are connected to nurturing, protection of the family and its honor, hard work, social responsibility, and emotional connectedness (Arciniega et al., 2008).

The results of Study 1 demonstrated that antisocial behaviors, such as number of arrests and fights, significantly correlated with Traditional *Machismo*, but not *Caballerismo* (Arciniega et al., 2008). Further, aggressive male traits significantly correlated with Traditional *Machismo*, but not *Caballerismo*. Satisfaction in life was not correlated with Traditional *Machismo*, but rather with *Caballerismo*. Lastly, emotional connectedness positively correlated with *Caballerismo*, but not with Traditional *Machismo*.

Study 2 assumed that the *Machismo* Measure could be used with the two constructs of Traditional *Machismo* and *Caballerismo* to produce results for variables such as ethnic identity, alexithymia, coping styles, and well-being. Participants in Study 2

included 477 Latino men, of which 403 were of Mexican heritage and 74 were Latino, non-Mexican. For Mexican participants, the average age was 31 years old, and 84% were born in the U.S.A. compared to 15% in Mexico. Of Mexican participants, 60% were single, 30% were married, 5% divorced, and 5% lived with a partner. The sexual orientation of participants was not identified. In educational attainment, 2% had a grade school education, 33% high school, 12% an associate degree, 24% a bachelor's degree, 19% a master's degree, and 10% higher degrees. Of Mexican participants, 45% learned English first and 71% preferred to speak English (Arciniega et al., 2008).

For Latino, non-Mexican participants, 29% identified as Puerto Rican compared to 22% Cuban, 27% Central American, and 23% South American. The average age of these participants was 32 years old, and 54% were single, 35% married, 4% divorced, and 7% were living with a partner. The sexual orientation of participants was not identified. The educational attainment of Latino, non-Mexican participants was 18% high school graduates, 6% associate's degree, 27% bachelor's degree, 23% master's degree, and 26% professional degree. Lastly, 60% learned Spanish first, but most preferred to speak English (66%; Arciniega et al., 2008).

Arciniega et al. (2008) found several correlations in Study 2. Higher Traditional *Machismo* aligned with more arrests, more fights, greater alcohol consumption, greater alexithymia, greater use of wishful thinking as a coping style, less sense of ethnic identity, and less other-group thinking. *Caballerismo* aligned with greater problem-solving coping styles, greater sense of ethnic identity, and greater other-group orientation. Neither Traditional *Machismo* nor *Caballerismo* aligned with satisfaction of life.

Arciniega et al. (2008) also reported an analysis of variance of Traditional *Machismo* and *Caballerismo* with selected demographic variables. Participants who preferred to speak Spanish scored higher on Traditional *Machismo* than the English-speaking or both-languages group. However, Spanish speakers also scored high on *Caballerismo* along with the both-languages group, compared to English only. No differences emerged for Traditional *Machismo* among country of birth, but those born in Mexico did score higher on *Caballerismo* than those born in the U.S.A. Those with lower educational attainment scored higher on Traditional *Machismo* but no differences emerged related to *Caballerismo*. Similarly, those under 30 years old had higher scores on Traditional *Machismo*, but there were no difference related to *Caballerismo*.

The significant finding from this article was the development of the *Machismo* Measure. Given that items and statements related to negative and positive aspects of *machismo* can be interrelated, the development of this scale was momentous. The process of creating such a scale centered on the population it sought to examine: Mexican-American men. As described earlier by Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002), traditional measurements of gender-role identity and masculinity have limited applicability to Latino men. Another benefit of having significant variance in the two subscales was that participants could score high on Traditional *Machismo* and still score high on the subscale *Caballerismo*. The creation of the *Machismo* Measure was a meaningful contribution to the future study of masculinity and Mexican-American men.

Saez et al. (2009) conducted a study examining the role of factors such as ethnic identity, gender socialization, and adherence to male identity in Latino men's observance of masculine ideology. Hypermasculinity among Latinos is an "exaggerated form of

traditional masculinity ideology” (Saez et al., 2009, p. 116). Study participants were 101 Latino men. The average age of participants was 22.9 years old, and 60% were undergraduate students. The majority of participants (32%) were of Dominican Republic descent, 30% were of Cuban descent, and 18% were of Puerto Rican descent. The remaining participants included those with backgrounds from Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Additionally, the majority (73%) of participants were born in the U.S.A. Saez et al. used the Hypermasculinity Inventory to measure adherence to hypermasculinity, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure to measure ethnic identity, the Traditional Egalitarian Sex Role Scale to measure gender-role socialization, and the Reference Group Identity Dependence Scale to measure participants’ adherence to male identity.

This study demonstrated that participants who strongly identified with their ethnic identity also endorsed attitudes and behaviors related to an exaggerated form of traditional masculinity (Saez et al., 2009). This outcome partially supported the results of Arciniega et al. (2008) related to *caballerismo*. Another finding established a strong relationship between gender-role socialization and hypermasculinity. The authors concluded that the home environment was a powerful socializing agent in the lives of Latino men regarding gender role norms. Ethnic identity and gender-role socialization contributed to Latinos’ adherence to gender-role stereotypes, whereas identifying with a male reference group did not (Saez et al., 2009).

In a comparison quantitative study, Mirandé, Pitones, and Díaz (2011) examined whether *machismo* ideology was a class-based phenomenon. The study compared two groups of Chicano men, consisting of immigrant day laborers (DLG) who were less



educated and worked low-wage jobs and a group of nonimmigrant men who worked in the primary labor market (PLG) and had more education. The DLG sample had 37 participants with an average age of 32. Participants in the DLG reported a mean household income between \$5,000 and \$10,000; one participant (2.7%) reported an income between \$30,000 and \$35,000, and 15 participants (41%) earned under \$5,000. Of the DLG, 89% reported Mexico as their country of origin, whereas the remaining participants were from Central America. The average number of years that DLGs were in the U.S.A. was 5.6. Almost half (46%) of DLG participants attended the equivalent of elementary school, 35% attended middle school, and 11% attended high school. One participant reported not having any educational experiences, and two participants reached the university level. The majority (60%) of DLGs was married and had an average of three children (Saez et al., 2009).

Saez et al. (2009) compared DLG participants to the original sample from Mirandé's (1997) study, identified as the PLG sample. To summarize, 105 participants comprised the PLG and had an average age of 39. Similar to the DLG, 93% were foreign born from Mexico. However, in contrast to the DLG, 33% had less than a high school education, 22% had some college, and 45% attended 4 years of college or more. Researchers administered the MSRI to both groups, as previously described.

The comparison of DLG and PLG participants is relevant in understanding whether the principal characteristics of *machismo* previously described as male dominance, aggression, authoritarianism, promiscuity, and dominance over women could be best understood as a class-based phenomenon or a true cultural value, cutting across all social-class levels among Mexican men (Mirandé et al., 2011). The findings from this

study contributed to the hypothesis that individuals who were less educated, immigrants, and had lower wage jobs would subscribe to more traditional *machismo*. The DLG endorsed items on the MSRI, such as a woman should always “honor and respect her man,” “honor and obey,” and that “men should always defend the family honor.” Comparatively, the PLG who had higher educational levels and higher paying jobs endorsed a more non-traditional conceptualization of masculinity. The PLG endorsed more items that saw men’s and women’s roles as equal, that marriage is an equal arrangement, and that men should help with childcare and the household (Saez et al., 2009).

Despite similarity between the two groups regarding their level of endorsement for items such as “a woman should always be faithful to her husband,” the PLG additionally endorsed items such as “a man should always be faithful to his wife,” whereas the DLG demonstrated a 73% discrepancy between the two items (Mirandé et al., 2011). Therefore, DLG participants adhered to a double standard on these items. A few outlying findings from this study were that fewer DLG participants endorsed that a woman should always be faithful to her husband: 84% compared to 95% of PLG. DLG participants also were more likely (20%) to endorse that it was somewhat natural for women to fool around, compared to only 8% of PLG (Saez et al., 2009).

Hurtado and Sinha (2008) conducted one of the only qualitative investigations specifically focused on Latino masculinity. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which participants, who were self-identified feminists, identified with their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class background. A secondary research question explored “How do participants apply their consciousness as feminists and working class

men in subjectively defining what it means to be a man?” Six of the interviews were conducted in a focus group, and 30 were individual interviews. The overarching interview question participants answered was, “What does manhood mean to you?” The interviews were transcribed, and a thematic analysis was performed to identify themes in the data.

This study derived its participants from a larger study (Hurtado & Sinha, 2006), that examined a wide range of variables, such as early adolescence, dating, sexuality, gender, relationships with parents, political participation, and educational achievement among 105 Latino men who identified as feminists. However, Hurtado and Sinha (2008) only examined the gender portion of interviews among those who also identified as working class or poor. This study included 36 participants: 16 currently enrolled undergraduate students; seven college graduates with bachelor’s degrees; four currently enrolled master’s students; one who had completed a master’s degree; six doctoral students; and one medical student not currently enrolled in school. The majority (72%) of participants were of Mexican descent, 4% were of Puerto Rican descent, 2% were of Central American descent, 7% of South American descent, and 15% identified as mixed ancestry. The average age of participants was 25 years old; 30 of the participants were born in the U.S.A., and 6 were born in Latin America. Of participants in this study, 33 identified as heterosexual and three identified as gay. Most participants were single ( $n = 34$ ), one was married with children, and one was married without children.

Hurtado and Sinha (2008) examined the frequency with which participants identified their social identities such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality during their interview about feminism and manhood. The authors conducted a content analysis to

identify the frequency with which participants identified with these main areas. All participants ( $n = 36$ ) mentioned their racial social group during the interview ranging from 1–14 times, with a median of four mentions. Ethnicity was mentioned 1–15 times by 32 of the participants and had the highest average number (six) of mentions. The range of mentions for social class was 1–11 with a median number of two among 22 participants. Sexuality was mentioned by eight participants only, ranging from 1–9 times and held a median of two mentions. The findings regarding sexuality were consistent with prior research, suggesting that the experience of masculinity among gay or bisexual identified Latino males is still missing from the literature (Arciniega et al., 2008; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002).

Participants' answers to the open-ended question, "What does manhood mean to you?" were coded based on prior studies addressing feminist men's views of masculinity (Christian, 1994; Cornish, 1999; Vicario, 2003; White, 2008). The four major coding schemes were relational definition, positive ethical positioning, definitions based in political action, and rejecting hegemonic masculinity. However, the coding scheme "definitions based in political action" was not endorsed by participants and was dropped from analysis (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008).

"Relational definitions" included themes that emphasized relationships with family, community, and other groups of people as part of the definition of manhood (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008). Of participants, 18 mentioned this category. An example of this category was,

The word manhood, it's when ... our mind matures enough that you start thinking as a grown adult. ... It's a person who from now on instead of thinking about himself is someone who starts thinking about repercussions about his actions for his family and for [his] community. (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, p. 345)

“Positive ethical positionings” included themes that emphasized individuals taking an ethical stand in life and exhibiting values such as respect, being truthful, respecting oneself enough to have confidence in one’s own decisions and identity as a man, and pursuing education to become a better person (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008); 22 participants demonstrated this category. An example of this category was: “manhood would be to work hard to respect people ... [and] was a commitment to viewing everyone as equals and honoring people as people and emphasizing their ‘humanhood’” (p. 346).

Lastly, “rejecting hegemonic masculinity” included themes that explicitly critiqued dominant definitions of manhood, including equating manhood with biological sex and instead valuing an individual’s personhood regardless of gender, rejecting dominance and patriarchy, and openly emphasizing positive characteristics to counteract the negative aspects of masculinity (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008); 14 participants mentioned this category. One participant stated, “manhood to me doesn’t mean heterosexual, educated man. ... It could also mean gay, White or whatever” (p. 346).

Bitar, Kimball, Gee, and Bermudez (2008) also conducted a qualitative study related to masculinity and Mexican-American men. A key distinguishing feature of this qualitative phenomenological study was its focus on a sample of 10 Mexican-American men who were on federal probation. Although the researchers did not provide demographic information of participants, participants had to meet the following inclusion criteria: “able to provide informed consent, self-identified as ‘male,’ self-identified as ‘Hispanic-Mexican-origin,’ currently on federal probation and engaged in individual counseling services at SWAID” (Southwest Institute for Addictive Diseases; Bitar et al., 2008, p. 35). Conducting 60–90 minute interviews, the researchers explored questions

such as “What does ‘being a man’ mean to you? Who taught you how to be a man and how? How have you learned to express your thoughts and feelings as a man?” (Bitar et al., 2008, p. 35). The researchers conducted follow-up interviews with seven participants to clarify themes and deepen their understanding of the phenomena. Bitar et al. (2008) conducted data analysis following steps outlined by Colaizzi (1978).

The main finding of this study was that participants reported improving their lives by moving away from negative to more positive traits of masculinity (Bitar et al., 2008). Participants identified their family as the primary motivator for their change. An additional finding was focused on gaining the respect of their family members instead of defining being a man through material terms. Based on participants’ responses, the authors proposed a revised approach to Mirandé’s (1997) negative and positive *macho* traits associated with Mexican-American masculinity.

Lastly, Bitar et al. (2008) provided general questions to promote the discussion of masculinity with Mexican-American men and specific questions pertaining to the revised continuum. One area of revision included the “focus on material possessions” to a “focus on family.” The related discussion questions follow: How important are material possessions to how you view yourself as a man? How about family? What is healthy focus on material possessions and what is unhealthy? Which gives you more satisfaction? Why?

Hammond and Mattis (2005) conducted another closely related study that explored African American men’s written responses to the question, “What does manhood mean for you?” The authors took data for this study from a larger study conducted by Mattis et al. (2000) that administered quantitative surveys on social support,

existential well-being, spirituality, depressive symptoms, friendships quality, manhood, and physical-health status. Qualitative components of the Mattis et al. (2000) study explored questions about the meaning of manhood, parental influences on manhood, and significant shifts in the meaning of manhood that may have occurred. Therefore, Hammond and Mattis (2005) exclusively examined the written responses of the open-ended question pertaining to manhood. Participants included 152 African Americans with an average age of 31 years, most (58%) with some college courses, 13% with a college degree, and 16% with a professional degree. An overwhelming majority of the sample (78%) reported being single with a median income of \$50,000–\$59,999.

Through content analysis, participants responded in 15 categories. Given the method of content analysis to explore the responses, participants could endorse more than one meaning. The most frequently endorsed (48.7%) response was the category, “responsibility-accountability.” Hammond and Mattis (2005) defined this category as, “Taking, handling, or being aware of one’s responsibility to oneself, family, and other; being accountable for one’s actions, thoughts, and behaviors” (p. 120). Hammond and Mattis further organized the results into four overall themes. First, African American men defined manhood as an interconnected state of being in the context of God, themselves, family, community, and others. Second, participants’ definitions of manhood were categorized as a fluid process. Third, participants defined manhood as a redemptive process, and lastly, as a proactive course. The theme of “manhood as an interconnected state of being” explored the notion that African American men defined manhood as interconnectedness between self, family, and others (Hammond & Mattis, 2005). The

findings that underscored the emotional connections with family challenged dominant themes of hegemonic masculinity as it is understood in the U.S.A.

### **Summary**

The recent scholarship pertaining to Latino and Mexican masculinity demonstrated positive strides toward a multidimensional view of masculinity. Studies began to critique the negative qualities of *machismo* to represent the overgeneralized representation of Latino masculinity. In particular, studies conducted by Torres, Solberg, and Carlstrom (2002) and Arciniega et al. (2008) provided a basis to support the deconstruction of the multiple meanings of *machismo* and varied experiences of masculinity.

Most notably, The *Machismo* Measure (Arciniega et al., 2008) provided an exemplary tool for future studies of Latino masculinity. The *Machismo* Measure allows future studies to simultaneously examine positive and negative qualities associated with *machismo*. This measure's ability to demonstrate that Latino men can be influenced by patriarchal notions of *machismo*, while also upholding strong familial values such as honor, respect, and caring for women and children, challenges unidimensional views of Latino men.

Studies that failed to explore both positive and negative qualities associated with Latino and Mexican masculinity will continue to perpetuate traditionally held notions regarding Latino masculinity (Saez et al., 2009). Such studies are significant to an overall understanding of Latino masculinity. However, researchers should be cautious when administering measurement instruments that were not created or normed on Latino men. In addition, results from these studies should be discussed in the context of the tools and



concepts that were originally used to conduct research, that is, hypermasculinity not *machismo*.

Given the existence of reliable and valid measures (Arciniega et al., 2008) normed on Latino men, studies examining Latino masculinity would be best suited to use such measures. In addition, employing a qualitative research design in examining Latino masculinity further will enhance understanding of the multitudinous ways masculinity can be experienced and understood. Qualitative studies, such as those conducted by Hurtado and Sinha (2008), Hammond and Mattis (2005), and Bitar et al. (2008), provide a needed critical perspective in the field of masculinity studies. Previously, no qualitative studies explored the in-depth meanings and experiences of masculinity among first-generation, college-educated Mexican-American men. Thus, this study fills the empirical gap, capturing the meaning and experiences of this population.

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Methodology

I used heuristic inquiry, as a systematic and organized form of investigating human experience, to explore the research questions: How do college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men define and create meaning of their lived experiences of masculinity? A relevant subquestion was, How do participants derive meaning from the interconnectedness of their academic success, ethnicity, and masculinity? Moustakas (1990) is considered the primary developer of heuristic inquiry and described the Greek meaning of heuristic as “to discover” or “to find.” A distinguishing tenet of heuristic inquiry is that it “brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). Therefore, researchers must have personal experience with the phenomena and an intense interest in the experience being studied. An essential question answered by researchers through heuristic inquiry is, “What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?” (Patton, 2001). Authors Douglass and Moustakas (1985) delineated the scope of heuristic inquiry as concerned with meanings, essence, quality, and experience.

Although heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) is similar to phenomenology, it differs in significant ways. Phenomenology encourages researchers to produce a detached standpoint from the phenomena being studied. By exploring participants’ lived experiences, phenomenology produces the essence of a phenomenon and does not highlight individual voices of participants (Moustakas, 1990). In contrast, heuristic inquiry provides the essence of phenomena while explicating unique depictions of individual experiences in the phenomena. According to Moustakas, heuristic researchers seek to understand the wholeness and unique patterns of experience. Therefore, heuristic

inquiry retains the essence of the person in the experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Heuristic research brings to the forefront the researcher's personal experience and connectedness with the phenomena. Although heuristic inquiry also leads to the depiction of essential meanings, this process also includes the researcher's own personal significance. Heuristic inquiry concludes with a creative synthesis of the essence of participants' experiences in addition to the researcher's tacit knowing.

Given that the experience of the researcher is a significant aspect of heuristic inquiry, the self of the researcher is essential throughout the scientific inquiry. In addition to understanding a phenomenon in-depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Moustakas (1990) described the heuristic process as a "return to self" (p. 13). The process requires a steady gaze inward and deeper understanding of the phenomena under study. Through shared reflection and mutual inquiry with participants, the researcher develops a connectedness to participants in an effort to elucidate the nature, meaning, and essence of the particular experience (Patton, 2002). It is the connectedness required in heuristic inquiry between the researcher, what is researched, and its participants that bridges "the illusory gap between researcher and researched and between the knower and what is known" (Etherington, 2004, p. 32).

Although I did not have direct experience of the phenomena under investigation, that is, the experience of manhood, I had a direct and personal relationship with first-generation Mexican-American college-educated men and shared significant social identities related to the experience of participants, especially given my personal experience as a first-generation Mexican-American. Furthermore, I possess an "intense interest" in understanding the lived experience of Mexican-American men growing up in

a Mexican-American family in the U.S.A. (Patton, 2002, p. 107). In addition, the usage of heuristic inquiry in this study is compatible with the theoretical frameworks of Chicana feminism that places Chicana/os life experience at its center (Lucero-Lui & Christensen, 2009). Consequently, applying the tenets of heuristic inquiry alongside the theoretical frameworks of Chicana feminism and symbolic interactionism allowed for an in-depth, first-hand account of the meaning and experiences of manhood among college-educated, first-generation Mexican-Americans.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Several themes in Chicana feminism made this framework suitable for this study. The themes include placing Chicana life experiences at its center, multiplicity, borderlands, sense of agency, oppression due to minority status and socioeconomic class, and recognizing gender oppression in Chicanos. The first theme is foundational and places Chicana life experiences at its center (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). This theme emphasizes that Chicanas' experiences are valid and of value. Given the marginalization of Chicanas' experiences in history and in the social sciences, centering the experiences of Chicana life is the primary goal of Chicana feminism (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009).

Multiplicity is the second theme of Chicana feminism, which draws attention to the vast diversity that exists among women of Mexican origin (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). Given the various systems of discrimination based on race, class, immigration status, acculturation, language usage, sexual orientation, and age, multiplicity promotes the idea that the lives of Chicana women are experienced differently based on the intersections of their social locations (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). This notion is similar to Patricia Hill Collins' notion of the "matrix of domination" (1990). More

importantly, both Hill Collins' matrix and Chicana feminism highlight that each attribute cannot be measured separately.

A distinct characteristic of Chicana feminism is that it addresses the issues of borders. The unique concept of borders is often associated with Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) borderlands theory. When used in a figurative manner, it describes the confluence of two cultures: the culture in the U.S.A and the one in Mexico. This often leads to Chicanas having contradictory and confusing messages about cultural homage. Anzaldúa provided a vivid description of the complexity inherent in "the borderlands:"

The U.S.-Mexican border es una herida abierta [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture. ... A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. (p. 3)

Research addressing the specific needs of immigrant Latino/a students depicts a popular Latino cultural saying that is quintessentially a byproduct of living in the borderlands:

*"No soy ni de aqui, ni de alla"* (I am neither from here, nor there) (Parra-Cardona, Busby, & Wampler, 2004).

Agency is the fourth theme of Chicana feminism. The theme of agency highlights and honors the many ways Chicanas have been subversive in the face of much oppression. Lucero-Liu and Christensen (2009) described this theme: "Depictions of passive, fatalistic women are a far cry from the reality of many Chicanas, now and through history. Throughout the history of the U.S.A, Chicanas have demonstrated their strength and resilience against systems and acts of oppression" (p. 99). Thus, Chicanas' ability to actively resist forces of oppression relies on sources of strength and resilience.

The fifth theme of Chicana feminism focuses on the oppression of Chicanas due to their minority status and socioeconomic class (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). This theme centers on the harsh realities that plague the Chicano community. Sociocultural forces, such as having the lowest high school graduation rate, being less likely to have a college degree, being more likely to be living in poverty, having a lack of health care, seeing the need for bilingual education, and the highly controversial immigration debate are among the few patterns of concern (Lucero-Liu & Christensen). Chicanas also recognize that many sociocultural issues that impact the lives of Chicanas also impact the Mexican community at large. Specifically, Chicanas acknowledge the ways Chicano men also are discriminated against, stating, “Mexican-origin men also experience oppression and may be disenfranchised due to their experiences with power relations and social structures” (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009, p. 99). The final theme of Chicana feminism acknowledges the gender oppression that Chicanas face, not only in the society at large but also within their communities (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009).

Chicana feminist authors have brought to the fore the experience of Mexican-American women; authors have not developed an equivalent theory pertaining to Mexican-American men. Whereas patriarchy and male domination exist, Mexican-American men often have been seen as a source of oppression and domination over Mexican-American women. A critical analysis of the social location of Mexican-American men would lead the reader to understand that, although Mexican-American men might benefit from unquestioned male privilege, these men are also the bearers of extreme hardships due to racial and ethnic discrimination. Arellano and Ayala-Alcantar (2004) recognized that

power relations and social structures disenfranchise Chicanos, in particular, young boys and older, poor, disable, immigrant, undocumented, and gay or bisexual men. We believe that it is critical to include Chicanos as subjects of study and as partners in the development of a new theory in Chicana/o psychology. (p. 219)

Applying a heuristic inquiry model to this research investigation heeds the call of several scholars (Baca-Zinn, 1982; Hurtado & Cervantes, 2009; Hurtado & Sinha, 2006, 2008; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012) to address the lack of knowledge regarding Mexican-American men's meaning and experiences of manhood. Not only do Mexican-American men's experiences need to be revealed, understood, and made visible, but it is vital they be placed at the center of our attention and analysis to best spotlight the complexity of the experiences and meanings of manhood for Mexican-American men.

### **Processes of Heuristic Inquiry**

Several processes and phases are essential to heuristic inquiry. The processes include self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). The processes and phases pertinent to a heuristic inquiry methodology are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

**Self-dialogue.** Self-dialogue allows researchers to become one with what they are seeking to know; self-dialogue relates to the notion that researchers must have a personal experience or intense interest in the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1990). Self-dialogue is the process by which researchers allow the phenomenon to speak to their experiences, be questioned by it, examine it, and engage in a recurring ebb and flow to best understand its possible meanings. Moustakas referenced this process as the “critical beginning,” where researchers must start with themselves. The process of self-dialogue also requires the researcher to be open to “one's own experiences, trust in one's self-

awareness and understanding, an internal locus of evaluation, and a willingness to enter into a process rooted in the self” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 17). In being open to one’s experience, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) also stressed the value of self-disclosure. The authors underscored the importance of self-disclosure as a process by which to invite participants to spark their own form of self-disclosure.

**Tacit knowing.** Tacit knowing is a foundational tenet of heuristic inquiry described as one’s ability to receive more information than one is readily aware one has. Moustakas refers to tacit knowing as “knowing more than we can tell” (p. 20). It is similar to general-systems theory or the cybernetics notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Bertalanffy, 1968). Through tacit knowing, one is able to get a sense of the wholeness simply by knowing individual qualities or parts (Moustakas, 1990). It is the tacit dimension that guides the researcher into untapped sources of meaning and is known as the basic capacity of the self of the researcher (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985).

**Intuition.** Intuition is a critical element of heuristic inquiry serving as a bridge between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge, described as tacit knowing (Moustakas, 1990). Through the intuitive process, “one draws on clues; one senses a pattern or underlying condition that enables one to imagine and then characterize the reality, state of mind, or condition” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 23). The intuitive process is important throughout the heuristic inquiry methodology, as it allows the researcher to adjust the inquiry based on obtaining essential meanings of the phenomenon. Intuition additionally facilitates the researcher’s capacity to formulate questions and identify patterns that aim to lead to deepened knowledge and meanings.



**Indwelling.** Indwelling is a conscious and deliberate process researchers undertake to facilitate self-knowledge as well as knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher must turn inward to seek a deeper, extensive understanding of the meaning of the human experience. Indwelling involves a “willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some facet of human experience in order to understand its constituent qualities and its wholeness” (Moustakas, p. 24). Indwelling is particularly important during the explication phase of heuristic research. The explication process demands reflective analysis of the researcher and phenomenon that ultimately leads to the creative synthesis and meanings of the experience.

**Focusing.** Focusing is a process for researchers to clear space in their minds. This process will allow researchers to tap into feelings and thoughts to assist in identifying and elucidating the parts associated with core themes of the phenomenon. Focusing can be understood as a process that facilitates researchers’ ability to be relaxed and enter into a receptive state that can facilitate their perceptions or intuition to achieve greater clarity of the essence of the experience.

**Internal frame of reference.** Given that heuristic inquiry requires a researcher to have a direct experience with the phenomenon under study, the internal frame of reference is an essential process of this methodology. This process necessitates researchers continuously exploring their personal experiences, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and senses that lead them to valid portrayals of the experience they are examining (Moustakas, 1990). Researchers’ abilities to recognize their own perceptions, thoughts, feelings, or senses facilitate participants’ ability to explore, express, and explicate their meanings of their experiences. The concepts of self-dialogue, tacit

knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and internal frame of reference are the foundational processes of heuristic inquiry research methods that support the phases of this research design.

### **Phases of Heuristic Inquiry Methodology**

There are six phases to heuristic inquiry research that guide its methodology. These phases are (a) initial engagement, (b) immersion, (c) incubation, (d) illumination, (e) explication, and (f) creative synthesis. The following sections discuss each of the phases.

**Initial engagement.** Initial engagement is the first phase of heuristic inquiry. This phase includes the researcher's ability to discover the critical area of interest that will guide the proposed study. The area of interest must hold strong personal and social significance for the individual. Throughout this phase, the researcher is open to personal experiences through reflection, tacit knowing, and relationships with others, to formulate a clear question (Moustakas, 1990). Initial engagement or

the encountering of a question that holds personal power is a process that requires inner receptiveness, a willingness to enter fully into the theme, and to discover from within the spectrum of life experiences that will clarify and expand knowledge of the topic and illuminate the terms of the question. (p. 27)

**Immersion.** The second phase of heuristic inquiry is immersion, which requires a researcher to become one with the question under investigation. Not only is the researcher's personal experience with the question significant but, additionally, any matter that can be related to the question under investigation becomes pertinent. Throughout this phase, people, places, things, readings, and environment all become motives for the researcher to maintain a steady focus and concentration on understanding

the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). Processes of heuristic inquiry—self-reflection, self-dialogue, intuition, and tacit knowing—facilitate the immersion phase.

**Incubation.** The incubation phase follows the intense focus and concentration of the immersion phase. Here, a researcher halts the steady focus and concentration of identifying and receiving information of the immersion phase to allow the inner tacit dimension to grow and develop. The tacit dimension has the opportunity to continue to cultivate deeper understandings of the phenomenon that are outside of the researcher's immediate awareness (Moustakas, 1990). Despite the researcher being removed from direct observation of data, “nevertheless, growth is taking place. The period of incubation enables the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28).

**Illumination.** The process of illumination opens the door to new awareness or possible corrections of previously held understandings (Moustakas, 1990). In the illumination phase, a researcher can have a breakthrough into the unconscious to elucidate new qualities or dimensions of knowledge related to the research question. The researcher must be receptive and open to the germination of tacit knowledge and intuition (Moustakas, 1990).

**Explication.** The explication phase allows a researcher to weave together seamlessly the many awakenings, new consciousnesses, and developments that have sprouted in the illumination phase (Moustakas, 1990). During the explication process, the researcher must depend on the previously mentioned processes of heuristic inquiry such as focusing, indwelling, self-searching, and the internal frame of reference. During this phase, a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon comes together. The

researcher is able to collect and organize the subtleties, nuances, and essence of the core themes related to the research question.

**Creative synthesis.** The final phase of heuristic inquiry is creative synthesis. Drawing on the information generated from the researcher's personal experience and data collected from participants, the major themes, meanings, and essence of the phenomenon are now apparent. It is up to the researcher to demonstrate an integrated, deeper understanding of the data. "This usually takes the form of a narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples, but it may be expressed as a poem, story, drawing, painting, or by some other creative form" (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 32–33).

### **Self-of-the-Researcher**

The self-of-the-researcher is an integral aspect of qualitative research. Being aware of and tapping into my experience as a first-generation Mexican-American woman, growing up in a Mexican-American family in the U.S.A. is a cornerstone for this dissertation. As a first-generation Chicana, I find this study personally significant. I was born in the U.S.A., the daughter of Mexican immigrants. I was born and raised in Napa, California, where there is a large Mexican population. I am a light skinned, 32-year-old heterosexual woman, raised in the Catholic religion. I have lived on the East coast for 8 years as I have pursued graduate studies. Throughout my studies, I have been deeply entrenched in the social science literature pertaining to Latinos that continues to perpetuate a unidimensional, homogenous depiction of Mexican-American men.

Growing up, many times I was keenly aware of gender differences. My family has a total of three children: my sister is the first-born, followed by my brother, then me. Also, a significant age gap exists between my siblings and me. My brother is more than 7.5 years older than me, and my sister is 9 years older than me. Thus, like many families, the

dynamics and circumstances of the family into which I was born were quite different from when my parents were raising two children close in age, as my mother had newly migrated to the U.S.A. My siblings always teased me that I was the “oops” child because I am so much younger than them. However, a dominant story in my family is that my father actually wanted another girl, which is why they tried for another child. After I was born, my father indeed received his *niña* (little girl); this identity has drastically shaped and permeated my life.

The majority of my life, my father and certain members of my family have referred to me as “*La Niña*” (the girl). The times when my father used my full name, Yajaira, were quite rare, and usually denoted something important or because I was in trouble. No bigger reminder of one’s gender exists than being referred to as “*La Niña*.” This was a complicated identity as I continued to grow because, most of my childhood, my father took me alongside for many typically male activities like fishing, shooting, and work. Partaking in such activities and many more that were deemed for boys, I earned another nick-name, “*mari-macha*” which is similar to “tomboy” hailing from a combination of the words, *Maria* and *macho*. Thus, many future activities or events in my life that were not necessarily deemed feminine, by my family’s standards, continued to accumulate in this category of my life, challenging stereotypical gender norms. The nicknames and overt messages of this tension in my life highlighted the covert messages that many of my activities were for boys and men, not a girl or woman like myself.

As I started to understand what it meant to be a woman and a man, several times in my teenage years and beyond, I realized that my friends viewed my brother and father differently based on their race and language ability. Many of my Mexican friends who

knew how to speak Spanish adored my father. They thought he was funny due to his playful and joking nature. However, my White friends who did not speak Spanish did not have the same experiences and were usually intimidated by my father. I remember feeling sad and frustrated, and often wishing that my White friends could actually speak Spanish because they would see that my father was joking with them. The differences of how my friends viewed my father also carried over to my brother. I recall that my Mexican friends always said hello to my brother, despite his lack of engagement with them; however, he would intimidate my White friends.

Another aspect I believe was influential in my understanding of what a man is or is not was my maternal grandfather's lack of presence in my life. Throughout my mother's young adult life, my grandfather migrated back and forth to the U.S.A. and Mexico for work. He was a seasonal worker in the New Mexico area and would visit his family whenever possible—until one day, he never came back. After many years, they knew he had deserted my grandmother and his family. In my lifetime, I only met the man who was my grandfather once, and unfortunately he died in the last four years. The role or lack of role he played in my family was significant. I can recall many overt messages in reference to my grandfather “not being a man” for leaving his family and not having the courage to be straightforward with my grandmother. I always have been very close to my brother and can recall many times where my brother received a message about being a “man” in reference to our grandfather. One vivid message I can recall was, “You have to learn how to start a fire, not like your uncle, since he never learned from your grandfather.”

Although my father has been an extremely significant part of my life and a major motivator to pursue my goals, at no other time has his presence been even more significant than upon his untimely death. My father's death in the past year has left all of my family members grief-stricken. My mother has become a widow, my sister and I fatherless daughters, but at times I am most worried about the fatherless son my brother has become. Beginning this dissertation journey has certainly been difficult. At times I have utterly sobbed at the stories I have read about men and their fathers. At times, my father's presence motivated me to keep going just a little bit longer as I am trying to write. I have been excited, curious, and afraid of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual process that came as I explored the meanings and life experiences of Mexican-American men regarding their manhood. Understanding the experiences of these men helped explicate the powerful words my brother recently said to me, "They don't make men like Dad anymore. Dad taught me how to be a man ... a different kind of man." This study served to fulfill the legacy of my father and other men like him.

It was important that I be aware of how my experience as a recently fatherless, West-coast, U.S.A.-born, first-generation, Catholic, light skinned-mestiza, heterosexual Chicana, influenced my perceptions, biases, and assumptions of Mexican-American masculinity throughout this process. The nature of heuristic methodology, keeping the experiences of the researcher at the forefront of what is being researched, has helped me maintain awareness of the powerful messages and helped situate my life experiences and meanings associated with gender, being Chicana, and college-educated.

### **Sample Selection Procedure**

After approval from Drexel University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), a purposeful homogenous criterion-based snowball sampling approach was

used to identify first-generation Mexican-American, college-educated men between the ages of 25 and 40. The use of a purposeful criterion-based homogenous sample allowed me to identify a specific population that yielded an in-depth exploration of the experience of manhood. A snowball sampling approach allowed me to inquire from participants if they had additional referral contacts that could serve as information-rich key informants for the study (Patton, 2002). Discussing the issue of sample size, Patton (2002) discerned that qualitative research must first determine the nature of the inquiry, determining whether the overall goal of the study is “depth or breadth.” Creswell (1998) suggested that 5-25 participants are appropriate for phenomenological research, and Morse (1994) stated that at least six participants are necessary to understand the essence of a phenomenon. Given that the purpose of this study was to explore the in-depth meaning and experiences of manhood among a sample of Mexican-American men, I interviewed 10 first-generation Mexican-American, college-educated men regarding the meaning they have attached to their experiences of manhood.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Sampling Criteria**

To qualify for the study, participants had to meet a set of inclusion criteria: (a) men who were between the ages of 25 and 40; (b) self-identified as Mexican, Mexican-American, or Chicano; (c) first-generation born in the U.S.A.; (d) raised by both parents who were born in Mexico; and (e) must have completed at least a bachelor’s degree. I excluded participants from the study if they were under the age of 25 or over the age of 40 and were not born in the U.S.A. Additional exclusion criteria included if either parent was born in any country besides Mexico, if participants were unaware of parents’ country of birth due to cut-off, if participants were reared by anyone other than their



biological Mexican-born parents, or if participants could not meet for a face-to-face interview.

## **Procedure**

**Recruitment of participants.** I recruited participants via e-mail through numerous agencies, universities, and key community organizations. I distributed the recruitment flyer (see Appendix E) and recruitment letter (see Appendix F) through mass e-mail at Palo Alto University and the Latino Student Network at San Francisco State University. I e-mailed additional information about the study (see Appendix G) to administrators at key community agencies such as Puertas Abiertas Community Resource Center, Napa Valley College, Napa Valley Latino Heritage Committee, and Napa County Hispanic Network.

As recommended by Umaña-Taylor and Bámaca (2004), I drew on the endorsement of Latino community leaders to connect to potential participants. Local community leaders also provided invaluable support by sharing the study information on social-media websites or verbally and connected me to potential participants. Participants who were interested in participating in the study contacted the investigator listed on recruitment flyers and letters.

**In-person semistructured interview.** Once participants expressed their interest in participating in the study through e-mail, and I assured they met inclusion criteria, I scheduled an in-person interview. During this time I provided each participant with the recruitment flyer (see Appendix E) and the informed-consent form (see Appendix B) to ensure participants had full knowledge of the study protocol. I scheduled interviews at each participant's earliest convenience at a location best suited for him while ensuring his

confidentiality. Interviews took place in various settings in participants' communities such as local coffee shops and eateries, work offices, homes, and at Palo Alto University.

Upon meeting with participants, I gave them an additional copy of the informed-consent form. I reminded participants of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and their audiotape consent. Because I collected no identifying information, I asked participants to give verbal consent to participate in the study. After participants gave their verbal consent, they completed the demographic survey.

**Demographic survey.** The demographic survey (see Appendix C) consisted of a 20-question self-report in which participants answered pertinent information about their background. Specific demographic information included age, race/ethnicity, marital/relational status, sexual orientation, years of formal education, occupation, and current income level. I obtained additional background information regarding participants' family background such as parents' country/region of origin, number of years in the U.S.A., immigration status, parents' educational background, relational status, languages spoken in the home, and number of siblings. Participants had the choice to select their own pseudonym or leave the answer blank to be assigned a name. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

**Interview guide.** Upon completion of the demographic survey, I asked participants to describe and interpret their lived experience of manhood through the use of a semistructured interview. Interviews were conducted with the use of a semistructured interview guide (see Appendix D). The interview guide originally consisted of nine open-ended questions, however further review demonstrated overlap between Question 1 and Question 2; thus I omitted Question 2 from all interviews.

I audio-recorded all interviews using two digital recorders. The length of time for interviews ranged between 35 and 60 minutes, with the average interview lasting 50 minutes. My clinical skills as a couple and family therapist enabled me to effectively elicit more information through the use of interview probes or permit participants to return to a question if they needed more time to think about their answers. I also continuously ensured participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and their experiences were meaningful data. Upon completion of the directed questions of manhood, I asked participants, "Is there anything else you want to say that I did not ask you in terms of your sense of manhood?" This question allowed for an open-ended opportunity for participants to share any relevant information. Once interviews were finished, I debriefed participants and gave them the opportunity to ask any questions about the study. Lastly, I thanked participants for their willingness to participate and for volunteering their time. At the end of every interview, I took extensive field notes and recorded my thoughts, reactions and impressions. I stored participants' audio-recorded interviews on my password-protected computer and storage devices.

### **Data Analysis**

After each interview was completed, a paid transcription service company transcribed the audio recordings into verbatim transcripts. Verbatim transcripts became the raw data for the study. Subsequently, the data analysis followed the steps outlined by Keeling and Bermúdez (2006): gathering and organizing data, immersing in the data, developing individual depictions, checking the individual depictions, developing exemplary portraits, developing a composite depiction, and creatively synthesizing.

**Data gathering and organization.** Once interview transcripts were completed, I listened to each interview while reading the transcript. A second review of transcripts was

conducted while listening to each participant's interview and ensuring accuracy in the transcript. I added key unidentified information such as pauses, intonation, and emotion and corrected specific areas indicated by the transcriptionist such as the need for Spanish translation. After a thorough examination of transcripts, I continued with data "immersion" (Moustakas, 1990).

**Immersion in the data.** I sought to obtain a broad understanding of each participant by listening to the interviews once more, while reading the corrected transcripts. I completed line-by-line open coding for each transcript to create meaning units (Moustakas, 1990). The line-by-line coding included descriptive, process, and interpretive margin codes. A second member of the research team listened to each interview while reading the transcript, and provided line-by-line margin codes for all 10 transcripts. The second coder confirmed initial codes and added further descriptive, process, and interpretive codes to the margins of each page of transcript. After both researchers completed comprehensive line-by-line coding, we counted the margin codes: 62 preliminary codes emerged, grouped into 13 initial clusters. This process allowed us to construct an initial impression of the overall group experience of the phenomenon in the context of each interview question across all participants. Throughout the immersion process, I engaged in continuous self-reflection through journaling and memoing to record important analytical procedures and discuss the findings with the second researcher.

An additional process of data organization and analysis was obtained through the creation of a data map. The creation of a data map is analogous to concept mapping, used in qualitative research to reduce the data, analyze themes, and understand their

interconnectedness (Daley, 2004). The data map consisted of a detailed and descriptive organization tool that included all line-by-line margin codes for each participant and each question. I first created the data map on a large 6 foot by 6 foot paper map. All eight-research questions were written across the top of data map and all participants were listed vertically. Using Microsoft Excel computer software, I depicted the data map electronically as well, by each participant and each interview question. This process allowed for a complete visual tool of the codes and provided a rich way to triangulate the data (Daley, 2004). Thus, the visual representation of the data map facilitated understanding of the codes and their interrelatedness to identify themes in the data (Daley, 2004). Consistent with the heuristic model, the data map also provided a tool to understand the data within and across the sample.

Upon completing the data map of the descriptive and interpretive codes across all participants and research questions, I removed all margin codes from the context of the interview questions and once again organized and clustered the data. The inductive process continued with axial coding (Patton, 2002). Axial coding thematically clusters codes that can be categorized together to represent similar items. The data continued to be reduce until the four themes emerged, completely independent from a particular participant or research question. The intention of this process was to disconnect the codes from each participant and research question to capture the essence of the phenomenon.

**Development of individual depictions.** Consistent with the heuristic model, once the major qualities and themes were illuminated, I created individual depictions. Individual depictions provide a “cohesive, descriptive narrative of the participant’s experience, giving the researcher and the readers an empathic sense of ‘what it was like’

for the participant to experience the phenomenon in question” (Keeling & Bermudez, 2006, p. 409). Individual depictions incorporated the verbatim accounts of each participant and the researcher’s field notes and memos. I present individual depictions in the proceeding chapter.

**Checking the individual depictions.** I compared each individual depiction to the participant’s raw data to ensure the depiction portrayed the participant as accurately and completely as possible. It was important to verify that all verbatim speech was consistent with the meaning and context described by each participant. The second researcher also read each individual depiction to verify that each depiction captured the voice and essence of the phenomenon for each participant.

**Developing exemplary portraits.** I clustered individual depictions that characterized the group as a whole into three exemplary portraits (Moustakas, 1990). Exemplary portraits provide richness and depth that humanize results and evoke an aesthetic and empathic response from readers (Keeling & Bermudez, 2006). Each portrait represented three different types of lived experiences related to the phenomenon. I share exemplary portraits in the following chapter.

**Developing a composite depiction.** Researchers create a composite depiction from the totality of individual depictions (Moustakas, 1990). The composite depiction represents the experience of the phenomenon across all cases, whereas the individual depictions represent the experience of each participant. Thus, the combination of individual depictions, exemplary portraits, and composite depiction are consistent with the purpose of heuristic inquiry, which seeks to understand the wholeness and the unique patterns of an experience while retaining the essence of the person in the phenomenon

(Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). I present the composite depiction of this study in the subsequent chapter.

**Creative synthesis.** Researchers develop the integration of all material that reflects the researcher's tacit knowing, intuition, self-searching, and full knowledge of the meanings and details of the experience into the creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher moves beyond attention to the data and provides a comprehensive expression of the essences of the phenomenon under investigation. The creative synthesis can be expressed in narrative form, using the verbatim expressions of participants or conveyed through any creative format such as a poem, story, or drawing. I present the creative synthesis of this study in the final chapter of this study.

### **Trustworthiness**

I established trustworthiness in this study through several methods: triangulating the data, checking interpretations against transcripts, consulting with my advisor and research committee, writing the researcher's memos, and creating an in-depth and extensive audit trail of the analytical process. Triangulation is an important approach to deepening the credibility of findings in a qualitative study (Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002). The premise of triangulation is to thicken or deepen understanding of a phenomenon through the use of multiple perspectives and procedures (Daly, 2007). In this study, I used investigator triangulation and theoretical triangulation to strengthen the credibility of findings.

I achieved investigator triangulation through frequent consultations with my committee chairperson and a third member of my committee throughout the study, particularly during the process of data analysis (Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002). Triangulating the data with a third member of the committee ensured methodological rigor and

verisimilitude in research findings. Checking interpretations against transcripts also allowed for increased trustworthiness, for the study to be able “to represent the experience as participants intended, and to convey the account adequately to support its conclusions” (Keeling & Bermudez, 2006, p. 411).

The triangulation process incorporated each means to analyze data, which included both researchers doing line-by-line coding to create margin codes, the creation of a data map with descriptive codes and interpretive codes, clustering codes separate from questions and participants to create the concept map, individual depictions, exemplary portraits, composite depictions, and creative synthesis. I used each form of analysis in a comparative manner, similar to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) constant-comparative method.

Additionally, theoretical triangulation entails using different theoretical perspectives to understand the ways differing assumptions influence findings and interpretations of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). Consequently, I triangulated findings in this study with or examined them from the various theoretical perspectives in the literature regarding the experience of masculinity among Mexican-American men (i.e., Chicana feminism, symbolic interaction theory, and literature related to manhood). A rigorous audit trail tracked important process and methodological research decisions as well as coding and analytical strategies. Writing extensive memos and journaling also helped me remain engaged and reflexive throughout the study (Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002). This process allowed me to be aware of my affective reactions and interpretations that might affect interpretation of the findings.



## Chapter 4: Results

### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter contains findings from the present study on the experiences and meaning of manhood among first-generation, college-educated, Mexican-American men between the ages of 25 and 40. The chapter includes descriptive information of the demographic survey. Subsequently, I present individual depictions of participants, exemplary portraits, followed by offering the findings. The findings from this study highlight four major themes: (a) influences on identity: role models and sociocultural, (b) intersection of manhood and *machismo*, (c) ability to define manhood mediated by education and consciousness, and (d) *El Deber*: being educated influences one's relationships to self, others, and the community. Finally, this chapter concludes with a composite depiction describing the core meanings and overall themes experienced by participants in this study.

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Ten ( $N = 10$ ) first-generation Mexican-American, college-educated men participated in this study (see Table 1). Each participant completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) and was assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. I removed all personal identification from the data. The age range of participants in this study was 26 to 40, with a mean age of 31. All participants identified as male. Most (90%) of them were born in Northern California, with 10% born in Texas. All participants resided in northern California at the time of the interviews. Nine participants identified as heterosexual and one identified as Queer/Joto.

Table 1

*Demographic Table 1*

Participant	Age (years)	Ethnicity	Race	Sexual orientation	Relationship status	Children	Highest level of education	Employment status*	Current annual income
1. Guillermo	30	Mexican-American	Other: Mexican	Heterosexual	Single	0	Master's degree	PT	30k
2. Pablo	40	Mexican-American	Biracial/Multiracial/Mestizo	Heterosexual	Married	1	Bachelor's degree	FT	58k
3. Manuel	26	Latino	Other: Mexican	Heterosexual	In a relationship Engaged	0	Currently master's student	PT	15k
4. Francisco	28	Hispanic	White	Heterosexual	In a relationship	0	Bachelor's degree	FT	150k
5. Enrique	29	Mexican	Other: Mexican	Heterosexual	In a relationship Living with Partner	0	Master's degree	FT	42k
6. Angel	32	Mexican-American/Chicano	Other: Mexican-American	Heterosexual	Single	0	Bachelor's degree	FT	75k
7. Oscar	32	Mexican	Other: Mexican	Heterosexual	Married	0	Bachelor's degree	U	38k
8. Vicente	29	Chicano	Mestizo/ Native-American	Queer/Joto	In a relationship Living with Partner	0	Bachelor's degree	FT	98k
9. Nicolás	33	Mexican-American	Mestizo	Heterosexual	Married	1	Bachelor's degree	U	N/A
10. Juan	33	Mexican-American	Other: Mexican-American	Heterosexual	Married	2	Bachelor's degree	FT	75k

\*FT = Full-time; PT = Part-time; U = Unemployed

### **Race and Ethnicity**

Participants made various responses about racial self-identification such that 10% identified as White, 30% as biracial/multiracial/Mestizo and 60% as “other.” Of those who self-identified racially as “other,” four wrote “Mexican” and two wrote “Mexican-American” as their race. For ethnic identity, 50% identified as Mexican-American; 20% identified as Chicano; 20% identified as Mexican; 10% identified as Latino; and 10% identified as Hispanic. One participant identified as both Mexican-American and Chicano.

### **Relationship Status and Children**

Most participants (40%) in this study were married; 20% were in a relationship and living with a partner; 20% were in a relationship, and 20% were single. The majority (70%) of participants did not have children, whereas 30% had 1 or 2 children.

### **Education and Employment**

The most common educational degree among participants was a bachelor’s degree (70%) followed by a master’s degree (20%). One participant (10%) was enrolled in a master’s program. The employment status of participants ranged from 60% full-time to 20% part-time, and 20% unemployed. Respondents worked in various occupations such as management, teaching, stay-at-home father, web developer, business owner, therapist trainee, program advisor, and counselor. The range of current annual income among participants was \$0 to \$150,000 with a mean income of \$58,146.

### **Family Background**

Participants answered demographic information corresponding to their parents’ background (see Table 2). The length of time in the U.S.A of participants’ mothers ranged between 24 and 48 years with a mean of 36 years. The mothers’ highest levels of education varied from elementary school to 2 years at a university. Relatedly, mothers’

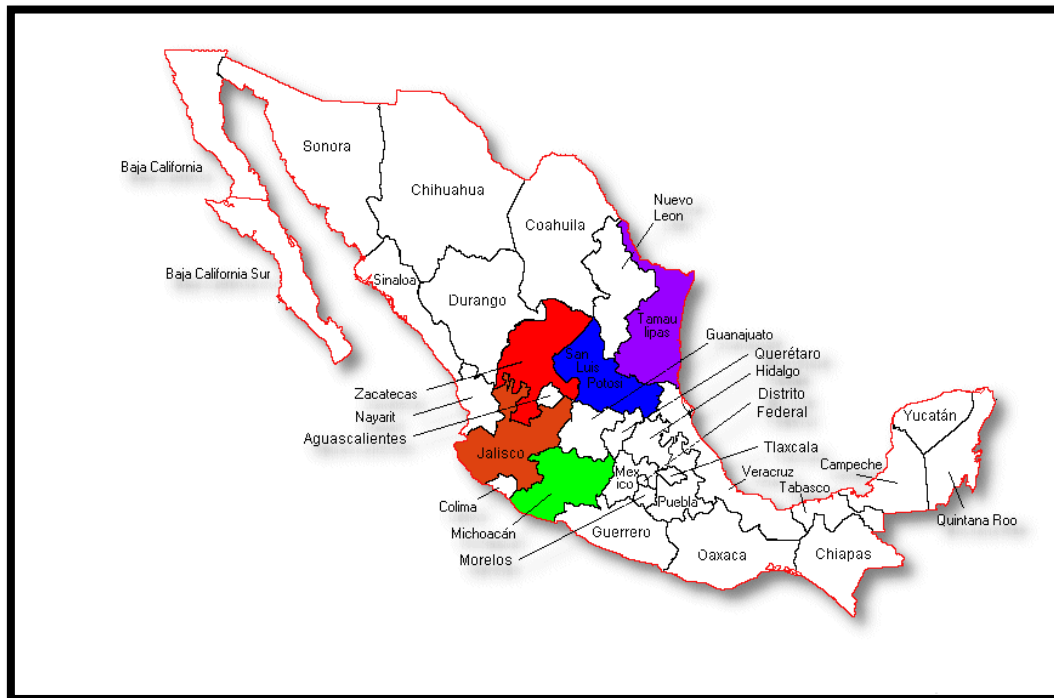
employment was an assortment of housekeeping, laborer, home engineer, teacher, caregiver, hospital worker, and president of a winery.

Respondents gave identical information pertaining to fathers' background. Fathers had been in the U.S.A between 24 and 52 years with an average of 40 years. Fathers' highest level of education varied from elementary school to an associate's degree. Fathers' occupational backgrounds included small-business owner, truck driver, electrical engineer, vineyard foreman, winery president, welder, maintenance person, cellar worker, and vineyard owner. The majority (70%) of participants' parents were married at the time of the interview whereas 20% were widowed and 10% had never been married but had partnered all their lives. All participants (100%) reported having siblings with the majority (60%) having both brothers and sisters. Twenty percent of the participants had only sisters and 20% had only brothers. Spanish was spoken in all (100%) participants' homes. Sixty percent of participants reported speaking both Spanish and English but, mostly, with siblings. Twenty percent identified mixed- citizenship status, indicating that a family member was undocumented. The State in Mexico where participants' parents where born is illustrated in Figure 1. Those states are Michoacan, Jalisco, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosi.

Table 2

*Demographic Table 2*

Participant	Mother's years in USA	Mother's education	Mother's employment	Father's years in the USA	Father's education	Father's employment	Parent's relational status	Languages spoken at home	Siblings
1. Guillermo	31	High school	Housekeeping	40	Middle school	Vineyard foreman	Married	Spanish	Yes
2. Pablo	42	6th grade	Farm-Laborer	44	6th grade	N/A	Widowed father deceased	Spanish/English	Yes
3. Manuel	35	6th grade	Assembly Cables/Wires	35	4th grade	Testing electronic components	Partnered never married	Spanish/English	Yes
4. Francisco	25	High school	Home Engineer	40	6th grade	Business owner—small engine repair	Widower mother deceased	Spanish	Yes
5. Enrique	35	Community college certificate	Preschool teacher	35	Grade school	Truck driver	Married	Spanish/English	Yes
6. Angel	48	2 years university	President of winery	48	Associate's degree	Computer/ electrical engineer	Married	Spanish/English	Yes
7. Oscar	42	Elementary school	Housekeeper	45	Middle school	Vineyard owner/ vineyard management	Married	Spanish/English (with sibs)	Yes
8. Vicente	24	6th grade	Housekeeper	24	4th grade	Welder	Married	Spanish/English (later years)	Yes
9. Nicolás	45	Community college	Intake coordinator- hospital ER	52	5th grade	Maintenance worker/painter	Married	Primarily Spanish, little English	Yes
10. Juan	34	Primary/ elementary	Caregiver	38	Primary/ elementary	Cellar worker- winery	Married	Spanish	Yes



*Figure 1.* Mexican states in which participants' parents were born.

### **Importance of Ethnic Identity**

To gain understanding of participants' ethnic identity, they rated several questions based on a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.e., very important, somewhat important, minimally important, not important at all). Rating the importance of their parents' Mexican heritage during their upbringing, 80% of participants stated it was "very important," 10% stated it was "somewhat important," and 10% stated it was "minimally important." Relatedly, 90% of participants said their Mexican heritage was currently "very important" and 10% stated it was "minimally important." Lastly, in regard to participants' identity as a "U.S. citizen/American," 60% reported it was "very important," 20% stated it was "somewhat important," and 20% stated it was "minimally important."

## Individual Depictions

**Participant 1: Guillermo.** Guillermo was interviewed at his work office. Guillermo shared how extremely proud he is of his academic accomplishments. He remembers being taken to work in the vineyards with his father at a very young age. This experience impacted his desire to work hard, go to school, and be a role model for others. He believed his family taught him important values such as hard work, respecting one's elders, and being a good citizen. He vividly described experiences of racism that have shaped him to be a proud Mexican-American man. He explained that those kinds of experiences made him want to show everyone else that he was educated *and* Mexican-American. He watched his father be respectful to his mother but was confused because he was "sometimes a jerk." Guillermo compared himself to his father and believed that perhaps he was more sensitive than his father. He felt that the differences between the two demonstrated that there is "a variety to manhood." He had clear memories of navigating between both cultures (American and Mexican) while growing up. He often felt he had to adapt his behaviors according to the group of men with whom he was hanging out. He believed that as a Mexican man he was often louder and joked around more than his White friends, "You have to be able to switch your persona," Guillermo said.

He also recognized that being around older men as he was growing up shaped many of the influences on being a man. He witnessed their behavior and witnessed them as loud and joking around: "They weren't the best, but not the worst role models," he said because they were often drinking. He credits a lot of his academic success to college-readiness programs and key supports like his godparents. College opened up "being in a bubble" for him and he realized that other students had the same struggles as him. School also helped him become more conscious and proud of his Mexican culture. After succeeding at a prestigious university he was surprised at himself and said, "If I put my mind to it, I can do it." This message to himself made him fight

previous racial experiences that made him doubt his abilities. His success also has motivated him to be a role model for children who are Mexican and show them that they too can be successful at school.

**Participant 2: Pablo.** I interviewed Pablo at his work site. He began by describing the ways that traveling back and forth to Mexico shaped the first 10 years of his life. Some of the values instilled in him at an early age were family, respect, and the importance of religion. He was taught the value of hard work by going to work with his parents over the summer. Although going to Mexico was important for his family in the earlier parts of his life, as the children got older and the parents obtained more important jobs they did not go as often. Pablo has not visited Mexico for roughly 20 years, which he attributed to being married to a White woman who has never visited and believes “everything is so dangerous.” Pablo’s meaning of being Mexican-American was described as “confusing” since the earlier parts of his life were shaped by high interaction with the Mexican culture but his ethnic identity diminished with increased assimilation into the culture of the U.S.A. Pablo learned that the values and characteristics of a man were hard work, supporting the family, discipline, and respecting one’s spouse and children. He felt that his parents were progressive in the sense that his father was not controlling, like he had seen at other friends’ homes and in having input from his mother regarding finances and family matters. He thought his mother was fairly strong-minded, which was a major influence as well. Pablo’s faith played an important role in shaping his meaning of manhood. He relies on the Bible, elders, and his pastor to help him learn the teaching of his faith on how to be a man. Major life events such as his father’s death and birth of his son helped shape his meaning of manhood. Pablo believed that his sense of manhood was more influenced by his family than being educated, however he did apply the value of hard work to his educational endeavors.



**Participant 3: Manuel.** Manuel was interviewed at my office. Manuel believed that being Mexican-American was about representing the struggles of his parents and the people in Mexico as well. He understood that his father and mother struggled to migrate to the U.S.A. so he wanted to represent and honor their struggle, so as to not forget their stories. Manuel believed he had a more privileged experience in growing up in a Mexican-American family compared to his brothers and other Mexican-American friends. As the youngest of three siblings, he recognized his family was able to move to a safer community when he was growing up. However his siblings grew up in a more dangerous and gang-ridden community. He felt that his parents and family were doing better financially when he was born. They only spoke Spanish in the home and believed they missed the emotional connection as a family. He mentioned that his mother and father always provided and are still providing for their family: "I think also that's what it's like to live in a Mexican home." He shared that education was a major value in his family. "*Portate bien y hechale ganas*" (Behave and try hard) were words that he often heard from his mother.

When asked about the meaning of being a man, Manuel discussed having integrity in romantic relationships, being committed, and working with a female partner to let go of having the leading role. As a father figure he discussed being equally supportive to both genders and sharing the provider role. He believed having integrity and taking accountability for one's mistakes were important in being a man. His father and his brother, who is a father now, have been influential in shaping the meaning of manhood for him. He felt his father was not a good communicator and was not free to show his emotional reactions. He also has observed his brother's adherence to strict gender roles in raising his children and does not believe in that. He shared that it is okay for men to express themselves, cry, and socialize with girls. Some life

experiences that have shaped Manuel's meaning of manhood have been his romantic relationships. He has been unfaithful to some of the women with whom he has been in a relationship and felt he was being contradictory to his beliefs; that realization helped him "flip the switch."

Manuel had several role models in his life. His wrestling coach was a role model for how he should carry himself as a man and helped him realize that if he is able to do things for himself he does not need to boss his sister around to do them. He watched his coach model what it is like to be a stern yet compassionate father. A former coworker also left a large impression on Manuel in how to carry himself as a man. He believed his coworker was more like a brother to him than his own brothers. He learned about generosity and that he can share something emotional and personal with another person. "I would never imagine him talking the way I did to my sister. I was one mean guy." As an educated Mexican-American man, he felt he had more pressure to stick to what he believed, especially his political views that impacted Mexican lives. He felt obligated to understand how his political views favored Mexican-Americans and people from Mexico too. He felt that getting an education helped him become more aware of the colonization of Latin America. One thing Manuel wanted to share with me was that just because a Mexican-American man questions his sexuality does not mean he loses his sense of manhood. He shared that questioning his sexuality and struggling with the shame of his family and brothers did not take away his sense of manhood whether he wanted to be, "a top or being a bottom, you know." Lastly, Manuel shared that *machismo* does not have to mean all the aggressive and assertive behaviors that people think. He said *machismo* is also about, "being noble, being honest, honoring family, honoring your family name, being somebody of their word and being there for your wife when she needs your help and your children too."

**Participant 4: Francisco.** Francisco met the researcher at a local coffee shop near his residence. At first Francisco shared that being Mexican-American did not really mean anything to him. He shared that it was just the way he was raised and “there is no meaning.” However, he shared that when he went to Mexico it gave him satisfaction or happiness to see the history and the culture: “It gives me more pride than anything. Like I am a part of that, that’s about it.” Growing up in a predominantly White community was hard for him because he felt he did not fit in with the White children or the Mexican children. He shared he felt lonely. He stated that growing up in a Mexican family was fun; it was about being disciplined and the food. Some important values he learned were that one should not count on anyone to do things for them, not give up, and to be respectful. He believed that helping family members whenever you could was important as was remaining connected to extended family. He believed being able to provide, helping steer the way, communicating well, and having honor and pride were significant to his meaning of being a man.

Going to family *carne asadas* (barbeques) and spending time with the older men in his family determined some of his interactions between men and women. It helped him learn gender roles and scripts. “Men would always be on the grill ... the females would be in the house getting the stuff ready to serve the food.” He said it sounded *machista* the way certain chores or roles were divided. Going to *Quinceñeras* (coming of age celebration at age 15, similar to a sweet 16) at a young age were instrumental in modeling manhood: “gentleman, you know being the prince charming for the princess.” Going to college also helped shape Francisco’s perception of what he was supposed to be. Because he did not fit in with others growing up, he was able to find other “weirdos like myself” in college and share interests. Socializing with other young men

that were not “*cholos* [gangsters] and all that shit” made him realize the “high school game is kind of stupid.”

Francisco’s father and uncles also influenced him. He grew up watching his father model his manner of being a man and a father. Listening to stories from his maternal grandfather and uncles helped him learn how his grandfather stopped being an “abusive drunk.” Francisco recognized that his father lost his father at a very young age and “He’s never had the example of how to be a dad.” He learned how to create things with his hands and “how to be able to create something from a thought.” Francisco felt that learning traditions from Mexico or other parts of Latin America was fun. “It just fills you with pride,” he said laughing and reflecting on the impact of listening to the Mexican National anthem. He felt that going to college helped him assimilate to “the American ways.” He joked about Mexicans always being 15 minutes late, but “when you go to college and get a job that shit changes you can’t be there in 15 minutes, or have appointments.” He recognized that one cannot learn these values from parents who are not educated to be like that. Francisco shared a few contradictions about how being Mexican-American influenced his meaning of being a man. He stated that it was silly to think that being Mexican or Mexican-American would distinguish the way a man would be raised. He believed it was more about the environment; however when I reflected his previous answers of being raised in a Mexican family, his response was, “Oh, checkmate, yeah ... it’s just the whole putting a label on it.”

**Participant 5: Enrique.** Enrique believed his identity, as a Mexican-American, was everything because his culture and values all came from being Mexican. He related to being closely connected to his family stating, “It’s how I make decisions everyday, you know. Kind of like, how was I raised? ... What would my parents do?” He shared that being raised in a

Mexican family meant it was never quiet and one never had a chance to be alone. It meant always looking out for one another and especially the oldest looking out for the youngest. He realized that the way he was raised in his family also affected the way he managed his friendships: “a lot of my close friends, I consider them family.”

Enrique believed that the media has contradicted some of the values his parents tried to instill in him, particularly his sense of religion. He acknowledged that he witnessed many traditional gender roles being modeled by other family members, but his parents were not as traditional. He believed several circumstances influenced his parents to be less traditional. First, his uncles made his mother go back to Mexico to try to stop her from dating his father. Second, his parents did not give birth to any girls and he grew up around all male siblings. Lastly, he believed being in the U.S.A gives people more options and they do not have to stick to those traditional gender roles. In his experience, religion, specifically Catholicism, was a central value in his family. His mother was not as devout as his grandmother and aunts. He did not agree with the church’s traditional views on same-sex couples and birth control. However, he shared, “I always say I’m Catholic, and I grew up and I’ll never change that.” Other important values for his family were respect, particularly respecting one’s elders, working hard, being honest and, especially, being humble.

A major factor that influenced his meaning of being a man, from both “American culture and Mexican” was being able to provide for your family. “Definitely being a man is being able to provide, and being able to defend.” He thought being able to defend one’s woman, one’s children, and one’s family were important. With age, he has realized that one also can defend with words, not just by fighting. Enrique believed that being able to command a room was significant to being a man. However, different levels were possible in being able to command a room. He

knew he had to find a balance between remaining calm and raising his voice because “when I do raise my voice or am kind of being more assertive, I feel like I am portrayed as more aggressive. I think that has a lot to do with my skin color and my appearance.”

One experience that helped shape his meaning of manhood was moving away from home. He has moved to different areas of the world, each time a bit farther, and increasingly gained financial independence. Each time he lived in a foreign country he learned that one not only had to be strong physically but, more importantly, strong emotionally. “It’s easy to be put on that show like, ‘Stand up straight, walk tall, show that you’re tough,’ but it’s very, very difficult to get it through your head, if you’re in a situation that’s hard mentally.” Many of the male figures in his family, such as his father, grandfather, and uncles, influenced his meaning of manhood. Speaking of his father, “He’s one of the most charismatic, patient, hardworking persons I know. He just does what he needs to do. He’s patient; you can say that, I admire that.” Speaking through tears, he said his father is one of the most selfless men he knows. While continuing to cry, he shared that his grandfather was amazing—“he was just so happy.” Being Mexican-American and educated shaped Enrique’s meaning of manhood in several ways. He shared that getting an education meant he could set an example for others, especially the younger generations in his family. Being educated also increased his confidence:

I know that I did something and I did something big, that not a lot of people do. That makes me feel confident in myself and my abilities and nobody can take that away from me, and I think that makes me a man.

**Participants 6: Angel.** Angel met me at a local eatery in the town where he lived.

Growing up as Mexican-American was very hard for Angel and his family. Food was a very big part of his experience as a Mexican-American. He believed his mother helped expose him to world cuisine and that people can have no greater exchange than serving food. Even though he was raised and went to Catholic school as a child he considers himself a “hard-core agnostic,

borderline atheist.” He remembers at a young age being defiant in regard to religion and challenging the priest and nuns in school. Food and music were large parts of his upbringing. His father exposed him to *banda* and *mariachi* music and his mother exposed him to rock ‘n’ roll. Thus, both cultures were infused into being Mexican-American. He felt very blessed and privileged to have grown up on a ranch with his grandparents, siblings, and cousins.

At a young age, his family inculcated themes of social justice in his life. This helped him see how education could drastically change people’s future. Education provided an opportunity for people to escape poverty and have more opportunities. He believed his family was very progressive. A significant value was the importance of family: “family is key”; however he did not think he would ever get married. He commented, “The institution is not for me necessarily.” Even though he studied theology in college, he was not a fan of organized religion stating, “I don’t agree with a lot of their points of view, you know, they’re anti-gay, anti— you know, pro-life once the baby is born, a lot of the time they don’t give a shit about the kids afterwards.”

When discussing the meaning of being a man he paused and said, “I guess this is where I have the goofball, the concept of manhood, I mean, man is second to human being because, you know, humans everyone is equal, everyone deserves the same access to everything.” Believing that education can “change everything” he thought people should get educated first as an option to not going to school and “just getting married and having babies.” He was more than willing to pay for his staff’s college education and even abortion, if that meant his staff would go to college, but was frustrated when nobody would take him up on his offer. He believed the mentality that a lot of Mexicans, especially devout Catholics, had was that you just needed to get married and have babies.

Attempting to clarify the meaning of manhood, Angel continued to emphasize that he “wanted to just be a good person.” He did not acknowledge any differences between men and women and believed that everyone should be equal: “It’s not something I think about in terms of manhood.” Even witnessing family members in Mexico who were well-to-do and have different standards for his male and female cousins was frustrating to Angel. He saw the ways Mexican culture could influence people’s beliefs and behaviors and wished, “the culture were a little bit more progressive on that front, I guess.”

After reflecting on the differences between gender roles and his identity as a man, Angel said, “I’m a weird subject because I don’t think too much about my own identity, as a man or other Latino.” He reiterated that being a good person was what dictated more of his identity. He also shared that learning and hearing about family stories regarding his grandfather who was abusive to his own father had shaped his perception of manhood. “That’s totally dictated how my father is, I think, not totally, but my father is a much kinder person.” He also said that he witnessed his father lash out for “nominal stupid things. ... And so I would kind of see that and be like, I don’t want that part of him.” He expressed that these experiences shaped much of what he does not want to be as a man. However, he did look up to a few teachers from high school who he found to be great role models.

Being an educated Mexican-American man, Angel felt very fortunate that he had the opportunity to go to school. He has enjoyed being a mentor to other children and has been recognized by several members in his community for being a Latino role model to others. Angel recognized that he was mainly raised by women while his father was at work and believed that also shaped much of who he is.

I mean, men we are a bunch of lucky assholes like, even, really kind of uncontested for a long time. I wish women ruled the world, basically. The world would be a better place.



I'm totally not kidding. You guys just a nicer, nicer—better. More caring and loving as human beings. That's just the way it is.

Angel was able to recognize that he struggled to define manhood throughout the interview.

During the interview process, he giggled as the researcher continued to focus on the experiences and meaning of manhood. At one point, Angel hesitantly and almost in disdain answered, “I guess as a maaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan.”

**Participant 7: Oscar.** Oscar met me at a local coffee shop in his town. Oscar identified strongly with being Mexican and although he knew technically he was Mexican-American, he felt more comfortable identifying as Mexican. “I felt like, even though I was born here, identify more with the Mexican culture. I get something that like I am more proud of.” He shared that being Mexican-American was many things and truly meant one was bicultural. In his home and with his parents, he only spoke Spanish. He learned to speak English with his sister and at school. He did not go to school with many Latinos when he was younger so he had a great deal of difficulty relating to people in Mexico during family trips. He did not encounter more Latino peers until middle school, when he attended summer camps that included neighboring schools. One of his friends swiftly reminded him, “Oscar, your people are here!” He remembers being able to relate to Latino students but it was not so easy for his White friends. After middle school, he started to feel a pull between associating with his White friends or Latino friends. He recognized that he felt more comfortable in a diverse group of people and described it as “home. That's where I started to feel different.”

Oscar spent a lot of time with his mother and sister and felt that he developed sympathy and respect toward women because of that. “I might have even been more—I don't know if it's the right term, more feminine when I was younger than masculine, maybe because my dad was working more.” Some of the values his family tried to teach him were hard work, eating healthy,

family first, respect for women, and the importance of focusing on education. Another important value to his family was religion. He was raised and still considers himself Catholic, but “like I’m [an] open-minded Catholic or even a cultural Catholic, you know.”

Reflecting on the meaning of manhood for him, he thought being a man goes back to respecting women and going away from *machismo*. “Not thinking *machismo* is being a man, that’s being a man to me, pretty much.” He shared that manhood was more about knowing oneself and having respect for other people. He struggled with not “being into” the typical boy and Mexican culture at a young age. He said, “I sucked at soccer and I wasn’t really into sports. I was into action figures and video games.” He also was not into “*Banda* or dressing like *vaquero* style ... which like a lot of guys and Mexican culture would do.” He believed his dad and next-door neighbor were the most influential on his meaning of manhood. He witnessed his next-door neighbor, who was a year older than him, struggle with not having a father figure in his life because his parents were divorced. He felt that looking for a father figure helped him learn a lot.

As Oscar reflected on life experiences that shaped his meaning of manhood, he said,

it’s hard for me to think of it that way. I mean I think of it more as being independent, or like growing up, or becoming an adult, or something like that. I don’t totally think of it as “manhood.”

Some of those life experiences included moving away to college and moving in with his girlfriend, who later became his wife. He remembers having a serious conversation with his parents, even though the normal family dynamic was that one did not challenge or discuss important things. Even though his parents strongly disagreed with him moving in with his girlfriend, he felt it was an adult decision and explained to them why it was good for him. Later, as he had more serious jobs, some of his supervisors and coworkers became his mentors. He bonded with them, confided, and could talk to them. He said, “That kind of goes along with manhood too, which I probably didn’t reference but somebody you can trust and talk to.”

In preparing for the study, Oscar shared that he reflected on the lack of other college-educated Latino men he knew: “I was like, ‘Shit, dude.’ They started college courses and they never finished or they just never started. ... There is a lot that don’t move to higher education which is kind of a bummer.” Even among other Latinos who have gone to universities, he said they share an unspoken connection. “But yeah, you know talking with them it’s kind of like, it’s easy, and uh so I think that’s the kind of a cool—it’s almost like uh, like a uh, like an elegant bro-code, I guess.” He shared it was a different way of seeing himself as a man, an educated Latino male.

Oscar wanted to add a few things about his sense of manhood. He was aware that his father had a drinking problem when he was younger. Observing his father and other family members drink too much made him decide not to start drinking until later in his life.

That kind of shaped, uh, what I saw of manhood, is like people thinking it was that you need to drink and to get wasted and things like that, and I didn’t want to be like that, so for a lot of times I would, I would go against, go against, kind of like—I don’t know. This one’s kind of hard to say, but I go against what my dad would do.

Recently, Oscar and his father bonded over comic books and movies. Breaking down the concept of *machismo*, Oscar wondered if the term “manhood” had a negative connotation for him, “because whenever I hear ‘manhood,’ I think *machismo*. So I don’t know.” He struggled to separate the two and when probed to distinguish manhood from *machismo*, he felt that manhood was what “society feels what a man should be.” Finally, he shared,

what it should be is, uhm, as a parent, just being there for your child, helping them grow, uhm, being accepting. As a husband, being, uhm, considering yourselves the equal, being respectful, never hitting a woman, unless they are coming at you with a knife or something [laughing]. There’s got to be one exception.”

**Participant 8: Vicente.** I interviewed Vicente in his home. Vicente recognized being Mexican-American as a privileged identity. Growing up in a family that had mixed citizenship status was a major source of stress for him. He has been conflicted about identifying with the

label “Mexican-American.” When he was younger, he stated “it was easy for me to do it because I was Mexican-American and I didn’t want to identify as Chicano or oftentimes I would identify as Mexican-American because that would make more White somehow.” However, he now prefers to identify with indigenous terms or *Xicano* with an “X” because it honors indigenous history in Mexico. He also shared many instances in his life when he felt a great sense of shame because he was the only documented individual in his family. Being a citizen of the U.S.A. he was afforded privileges that his siblings were not, such as getting a driver’s license and going to college. However, the sense of shame was even more profound when he did not live up to his family’s expectations and briefly dropped out of college. This was a critical time in his development because he not only struggled with an intense feeling of shame, but he also was questioning his sexual identity. Thus, it was easier for him to reject many of his family’s values. He separated from them by gravitating to the American (White) culture that his family could not.

Growing up in a Mexican family was, “beautiful and it was challenging all at once, you know.” He grew up in a family that was “huge,” raised Catholic and believed patriarchy impacted many of his family dynamics. He said, “a lot of folks coined like *machismo* to Mexicanidad, which I think is a bunch of B.S. because I think that patriarchy exists among all cultures.” He noticed the discrepancies in how his father would talk to him and his brother and his sister regarding having “*novias* or *novios*” (girlfriends or boyfriends). Although questioning his sexual identity was difficult in the context of his family, he learned a great deal from his father such as always being there for one another. He also recognized that he learned love and strength from the *mujeres* (women) in his family. Earlier in life Vicente had a hard time identifying with his father because he hated what his father represented. Explaining “the crazy dichotomy,” Vicente learned to forgive his father and, through this process, his father taught him

how to love men. Many gender-related behaviors and norms were “inner-family social contracts” except those that had to do with “queerness or *joteria*.” His father was quite clear that he would rather have a child who was “*mongolo*” (having Down syndrome or special needs) than “*joto*” (gay/faggot).

Vicente’s journey in identifying as queer has helped him navigate the meaning of manhood in his life. He experienced difficulty relating to narratives of manhood that do not embrace *mujeres*. Although his father has been a role model of manhood in his life, he believed his mother taught him how to be a man because he associates manhood with courage and strength. Being educated as a Mexican-American man has provided him the language and experiences to identify as queer/*joto* and to be a role model for younger generations. He hopes his position and activism in redefining Mexican-American masculinity can help others at least question their beliefs about manhood.

**Participant 9: Nicolás.** I interviewed Nicolás in his home. Being raised Mexican-American was a big part of Nicolás’ life. Being raised in a Spanish-speaking home helped shape a strong sense of Mexican ethnic identity. He said it influenced everything from the food they ate to the way they cleaned their home and even the decorations. He identified a major dichotomy between his school environment and other social settings. The student population at his school was predominantly White and Filipino. However, his other primary social setting, the soccer field, was mainly comprised of Mexicans and other Latino subgroups. At a young age, he felt he had to prove himself because he carried an exterior *cholo* (gangster) persona but was also a student who received good grades and did well in school. Thus, he often felt that he needed to prove that “I am not who you think I am.”

Nicolás' family tried to instill several values such as the importance of education, family, cohesiveness, and financial security. He acknowledged that his perception of what it means to be a man has changed over the years. His initial idea of what it meant to be a man was to be respectful to women, be tough, protect one's family, stand up for oneself, be aggressive, and always stand one's ground. Factors such as the media, television, friends, gangster Bay rap, and not having a sister were major influences on his meaning of manhood in early life. Some life experiences that helped shape his meaning of manhood were going to college and meeting his future wife. These experiences helped challenge many of his previously held beliefs regarding manhood and, in particular, "the man box," which he believed was what society tells a man he should be. He spoke passionately about not only knowing manhood.

Nicolás believed that being a man meant connecting with one's emotions. He recognized that there is much *machismo* in Mexican culture but it also exists among White Americans. "Being Latino in this country reinforces that, I have to stand up for myself." Being a college-educated Mexican-American has influenced his meaning of manhood because "I feel like I have to be a role model. Not just a role model, but a Latino with education." As a man, he wants to help others redefine manhood, teaching boys and young men healthy ways to be a man, "For their sake and the future of my young daughter."

**Participant 10: Juan.** I interviewed Juan at his work site. He began by sharing that being Mexican has had more importance in his life because all his family is Mexican and they have not upheld many American traditions. Some values he learned from his family were the importance of family, sticking together through the good and the bad, food, school, working hard, and being respectful. Being Catholic and going to church were always important values for his family. At a young age, he felt the difference from being labeled American by family and friends in Mexico

but when in the U.S.A and at school with White classmates, they would say, “No you’re not American, you are Mexican.”

In defining manhood, Juan shared that part of his responsibility, as a man, was to work hard, provide, and protect his family in partnership with his wife. He made it clear that he does not feel any less of a man because his wife makes more money than he does. He believed that as a man, he had to provide for his family and be a role model for his son about how to treat girls and women by the way that he treats his wife. He also said this was important for his daughter, because he wanted to demonstrate to her how a man should treat her.

Juan made it very clear that his father did not model or talk “*macho* stuff.” Juan felt that the *macho* image was mostly portrayed on television, in media, and through observing other older men, including his uncles at family parties. At first he said that *machismo* had not influenced him, but then realized and said it did because “I think it’s stupid.” Many of the *macho* scripts he observed in the media and family gatherings did not appeal to him: “That’s not something I want to do.” He also recalled hearing stories of his grandfathers being “womanizers” or being verbally and physically abusive to his grandmothers, but often compared them to his father who was a positive male model. Going to college for Juan was a way for him to live up to his father’s example of what a man should be and be able to obtain better job opportunities to provide for one’s family. He wanted to model that value to his son by continuing his education at some point so his son could observe the importance of education. Lastly, Juan added that fear is a human experience and just because one is a man does not mean they are not allowed to have fears. Being afraid of spiders did not make him feel less of a man.

### **Findings of Thematic Analysis**

**Theme 1: Influences on identity: Role models and sociocultural factors.** Overall, participants reported the presence of significant influences on their identity as Mexican-

American men. Participants' culture of being Mexican-American produced several experiences on which participants coincided. Staying connected to their Mexican heritage was important to participants; honoring important cultural values and being aware of their racialized identities contributed to their experiences as Mexican-American men.

*Being Mexican-American.* All participants in this sample described what it was like to be Mexican-American. Many found it important for them to stay connected to their culture in various ways, such as visiting Mexico. Some described being Mexican-American as having two-cultures or being bicultural. Others appreciated the strong cultural values they were taught by their families and several participants described their experiences of racism or being "othered." Enrique emphatically recalled his culture with fondness. To him, his culture represented everything that he did and everything he believed in. He described being Mexican as follows:

It's kind of everything, because it's the culture, the values, everything that I believe, in the way you should live your life, or treat others, or treat the people you love, you care about. Or people you don't care about, or you hate, comes from definitely being Mexican. Having that big family; just being closely connected to them, even if it's just one side of your parents, because for me it's my mother's side that I've grown up with because the majority on my father's side is still in Mexico. But yeah, it's given a lot of meaning. It's how I make decisions every day, you know. Kind of like, "How was I raised?" I don't ask myself that, but it's some instinct to just like, "What would my parents do?"

Nicolás' statement concurred with Enrique's thoughts regarding the centrality of his cultural heritage:

It's a big part of who I am, being in a country that has a lot of different races in it, uhm. It was a big part of my upbringing as far uh as my experiences in the world I was living in, so it means a lot to me. It's the way I connect with my family, uhm, it's the connection I have to another country uhm, to a different part of the world; my uhm values, my culture, the way I was raised, the food I eat; my outlook on the world has been influenced by that.

The values mentioned by Nicolás were echoed in the sentiments of the majority of participants. The significance of cultural values such as the importance of family, respect,



education, religion, speaking Spanish, and food were often described in this sample. Pablo identified that the most important value he was taught was the importance of family, respect, and religion, stating,

For them, it was family was respect amongst, you know from your grandparents to your uncles. Your elders, having respect for them. Hard work was part of it and also, their religion. They grew up as Roman Catholics so that was part of our ritual or routine.

Despite experiencing traumatic experiences in his family associated with his identity as a gay male, Vicente profoundly shared that even though his father expressed overt homophobic thoughts to his face, he knew that, no matter what, his family would always be there for him.

Vicente shared the following:

So, I mean I think that we value family you know. I think that was very clear from the beginning. Like we can talk shit to each other, we can like—my dad would call me a *joto*, all of these things, but at the end of the day, like they had my back in the sense that like my brothers would call me a *joto* or *pinche maricon*, but if someone else did it, they would kick their ass.

Juan also gave a powerful testament to the importance of family and recognized that it did not matter if things were good or bad; one was expected to always be there for one another. Further, he recalled that his mother, especially, inculcated the importance of education at a young age:

So it was always just the family and the family is what's important, being together, uh, and celebrating. Even when things were not, when something terrible happened or something like that, funerals, or whatever. It was always family was always the big issue, the big theme, not issue, but the big theme.

Well, they would always instill, like as a kid, they would always say school. They would always just say, "go to school." They never went to college or anything, so they would always just say, school, school, school. Uhm, so as a kid, I do know school was important. I just listened to whatever my mom and dad said, especially with my mom, because she was the authority basically. Uhm, but yea those values of going to school, working hard.

Similarly, Guillermo expressed the importance of respect for one's elders, but it also was engrained in him that getting an education was important. Guillermo laughingly said, "Since

from a young age they were like, ‘If you don’t go to school you’re going to work a lot like us, so you better go to school.’”

Enrique and Oscar both described the importance of respecting one’s elders and respecting women. Enrique stated, “that’s like a huge one. Just respect in general.” Being a hard worker also was engrained in his family and the importance of being humble. “If you do something good, someone will notice it and someone will appreciate it, but you don’t have to go and tell everybody.” He identified that religion and going to church were very important to his family, particularly his mother. Although he does not necessarily go to church as much as he used to, he and Oscar both expressed being “cultural Catholics,” meaning they identified as Catholic because that is how they were raised, but both currently disagreed with a lot of the church’s views and positions on equal rights.

Another aspect described by participants in being Mexican-American was the experience of racism and being “othered.” Numerous men in this sample described circumstances in their lives where they were treated differently or had to live up to different standards because of the color of their skin. Guillermo was able to share his lived experience with racism in his community,

You know how, especially here in town, you see people with the American flag on their car or the Confederate flag? You know that when they see you they’re not going to really be nice to you. Those people would always stop and like, you know talk shit to me or whatever when I was younger. That kind of stuff it goes with you, “Get out of here spic,” or whatever.

Enrique presented similar feelings, expressing that he was held to different standards at work, due to the color of his skin. He believed that the quality of a man was to be able to command a room. However, he believed that this was difficult for him to achieve at work because, as a man of color, he would be perceived as aggressive.

I feel like for people; and for me sometimes it's been a little difficult because sometimes when I'm calm people don't listen, so then when I do raise my voice or am kind of being more assertive, I feel like I am portrayed more as aggressive. I think that has a lot to do with like my skin color and my appearance. That still affects me now. Like even in the workplace and stuff like that, when I'm assertive about something, I feel like people are kind of on the defensive about it. Because they see someone who is of color who is smart, who is critical and provides either really good feedback or alternative ways to see and work with things. And they kind of perceive it as a challenge more than like as an alternative.

Other men in the sample shared memories from their childhood wherein they recognized they felt differently or were treated differently by others. Oscar recalls the change from elementary school to middle school—a more diverse setting. He recalled going to a summer program during this transition where more Latino children were present:

I remember one of my friends made a comment. He's like, "Oscar, your people are here" [laughing] I was just like, "Ha, ha, ha." And then, uhm, that kind of made me think about it a little bit. I was like, "Oh, shoot," because I mean I was able to relate with them whereas, you know, my White friends weren't really do it as easily and so then I started to feel a little conflicted. ... So it was more diverse and I felt a little more [laughing]—I don't know. It's hard to describe but it felt a little more, not welcomed, but at home.

Juan also described a compelling experience as a youngster when he did not know how to make sense of being Mexican-American. Trips to Mexico included interactions with other cousins and family members who would negate his identity as a Mexican and vehemently told him, "No, you're American, you're from the other side, *Tu eres del otro lado.*" However, when he was back in the U.S.A., his predominantly White school peers would say to him, "Oh, you're Mexican instead of American."

Lastly, being Mexican-American for Nicolás was challenging as well. He described that as a youngster he had a "*cholo* persona" but always did well in school. He worked hard to prove to others that, "I am not who you think I am," due to his outward appearance. As he reflected on his experiences as a Mexican-American man he stated,

I guess my first experiences were because just I guess we knew we were different. ... You know even though I looked a certain way you know, I felt like I had to prove myself.

Uhm, you know, hindsight bias like—when I was getting pulled over, you know I always felt like I had to prove myself or like being Latino, I had to show—which sucks—to some extent, being Latino you kind of had to show them like, “Hey, we’re not all bad.” You’re like representative of your own culture so you have to be like an example and it’s not fair.

**Primary role models.** In addition to the importance of participants’ ethnic identity as Mexican-Americans, this sample identified the centrality of primary role models in their development as men. Unequivocally, all participants identified the role of their father in their lives on their development as men. Many identified positive qualities about their fathers and important lessons they learned about becoming men. Few described behaviors they denounced or characteristics of their fathers with which they did not agree; however, participants also had a critical understanding of the impact their fathers’ childhood and upbringing might have had on these behaviors. Thus, participants were able to hold a place of compassion or exoneration toward their fathers and chose to take the positive attributes of their role models. Other primary role models who played a role in developing participants’ identity as Mexican-American men were mothers, uncles, grandparents, godparents, coaches, and mentors.

Oscar demonstrated the important role of his father in his life by how hard he saw his father work for his family. Oscar knew his father worked extremely hard to give his family better opportunities. He recalled his father telling him, “he works because you know he cares about us and he wants us to have a good life.” Enrique fondly recalled how much he idolized his father as well. He experienced “getting emotional” as he described how he has seen his father be “completely selfless.” Even as a “senior citizen,” he was amazed at how his father worked 6 to 7 days a week just to continue to provide for his immediate family and family in Mexico as well. Through tears and emotions, Enrique talked about his father.

He’s so calm about everything. He takes care of things. He does what he needs to do, to make sure that his family, us, my mother, are doing well. He does this, and still tries to take care of his brothers and sisters who are back in Mexico. So I feel he has sacrificed a

lot. Like we all know, he wants to be there. He visits, he went recently. He doesn't go very often anymore, but for him to do that, it totally, just like going back to like what makes you a man, is like being able to take care of your family, and it's like he'd done that ... I think that, like sacrificing of himself to give to others, that's just him. He's completely selfless. He always thinks about others before himself.

Furthermore, Juan had high regard for his father as a model for a man and a good husband. He consistently explained the following about his father.

I have my dad as a model of you know being a man and following you know—he's been a good role model for all of us in our family ... but like I said, there's always those examples like my grandparents, uhm, or other people's dads and growing up you know and just being around them have influenced. But it's mostly been my dad—has been the main one. I talk about my dad a lot.

Participants such as Angel and Francisco described their fathers as important role models but also provided a critical understanding of their fathers' upbringing that explained certain characteristics or behaviors that they did not appreciate. Angel explained that his father was “temperamental ... like all good Latin, hardy, stubborn fathers,” but he also shared the following:

Not to put anything against my father, but I think, you know, knowing how he was exposed, my grandfather was a dick to him. You know, he abused them, uhm, uh physically. ... That's totally dictated how my father, I think, not totally, but my father is a much kinder person, I think, but he would also lash out, you know, for nominal stupid things. Where, at the end of the day, it wouldn't really matter, obviously. And so I would kind of see that and be like, “I don't want that part of him.”

I understand why he's like that because I understand—because his siblings would tell me like, “Woo, because your dad was the oldest and he got the most shit.” ... And so, I'm sure my grandfather was abused physically as a child. I know he was, because that's what his wife, my grandmother, tells me. And so, you know, me growing up—even at a young age, I was like, “Oh, I'm never going to treat my kids like that.”

Similarly, Francisco demonstrated empathy for his father. He understood that his father lost his father at a young age; thus, he never had an example of how to be a father. He demonstrated his empathy for his father by explaining the situation in this way:

Being a dad in the house, it was kind of weird for him because his dad passed away when he was really young and he came to the U.S. at 13. So from the start, he's been on his

own for God knows how long. He's never had the example of how to be a dad. Like I watch home videos and I see him playing with me or my sisters and yet I think he had a fear of hurting us because we were so little. So every video when we see him he's not smiling. Like he's not enjoying it because I think he's on edge. But at the same time, seeing him work, he just does it. You know those days where you don't want to get up? I have them all the time, but yet he would work two jobs, sleep like maybe three hours and then go to the other job at night. Just seeing him bust his ass for us, that's kind of like, oh shit. Like, damn!

Mothers and other people such as uncles, coaches, and mentors also played an important role in the participants' identity as men. Angel, Enrique, Oscar, and Vicente discussed spending significant time with their mothers during their childhood. Oscar wondered if perhaps he was "not really into the typical male or boy thing" as a youngster because he spent more time with his mother and sister. Enrique also credited his interest in more "feminine" types of activities such as cooking or sewing to spending time with his mother through his childhood.

When asked who had most influenced his identity as a man, Vicente emphatically stated, "Oh, my gosh. The irony because it's like my mother you know. Dang, you know, it's like who taught me how to be a man, is my mom, you know. Uhm, yeah, my mother hands down, you know." He further described his developmental process with accepting and owning his name. As a child he hated his name and associated that with his mother naming him. He described that during this time he was coming to terms with his gay identity and wrestling with what it meant to be Mexican-American and, in turn, what all of that meant for his identity as a man.

It meant, like it was just everything I didn't want it to be at the time. And part of it was, was, uhm, just like this definition of, of being a man, uhm, and that my mother is the one who named me and not my father, and like what that dynamic was like. And the reality is that, I'm strong. Uhm, I find my courage and I find my ability to love other people or I've learned to love other people and I've learned love through my mother you know. And I can't be a man who loves my community and my fellow man and my fellow *mujer* and everyone in between that doesn't fall into those labels without amor. And I learned love from my mother. So I learned how to be a man from my mother, you know. So it's this irony that I learned to love other men through my father, but I learned to be a man from my mother.

Aside from mothers, participants identified uncles and other family members such as grandparents as having an important impact on their identity as men. In a very emotional and vulnerable interview, Enrique spoke very fondly of his grandfather. Many of the qualities he admired about his grandfather he wished to replicate in his own life:

My grandfather was amazing. This is my Mom's father. [Laughing and crying]. You're going to make me cry talking about him. [Crying] Especially because he used to live down the street. I haven't been back here in years. Feels like—he was just always so happy.

He would always have to save everything and make stuff out of it; and I think that's the way I am too now [laughing] ... he was just very resourceful. I mean, I imagine he had to be. Like, you know, in Mexico you can't really just go out and buy everything; more like you make everything.

He just loved everyone so much. He loved all his grandkids. My Mom always makes me sad because she said he carried a picture of me in his wallet [Laughing and crying]. He's just a typical grandfather. He would just pick you up, bounce you on his knee and rubbed his scruffy beard on your face to make you laugh; buy you ice cream all the time. And he you know raised 13 kids [laughing], and I'm sure my grandmother is much, much stronger than him [laughing]. For doing all that and putting up with him. But yeah, he's just my grandpa.

Similarly, Nicolás identified that he was aware of the influence of other men, friends, media, and his family on his early development as a man, but he adamantly claimed that his wife “totally veered it off course.” He would not deny the impact of his formative years, or the current role of his wife on his definition of what it meant to be a man. Guillermo acknowledged that his godparents, especially his godfather “were always in my life. I remember they made all my birthdays, until I got older. They were really like big, always there for me.” He was aware that he looked up to his godfather as a role model for what a man should be. He also shared that living on a ranch, many family members and friends came to visit on the weekends. He laughed while saying,

They wouldn't do good things, obviously. They would always be drinking [giggles]. So I think I learned what it means to be Mexicano, I guess because all I would hear is jokes, inappropriate jokes, just messing around. But they were all like respectful, you know, to

like me and to my mom, and stuff like that so I guess I grew up with all these figures, but they were all—I don't know how to explain it. They were role models, I guess because they were always there. They weren't the best role models, but they weren't the worst either, I guess.

Among the fathers in the study's sample, Pablo gave voice to an important experience that has continued to shape his identity as a man—being a son and being a father.

There was an early part, my dad, in 2002 he passed away so that was a big, big change in regards to me as a man. I'm the eldest of my family so I was like, okay, I'm now helping guide my mom through that whole shift. Now you're on your own, so kind of that makes you grow up pretty fast, even though I was not young. My brother was the young one but still, it's a big shift, especially in our family. That, itself, put things in gear a little bit more and life more in perspective. That was a big, for me that opened up my eyes in regards to manhood and to now there are serious responsibilities. Then the birth of my kid, marriage, so different stages have different significant things that shape the way you are.

***Sociocultural factors.*** The last subtheme included in Theme 1 was the influence of sociocultural factors on participants' identity as Mexican-American men. Participants mentioned factors such as socioeconomic status, the influence of media/popular culture, sexual identity, and male socialization. Male socialization, in particular, encompassed many variables. Many participants identified that part of what they witnessed at a young age was the men drinking alcohol. Francisco and Guillermo shared they were often around older men or family members for parties and family functions. They often witnessed the men drinking and believed that was not the best role modeling. Francisco laughingly said,

I don't think that's a good experience, but ... well, some of them would get drunk, but still, just being able to see how they interact with each other and then you see how the moms interact with each other. It has a little bit of shaping.

Oscar carefully made it a point to mention that his father had a drinking problem. He would not go as far as to call him an alcoholic, but admitted that his sister would label him an alcoholic. He witnessed that many of his cousins and family members "drink way too much," which drastically shaped his ideas about drinking. Oscar shared,



I noticed that and that really affected me to not want to drink until two years ago. ... I just saw kind of like in our culture it was something that people just abused too much and I never got into it.

Vicente also grew up noticing this pattern in his family. However, he also pointed out the double standard since there were “men’s drinks” and “women’s drinks.” He explained,

Uhm, we would drink like, beer drinking was huge. I remember alcohol was huge growing up and there was alcohol at all the parties and you know my mom liked to drink wine coolers and my dad was like “Oh that’s very feminine,” like that’s all you can drink. The day my mom wanted a beer, she couldn’t have one, right, because that was a man’s drink.

Vicente acknowledged that he saw this dichotomy as a part of patriarchy and the double standard for women.

Another aspect of male socialization with which Manuel did not agree was the notion that men were not supposed to show emotion. He shared a gripping story, describing that his father and he witnessed their family dog get ran over and killed by a car. He could not believe that his father did not show any emotion or shed a single tear, especially because his father was the closest to the dog. It also made Manuel angry to witness his brother parenting his sons in a way that reinforced traditional gender stereotypes.

I hear him say these things; they’re so stupid. Like, “*Hombres no lloran maricon, [men do not cry you faggot]*,” shit like that. Just really enforcing like masculinity into this little kid and that’s how he’s raising him. Also, he’s married to a woman who is from Guatemala and they’re both like really comfortable with their ideas of maleness and femaleness right.

Sexual orientation and gay male identity were also aspects of male socialization that impacted Manuel and Vicente. Manuel briefly added that he once questioned his sexual orientation, which he did not believe made him less of a man. However, he also admitted that he was so heavily concerned with being shamed by his father and brothers that he did not pursue this any further. Vicente, in contrast, knew he was gay at a young age. He recognized that many of the “social contracts” in his family around maleness and male identity were modeled—”I

believe 90% of it was modeled,” he said. However, the remaining 10% were clear messages that men are not supposed to be gay. Vicente described the following example.

I think that the ones that were very articulated were the ones that had to do with queerness, with *joteria*. Because I remember we were watching uhm, some show, like I don’t know if it was like a Caso Cerrado, type of thing or, and where one of the folks on the talk show was gay. And it was like a segment and then the next segment was, uhm, a youth who had some sort of mental disability. I remember very clearly that my dad looked at me specifically out of all of my siblings that were sitting watching the talk show and he said, “I’d rather have *un mongolo que un joto*.”

Socioeconomic status and class were also variables in participants’ sociocultural environment. Both Manuel and Nicolás gave important illustrations as to how this factor played a role in their identity. Manuel was aware that being the youngest of three children, his family was in a better financial position when he was growing up. He identified that his family lived in a lower income neighborhood when his two older brothers were growing up. His brothers shared stories with him about being beaten up by local gangs on their way home from school. Ultimately this caused his brother to join the rival gang. Manuel communicated that he not only felt more privileged than his brothers, but his friends as well.

I was able to go out and buy these material things that they weren’t really able to when we would go hang out and go to a mall. I would remember sometimes feeling like—just noticing the difference, noticing, after so many times, I think they can’t buy this skateboard because it’s really expensive you know [laughs] and their parents can’t really afford it.

Nicolás similarly shared that it took him some time to realize that his family was actually middle class. He shared that he,

didn’t realize how privileged we were, as far as our economic status because my parents came from more, uhm, a lower socioeconomic status, so they still have those values as they were raising us even though we were growing up in a middle class home.

Being an immigrant and having a lower socioeconomic class background influenced Nicolás’ father to stress the importance of financial security. However, because his father had been successful in creating a car-cleaning company, Nicolás believed this afforded him the privilege

of focusing on other issues later in life, such as social justice; a career choice his father did not approve of because it was not financially responsible.

Lastly, Nicolás, in particular, highlighted another facet of participants' sociocultural context: the influence of media and popular culture. Nicolás commented on the influence of music, particularly rap, on his identity as a man. He shared that he, "always wanted to live a life where I wasn't causing harm or I was being respectful to women," but his girlfriend (now wife) quickly pointed out that he was not being respectful to women by listening to that music.

And, uh, I listened to a lot of Bay rap, gangster Bay rap and that's very degrading to women. And, uhm, in college, like even towards the end of high school I was getting tired of it; it was the same thing. Then in college it was more when, when I decided not to listen to it, especially when I met Jeanette who's my wife now, and she really pointed out a lot of stuff.

Enrique also pointed out that the media, television specifically, has had a major impact on what he has seen portrayed as the typical male roles. He explained,

Like, both my parents worked all the time, so like all of the things I see on T.V. don't necessarily line up with what they want, especially with regards to like religion and like those beliefs. I guess I watched a lot T.V. growing up; you always see like the typical dad coming home, and like bringing home the bacon or whatever, it's like typical T.V. So you see that growing up right away, and even now, you still see it in the media. I don't think it's ever going away. More like the typical roles are just engrained, so definitely, that aspect; I think that's like the major thing that sticks out in me and I think it has to do with like the media.

**Theme 2: Intersection of manhood and *machismo*.** The process of defining and interpreting the lived experience of manhood among this group of educated Mexican-American men was challenging for numerous participants. Many participants identified that they had "never thought about it like that" or commented on how hard it was to answer the questions relative to manhood. Participants also discussed the impact of the concept of *machismo* on their sense of manhood.

*Not defining manhood*—“*I never thought about it like that.*” Pablo’s first response to the questions was, “Well ... That’s a loaded question, isn’t it?”

He continued, commenting on his parents’ relationship but did not give additional explanation on his personal definition of manhood.

Angel was able to expand more on the reason he might not have had a specific definition of manhood. He believed manhood is secondary to being human. He preferred to focus on being a good person, but did not think being a man influenced much of who he is.

I’m a weird subject because I don’t think too much about my own identity, as a man or as a Latino, uhm [paused], in my own personal experience. That hasn’t affected decisions. Those two things, you know, don’t play—don’t really dictate a lot of what I’m going to do, how I see the world. It literally is one, uhm [paused]. The whole being the good person, that kind of dictates how I feel and what I want to do and how—more of my identity, too.

Angel continued to try to produce an answer to the interview question, however after the third attempt still replied,

Yeah, no, yeah, no, it’s not. I don’t want to be disassociated with, like, manhood, I’m just trying to—because I never thought about it like that. That’s why it’s really funny. I’m also trying to think, it’s like, I wonder if I have friends who are like, “I’m a man, like manhood” or like what all that entails—like, I don’t even know what to think or begin to think like. Because, again, it’s like, “Nah, be a good person and then.”

Although Oscar continued to wrestle with his perception of manhood throughout his interview, he expressed similar sentiments to those of Angel stating,

I was trying to think specifically of manhood. It’s hard for me to think of it that way. I mean I think of it more as being independent, or like growing up, or becoming an adult, or something like that. I don’t totally think of it as “manhood.”

I’m trying to think of anything. Again, trying to think of it relative to manhood, it’s kind of tough. But, uh, yeah I guess I don’t know if it has to with, which is the fact of my definition of manhood, there isn’t something that really stands out or something that like, you know, I strive for. It’s kind of like whatever.

*Difficult to answer*—“*Hard to articulate what the fuck manhood is.*” Although a few participants were unable to articulate a working definition of manhood, several grappled with

their ability to define manhood and expressed difficulty in doing so. Oscar stated, “Oh man, I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know, if uh [paused]. . . . Yeah, its like, uh, it’s hard. I don’t know, I can’t think. It’s weird. I don’t know if I’m sabotaging your interview but.”

Similarly, Juan explained that defining manhood was hard but he was not necessarily sure it if was due to conflicting ideas. He shared,

Ok, uhm [pause] being a man . . . being a man mean . . . well I mean, it’s like I have these ideas, but I don’t necessarily think it’s just because I’m a man. I think it, well it just means . . . I don’t know how to answer that. It’s hard . . . These are hard. I never have had to think about these things really.

Vicente had similar feelings to those of Oscar and Juan, but also realized that he could not fathom that he was struggling to define manhood. He was aware that he was used to having difficult dialogues on the topic, but was struggling to “articulate what the fuck manhood is.”

I definitely feel that I have the language to and I’m still struggling with it. I mean even through this interview like, when, when you know you had that brief contact and I was like okay, like I’m going to be talking about manhood, something that I’ve talked about on panels and something that I’ve talked about with other folks and we get together on Saturday nights sometimes to play *loteria* and this conversation comes up. Like I was like, oh, I have things to say, I got this, you know . . . more like I have something to contribute to this interview, because I think that the work that you’re doing is really important, which is why I immediately was like, I want to be part of this you know. I have something to say and now you’re here and I’m struggling to find the words and to articulate like what the fuck manhood is? [laughing] You know?

***Machismo.*** Many of the men referenced the concept of *machismo* in trying to explain the meaning of manhood. Although they had varying explanations in referring to the term *machismo*, none of the men identified *machismo* as the definition of manhood. Furthermore, several of the men offered a critical analysis of *machismo*.

Francisco described certain behaviors that seemed *machista* to him. He explained that as he has gotten older and has more responsibilities, he understands why his father would “Just com[e] home relaxing.” He further described,

It sounds kind of *machista* but just noticing how my mom would do certain things like do the clothes and my dad would just come home, take his clothes off, shower, eat, and then talk with my mom and maybe talk with me. Just things like that. ... I think my sisters would help, but it was very challenging to get them to do it. It kind of seemed a little *machista*. It was kind of expected of her. It's kind of messed up, but it's reality.

Nicolás identified considerable *machismo* in the Mexican culture, but provided a context for the experience of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A.:

In the Mexican aspect I would say there's a lot of *machismo* in our culture. And, uhm, you know, just playing soccer, like you have to be aggressive, you know; you can't stand down you know, even up to the point of almost getting into fights because you know, you're not supposed, uhm, you're not suppose to, uhm, back down from anybody. And, uhm, *no debes de ser mandilon*, you're not supposed to let women dominate you and you're supposed to be the man of the house and the breadwinner.

I guess on the American side, on the U.S. side, to some extent it's not too different, uhm. And then, uhm, I guess just being challenged at where I was, being Latino in this country kind of just reinforced that. I have to stand up for myself. I can't ... Uhm, yeah I guess just because, uhm, growing up I've always, even now, kind of felt like I'm proud to be American or Mexican-American, American, you know. I appreciate everything this country has offered my family and me as a citizen but I always kind of feel like, I don't belong. And, uh, so I've always been, I guess on the defensive or aware of, uhm, how I need to watch out and protect myself if I need to.

Similar to Nicolás, Vicente criticized the application of the term *machismo* to only Mexican culture. He explained,

I grew up with my parents. You know my mom would cook every day, so drinking was huge in my family and it was a problem for my dad. Those dynamics were really challenging, and, uhm, you know, patriarchy, a lot of folks coined like *machismo* to Mexicanidad, which I think is a bunch of BS because I think that patriarchy exists among cultures. And, uhm, you know, uhm, but ... Did I grow up with patriarchy? Absolutely, which I think influenced or, uh, impacted rather, uhm, you know my perspective on queerness and when I started to come out and how I decided to come out.

Juan also shared that his parents had more of a progressive household and thus were not like other families who were more *machista*:

People say *machismo* [defines manhood] but my dad wasn't really that kind of person, you know. I thought he was more progressive than anything because he'd be very encouraging

over having my mom's input, finances and everything. He wasn't like, "I'm controlling it all." She actually had a lot of say in everything, maybe because mom was pretty strong-minded too.

In the beginning Oscar gave a definitive answer and stated that the way he defined manhood was to think of *machismo* and do the opposite. He had an easier time identifying the qualities that he thought a man should not have and said,

Being a man? The way it's phrased it sounds like all tough. But, uhm, I think being a man you know goes back to respecting women, uhm, [paused] kind of going away from the *machismo*. Not thinking *machismo* is being a man, that's being a man to me pretty much. So, uhm ... [paused], I don't, I can say more what I don't think a man is. [laughing]

Oscar continued to tease out his definition of manhood and grappled over the term manhood and his association to *machismo*. After much thought and conversation he provided more insight and stated, "I'm wondering if manhood has a negative connotation, or at least for me, because I think whenever I hear "manhood," I think *machismo*. So, I don't know. [laughing]"

Oscar was open to scrutinizing his thought process and participate in the following dialogue:

Interviewer: Can you say more about that? If you just don't think about, you can say like, "Well, that's just what I think. Whatever." But that's interesting to me.

Oscar: I mean just thinking about it or talking about it, uh like when we're focusing on manhood, whenever you say it, it just stands out like as if that's not where I'm expecting the question to go. Even though I knew that's what you wanted to talk about, it's like I'm thinking about something else and then putting that in. It's like, I don't know, it's just not easy to answer for me, at least. So, uhm, I don't know, I think, for me, it has, its like it's too, too closely tied with *machismo*. Like to say "manhood," just the term, maybe I'm just not used to using it or hearing it or something like that. [laughing] I don't know.

Interviewer: But it sounds like you're saying when I say manhood, you're saying, "Oh, she's saying *machismo*."

Oscar: Or at least what I'm thinking or just what pops up into my head you know, as far as whatever I'm going to say.

Interviewer: That I will interpret it as?

Oscar: No, that like if that's something that I'm going to say that's going to sound like *machista* or something like that.

Interviewer: Sort of being afraid that you believe in it?

Oscar: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So if you allowed yourself for the next 3 minutes, whatever, a very short amount of time, to just take the word “manhood” and to hear from me, like, “No, I’m just talking about the essence of being a man,” not like that it’s associated to or being *machista* or what not, if you just try to put yourself, what do I really think in terms of what it means to be a man, what it means to be a Mexican-American man, where do you go?

Oscar: Because when you say, “What it means to be a man?” it’s that like what society feels that what a man should be. That’s, that’s kind of where my head goes and that’s not what I totally identify with or.

*Aversion to manhood.* A few participants in this study seemed to have an aversion to defining manhood or distinguishing their ethnic background as a basis for the development of their manhood. Francisco specifically iterated at the end of his interview that he believed his ethnicity had nothing to do with his identity. He exclaimed that it was just about how he was raised or the environment in which he grew up but the end result is for him to make it a positive experience.

Now that I think about it, to me it’s a little silly thinking that like Mexican-American, being raised Mexican or American would distinguish the way a man would be raised. I think it’s more simpler than that, than just being race based. I think it’s more like the environment of where you’re raised. Granted I wasn’t raised in Oakland, or I think we wouldn’t even be having this discussion. Being raised out here you learn certain things but at the same time, being raised by different language and different things—I don’t know, it’s hard to describe. ... To me, I was raised the way I am just because that’s the way I was raised. That’s the hand I was dealt. If it’s good or bad I really can’t complain, it’s up to me to make it all positive.

Angel was very clear that manhood was second to being human. He seemed to abhor the concept of manhood and believed everyone should be equal. Even though he identified as a traditional male, he vehemently believed “men were a bunch of lucky assholes.”

Uhm, [paused ... And again, I guess this is where I have the goofball, the concept of manhood, I mean, man is second to human being because, you know, humans—everyone is equal, everyone deserves the same access to everything. Uhm, [paused] ... I guess I haven’t thought about, you know—I have a lot of friends from Mexico who are very *machismo*, you know, which drives me insane.



I don't think about me in terms of—I just want to be a good person. I think that's a weird way to look at it. You know, man, female, be a good person. You know, I don't—I self-identify as a, you know, as a traditional male. You know, I just want to—I happen to have a penis and you happen to have a whatever. This is just—be a good—across the board, yeah, it's weird. I've got the goofball – It's not something I think about in terms of manhood.

Yeah. [Paused] Manhood. It was—because I was raised, again, mainly by also women, too, so that's also shaped a lot. You know, I think it's funny I couldn't explain the concept of womanhood either just because of—I mean, men we're a bunch of lucky assholes like, even, really kind of uncontested for long. I wish women ruled the world, basically. The world would be a better place [laughing]. I'm totally not kidding. You guys are just a nicer, nicer—better. More caring and loving as human beings. That's just the way it is.

**Theme 3: Ability to define manhood mediated by education and consciousness.**

*Defining manhood.* Many participants described important qualities and roles that defined manhood. Qualities such as integrity and having good character were particularly important to Manuel and Oscar. When asked about the meaning of being a man, Manuel, very passionately, shared the following:

Manuel: When it comes to like, uh ... romantic relationships, I would say, I guess I'd start off there ... it means to have integrity, do the right thing. It means to uhm, in a relationship to, to have the ability to know when you can be committed and once you decide to be committed, you stick to it. It means [thinking] ... it ... it means in a relationship, to allow a partner to also like take charge, to be able to let go of a leading role, to be able to work with somebody who's female without feeling like you're being attacked.

Interviewer: In the beginning you mentioned integrity and doing the right thing. Can you say a little bit more about integrity?

Manuel: Yeah, it means like ... if you get caught, it's taking accountability for the things that one person does. To me, it's really connected to that. If I were to get caught in my own mistake, I'm going to own up to it and not beat around it and say it wasn't my fault. I think mainly that's what I mean about that.

Oscar described good-character qualities as “someone you can trust and talk to—that kind of goes along with manhood too.” He also believed that being a man meant having self-knowledge and not being afraid to express yourself.

I think it's more just about just knowing yourself and, uhm, having respect for other people. Yeah, uhm, that's more of the way I like to think about it—not trying to be something else. Just kind of knowing what your talents are, uh, what your interests are and, uhm, being in touch with that and being able to express that too, which is harder to do when you're younger but you know when you get older it's like easier to kind of figure that out.

Nicolás discussed the developmental process of *defining manhood* and how his perspective has changed over time.

A man. That's an interesting question. Growing up was very different than what I thought, than what I think it means now. Even in college it was different. ... So growing up, you know, I always thought, I was raised to, be respectful to women; that's what a man does. Uhm, I guess, growing up I was also, I guess socialized, to think you know you got to be tough and you got to protect the family and you got to stand up for yourself. In the same way, you have to be aggressive. Uhm, you got to I guess stand your ground. You'll always be respectful to women, uhm, especially your mom [laughing].

You don't have to be hyper aggressive you know. You don't have to fight, you know. It's okay to be gentle.

And uh, so, you know, a big part of what I think it means to be a man now is to connect with your emotions and be aware of your emotions because I think that closes off a lot of men and it causes a lot of men to not deal with that and then there's a lot of anger issues and they really don't know how to relate. Men, I think, growing up are raised—the emotion that you go to is, is anger, is to uhm, right away go to anger. Even myself, still, I get hurt, then I want to be angry so I need to check that.

***Taking the good/roles.*** Explaining the meaning of manhood, several participants described observing specific traits or behaviors that modeled “a certain type of man” but felt empowered to “take the good” of what they had observed and create their own meaning of manhood. Manuel was able to identify that being Mexican-American did influence his perception of manhood and described it in the following way:

Yes, because it's helped me recognize like what's kind of common behaviors and maybe thoughts or ideas that Mexicans have when it comes to being a man. Those are things I was able to pick up along the way and because I was able to pick them up, I can pick and choose what I like and don't like.

Juan complemented the sentiments expressed by Manuel. He described circumstances of manhood that he observed in his uncles and grandfather with which he did not agree but strongly idolized his father for his positive attributes. He stated,

So yeah, even in my own family, my grandparents and even some of my uncles, uhm, as a kid too you just hear stories. You know you hear the adults talk and you remember some of those things, uhm, and yeah, its like so it's not cool. Using those as examples.

I remember as a kid, they talk *macho* this and the guy does that. And I remember as a kid hearing it, or like the dad has to work and stuff like that, but I always look back at my dad as the model and it was never, it wasn't always like that and that's not the message my dad gave, although it is what I would hear or see on TV or media or things like that, or at parties, other guys, they're there drinking and they're macho talk and stuff like that.

Yes, I have my dad as a model of you know being a man and following you know—he's been a good role model for all of us in our family.

Valuing and “taking the good” qualities of his father, also contributed to Enrique's definition of being a man. He desired to emulate his father in being a provider for his future family and was beginning to see those changes with his long-term girlfriend.

I think living with my girlfriend for the past three years, sort of like being domestic almost I guess, it's kind of shaped my experience, and just being able to like cooperate and cohabitate with her and just like make those adult decisions, and sometimes sort of be her support, when she's not feeling good. Like being able to look at the big picture, and look at things clearly, and with a clear head, and make a good decision about what's going on, because it affects both of us. So I think for me, that's very much shaped the meaning of manhood. It's like moving again towards providing and taking care of your family, because she's my family right now.

Oscar was able to summarize the thoughts of a few participants who verbalized their identity as a man in terms of their various roles. Oscar shared,

Yeah, yeah. No, I get it. I mean I guess, uhm, what it should be is, uhm, as a parent, just being there for your child, helping them grow uhm,, being accepting. As a husband, being, uhm, considering yourselves the equal, being respectful, never hitting a woman, unless they are coming at you with a knife or something [laughing]. There's got to be one exception. Uhm, as a friend, uhm, just being trustworthy, uhm, not doing something to follow the crowd, uhm, not trying to follow what society feels that being the man should be.

Vicente demonstrated a deep and complex understanding of being able to “take the good” of his relationship with his father and explained the following:

Vicente: So you know I think that the craziest thing is that looking back [paused] I never identified being a man with who my dad was because I hated everything that my dad did you know and how he treated me and the things he said about me. Uhm, and then, I learned to fall in love with my dad for a lot of the values that I respect.

And you know at the end of the day, my family is here and they're strong because of my dad, and, uhm, which is crazy, it's a crazy dichotomy for me because as much as I hated and didn't identify with, with what I believed manhood was or what I believed he believed manhood was. Uhm, my dad was the first man I've ever loved, so I learned how to love men through him. You know?

[Crying] So like, you know, and I, like I had to learn to forgive him, but when I did, uhm, I realized that I loved him. And he's the first man I ever loved, which is huge because being gay is the last thing he ever wanted for me, yet he taught me how to love men. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah, that's beautiful. That's really beautiful.

Vicente: It's really hard.

***Redefining manhood.*** Going to college helped Nicolás raise his awareness or *consciencia* regarding the socialization of men. His wife also played a major role in assisting him to challenge “the manbox” and later the importance of redefining his definition of manhood. So growing up, uhm, be tough, be respectful to women but at the same time, subconsciously like, when you think about partners, uhm, you know, I guess a lot of it which really sucks but should be said, for a lot of guys it's really, not about emotional connection with women. And uhm, but going to college, I would say now, what I feel it means to be a man is still to be respectful. You have to be constantly aware of, uhm, the effects you have on women, and, uhm, still care for your family, protect your family, uhm, and I guess, getting into the man box, uhm, you know stepping outside what society tells you it means to be a man, uhm, or, you know, I guess redefining it.

Uhm, I mean she made me aware of the man box. She made me aware of socialization, male socialization and how society tells us to be a man when a lot of the times it's not healthy. That feels redefining but still a lot of work to do. And, uhm, so really just, getting me to think about it. That's how she's really influenced me. And, uh, having conversations with me and calling me out on certain things and telling me, “Hey, hey, here's this conference you should listen to.”

Vicente's definition of manhood derived from a critical understanding of his ethnic identity and thinking complexly about the interrelatedness of men and women. Vicente described the following:

Ooh. Well, I think that being a man means fully embracing my being, fully embracing uhm the entire spectrum of manhood, which includes you know la mujer component and anything in between. So you know, I think that, that, uhm, for me it's now like identifying as a man it means being comfortable and open about my femininity, it means, uhm, embracing femininity and everything in between.

Vicente articulated that his awareness about *Mexicanidad* and identifying with labels such as *Xicano* instead of *Chicano* rooted his identity in indigenous Aztec ideology. The ideology allowed him to redefine his definition of manhood because it values womanhood in various ways:

Yes. So ... yes. So I think that before I decided to take on those labels, the only definition of manhood that I had was that modeled behavior that I learned from society, specifically in my own home so I think that once I started to identify as *Chicano* with an X or as indigenous, and I understood that there is no binary between manhood and womanhood and that they actually interlock and interconnect. I became more comfortable with identifying with manhood because the definition of manhood changed—uhm, because of that identity, because I was at that point I was two spirit. I was, at that point, man and woman, even though I self-identify as a cis-male, where I self-identify as a man, and I use, uh, you know masculine pronouns, uhm, I understand through that lens that manhood does not mean a binary, it's not a dichotomy. That's it's fluid and that it, uhm, you can't be a man without the *mujer* ... it's about a system of, of, uhm, inner-connectiveness, uh, with, without a gender-binary so it's a lot of easier for me to say I'm a man, or for me to use he/him pronouns because I understand that I'm doing it with fluidity and that at any point in my life, I can change, you know?

And that's that okay. And you know it's just—I think that's why I am able to identify as a man and still identify as a *mujeristas*.

***Education and consciencia.*** Several participants spoke to the role of education in developing their *consciencia* or consciousness. Experiences in college were instrumental in developing a heightened sense of consciousness. Some stated college made them question privilege, have difficult discussions, but mostly, made them think critically about their identity as educated Mexican-American men.

I think that what made me find that definition of manhood and how I want to identify as a man and what I feel like the meaning of a man should be, for me ... was through higher education. Because I think that's where I learned the language to be able to articulate what that was—Oh yeah, *consciencia*, for sure.

So, so, you know, so I feel like higher education component has definitely given me the tools, the *herramienta* (the tools), as far as academic language, articulation, critical thinking and *consciousness* to be able to articulate how I feel, most importantly because I never talked about feelings right when I was growing up, because I was not being a man. ... I think that critical thinking, that *consciousness* and that, that language is huge so I think had I just been talking about manhood, without having gone through higher education, I mean I think my definition of manhood would have been completely different.

Similarly, Nicolás shared that certain college courses “if you are open to it” forced him to reflect on his own socialization and “how you grew up.” He also expressed that being first-generation he was able to take advantage of the sacrifices and struggles his parents experienced for him to go to college. His parents’ goal was to be established in the U.S.A., which gave him the opportunity “to go beyond that.” He said,

so although their values have always been for fairness, I guess I've taken it to another level where I am interested in social justice and want to give back to the community, want to, you know have a career in education. And uhm, thinking more in the broader aspect as far as race relations in this country, uhm, gender, all inequalities, the different inequalities, uhm even globally like, you know our impact on, on environment.

Manuel also explained that college played a major role in increasing his *consciencia* specifically about the historical and current context of Mexicans in Mexico, but also Mexicans in the U.S.A.

You know I learned without being college-educated, I probably wouldn't have come across certain topics or you know. . . The colonization of Latin America and then leftist movements arising up over there, the war in Salvador. I would have cared less if it wasn't for college and I think learning about some of those topics kind of helped me like further understand the struggle that people face there, that my parents faced and the reasons why it was like that.

So I kind of take that and I don't want those feelings and the understanding of that kind of struggle to be forgotten in my family, even though the family that I create are very less likely to have that kind of struggle, mostly because I didn't, I didn't come from that country, I was born here. And so as future father and I'll say man too, it will be really

important for me pass on that kind of knowledge, just so that my children, you know, don't forget what it's like to be—what their grandparents went through, you know.

Lastly, it was important to Manuel to share that education helped him challenge his previously held beliefs that *machismo* meant only negative qualities of Mexican men. He was eager to share that he had a new understanding of *machismo*.

Yeah, I guess a little bit more [laughing]. You know I've always thought *machismo* meant all of these aggressive and assertive behavior thoughts and ideas, whatever, right. Like, I tell you to do something, you do it for me, no questioning, you know, those kind of things. But I learned that it can also be the opposite of it too.

As far as being noble, being honest, honoring family, honoring your family name, [thinking] being somebody of their word and being there for your wife when she needs your help and your children too. I guess in those kind of ways. That's it!

**Theme 4: *El Deber* (The Duty): Being educated influences your relationship to yourself, others, and the community.** The final theme revealed from the thematic analysis was “El Deber: Being educated influences your relationship to self, others and the community.”

***Being an educated Mexican-American man.*** Several participants described the ways in which achieving their educational goals increased their sense of pride and confidence as Mexican-American men. Guillermo described that being educated gave him a confidence boost and made him feel that no matter what he puts his mind to, he can do it. He explained, “I feel like just getting there and doing all of this was a big confidence boost. That uhm, it's okay, you can do it no matter where you come from, you know. That was pretty cool, I think.” He also explained that his educational accomplishments motivated him to want to be a role model for others in his community and show them that they should believe in themselves.

And then once I got my master's, it was a big deal, you know and that really put a lot more confidence in me. I was reading the stats and since like 1990, 22% of Latinos have a B.A. and only 8% have a master's and I don't know 3% have like ... “Damn, I'm in this little circle,” you know. Then I was like, “Me, really!” It's a big deal, you know. I think that's really important for me, so people can see that you can do it, especially from your own community. So they can get inspired. And even if they don't want to go to school, just stay out of trouble. ... I feel like a lot of them maybe don't have dads or male role

models and I think that can be really hard on kids. I don't know. That's why you just have to make them believe, I guess.

Guillermo also was aware that being a part of the "little circle" of educated *Mexicanos*, gave him the opportunity to combat negative stereotypes about Mexican men and represent his culture positively, although not easily: "it's the price to pay for being here." He felt cautious about the manner in which his behaviors would be reflected on Mexican people and grew tired of having to prove his worth as an educated Mexican man.

Now I think, okay, I don't want to act a fool either because it's important as a community and as a people they know we are educated, we can do good things in the community. It's not easy, but I feel like it's something that's important, for me especially to try and set a good example, you know. ... People see us as so negative sometimes that sometimes maybe I try and overdo it, you know. You just get tired of it, I guess. Like people don't believe that you're educated. Stuff like that it just gets annoying. Like really! ... Sometimes I feel like it's because of my skin color or whatever, but I don't know. It's something that I just have to live with, I guess. The price to pay for being here, I guess. I don't know. You have to really watch yourself, I guess. It's not easy.

Enrique had similar feelings to those of Guillermo. He felt a great sense of pride in his academic accomplishments and took them seriously.

I think it's just given me more knowledge, more power, and a greater ability to really set an example for others. Like I said, I'm humble, like I don't go around telling people like, "Oh yeah, I went to U.C.L.A. and I went to N.Y.U." Like, I did it for myself. I mean, my family too. They always value that, it's like, "I did it for myself; even if I don't use my degrees, I know that I did something and I accomplished something big, that not a lot of people do." That makes me feel confident in myself and my abilities and nobody can take that away from me, and I think that makes me a man. I'm confident about myself.

Enrique described a strong relationship due to his ethnic identity, academic success, and identity as a man. He believed that the combination of his strong Mexican culture and academic achievements gave him a greater platform to be a role model for others in his family and community.

Definitely being able to be a good role model for younger generations; being able to inspire others, using the knowledge. Just simply utilizing the knowledge you've had or I've had, as well as my cultural values: the idea of respect, and be kind to people, respect



your elders, and take care of your family; all those things that I learned growing up being Mexican.

Combine that with the power of education, the power to make logical decisions, and think critically, those two it's like, you know, who's going to ever take that away from me? Nobody. And I can really do what I want ... sometimes I need to remind myself that I do have a college education, and that I have a strong cultural background that pushes me to do things that I don't think I can. So I think that's a big thing. That's also why I think I want to go into counseling and stuff like that, it's just like more for the youth, you know, to let them know that it's possible despite where they are or who they grew up with, how much money their family has. Like, you can do it.

Reflecting on the influence of being Mexican-American and college-educated, Oscar's comments resonated with Guillermo's sentiment of being in the "*little circle*" and the lack of educated Latino males in general.

So, uhm, uhm, I'm thinking about it right now, like going through classes and things like that [paused] ... I know that a lot of my friends who are guys and Latino, haven't graduated, which got me thinking about it when you, when I heard that you were looking for more people. I was like, "Shit, dude." [laughing] They started college courses and they never finished or they just never started. There is a lot [of Latinos] that don't move to higher education, which is kind of a bummer.

***Relationship to others—*"It's like an elegant bro-code."** Oscar expanded on the lack of educated Latino males and further shared that it gave him a different perspective about himself as a man. Further, he commented on the impact of this identity on his relationship to other educated Latino men and an unspoken bond that he referred to as "***an elegant bro-code.***" He made it clear that another unspoken quality of being Latino and educated is that one would eventually be involved in the community.

When [you] see or when you talk to or when you meet Latinos that you know have gone to the university or just graduated or somehow like you know, involved with the community that you can tell that they've gone on to higher education and have reference to it, there's kind of like a weird connection. Like, uhm, we kind of relate with each other a little bit, not that you necessarily have to talk about it but there is more of an openness, I guess you can say, of like talking about what you're working on or where you see yourself, different opportunities, things like that.

But yeah you know talking with them its kind of like, its easy, and uh so I think that's that kind of a cool--it's almost like a uh, like a uh, like an elegant bro-code, I guess.

[laughing] But, uhm, yeah I haven't really thought about that before but, uhm, yeah, so I think that kind of, that kind of shapes it too. It's kind of like a different way of seeing yourself as a man, educated, Latino male. Just realizing the power behind that and, uhm, I think just knowing that you are influencing the community, I think that's something that's pretty big. Like eventually, you're going to get involve with the community at some point, right? [laughing]

Vicente was able to identify that going to college helped him find his niche in being a critical thinker and challenging important notions of his ethnic identity, sexual identity, and manhood, however he was wrestling with another important notion. Vicente's perspective was similar to the views of several other participants about giving back to their communities; however Vicente described "struggling" with feeling pulled between his community at home and his academic community.

So it's hard for me because yes, that's where I found my niche and that's where I found my place and that's where I found people who understand and who understood me. That's where I was able to make sense of my existence and that's where I was able to make sense and articulate like who I wanted to be, who I am and where I want to go. But how do I bring that back to my *familia*, you know? My mom had her freaking elementary school education and so did my dad. So, where does that work get bridged?

There was that clear disconnect between my community, at home and my academic community and still to this day, I don't know how to bridge it and you know that's what I want to do my—graduate work on is how do you bridge those communities? Like how does, where does, how does that bridge happen?

***Relationship to community.*** As Vicente continued to articulate his current struggle, he explained his profound sense of responsibility or "*my deber*"(my duty). He had transformed previous feelings of shame from being the only documented person in his family to coming back to his community, not as "*a knower*" but as a bridge between his community and the academic community.

Yes, I agree and that's why I became—it's also hard for me to also identify with a label activist, but I'm super involved with undocumented communities and queer communities and especially in [my hometown], and bringing legislation, and but it's, so I feel like it's *my deber*, you know, but it's also not *my deber* as like a responsibility because of guilt, it's more like raising *consciencia* right? Because I think it is our life's work that now that we've been privileged and privy to higher education it's our responsibility to create that

access for someone else because as self-centered is we may want to believe that you know I got into it because my SAT scores were really great or because I work really hard or because I'm smarter, or because yes, all of those things are true, however, someone else also helped you get there. You didn't do this by yourself, you know. So now it's our responsibility to help someone else get there."

As a *joto* (queer and *Chicano*)-identified man, Vicente aimed to give back to his community and be a role model by being subversive and challenging dominant narratives of manhood and patriarchy. Vicente has contributed to literary texts on queerness but also aimed to contribute to children's books about manhood. He described the importance of challenging presumed narratives of patriarchy and heteronormativity:

It's such an important topic. And one of my goals is to be able to write children's books about manhood. Uhm, and queerness, patriarchy in communities of color, specifically, because I think that part of it was that everything that was modeled, was modeled for us within the home and there was no resources, nor access to anything, but what was modeled in the home.

So I think that it's really important to, to be able to create, uhm, different definitions of manhood, uhm, within youth spaces because I think that if I had access to, to a male role model that had a different definition that would even allow me to question my own definition of manhood, it would have been so impactful you know.

So, you know, I think that that's what I aim to do because they don't have to model my definition, or my, but if they can at least question whether or not, you know or question their definition of manhood and if they agree, after they've questioned and critically thought about it, and want to continue it that, fantastic, but at least they know that manhood is not the same for everyone and that manhood is fluid. ... So I think that I aim to at least have people question their own definitions because if they don't, then again, it's falling into patriarchy.

### **Exemplary Portraits**

Consistent with the heuristic model, three exemplary portraits emerged from the overall experience of participants. The three portraits explained below represent participants' different experiences related to the primary research questions.

**Exemplary Portrait 1.** Group 1 represented participants who were not able to define manhood or had a low level of consciousness in defining manhood. This group also

characterized the experience among participants with mixed feelings toward their ethnic pride. Consequently, participants did not report significant meanings in their association among their ethnic identity, academic success, and experience of manhood.

**Exemplary Portrait 2.** Group 2 demonstrated an increased ability to describe and define their experience of manhood. This group also expressed higher levels of ethnic pride, which resulted in meaningful expressions in the associations among their ethnic identity, academic success, and experience of manhood.

**Exemplary Portrait 3.** The third group of participants illustrated the experience among participants who felt strongly about the importance of redefining Mexican-American manhood. This group demonstrated a high level of ethnic pride and gender consciousness. Therefore, participants discussed the significance of using their academic accomplishments and strong ethnic identity to positively model male roles in their community.

### **Composite Depiction**

This composite depiction is a representation of the core meanings and overall themes experienced by participants in this study. Overall, four major themes and 15 subthemes emerged as a result of an in-depth thematic analysis.

### **Influences on Identity: Role Model and Sociocultural Factors**

Generally all participants had *major influences on their identity as first-generation Mexican-American men*. Being Mexican-American contributed to their development through their cultural values such as the importance of family, speaking Spanish in the home, learning the value of respect, and having great food in their homes. Participants described the importance of staying connected to their Mexican heritage through family or visiting Mexico for important events. Being Mexican-American also contributed levels of stress and trauma through experiences of racism, “being-othered,” or having mixed citizenship status in their families.

Overwhelmingly, participants identified their fathers as the primary influence on their definition and experiences of manhood. Fathers played a major role by modeling positive and negative behaviors of manhood, demonstrating appropriate or inappropriate relationships with their wives, working hard, and providing for their families. Mothers were also credited for contributing to their identity as men, based on spending significant time with participants in their formative years. Additional role models included other family members such as uncles, grandparents, and godparents, as well as coaches and mentors. Witnessing their parents' relationships that were considered "progressive" or "nontraditional" impacted how they wanted to be as partners to their future spouses. Significant life events such as moving out of their parents' homes, going away to college, the death of their fathers, or becoming a father also were crucial events shaping participants' meaning and experiences of manhood.

### **Intersection of Manhood and *Machismo***

The second significant theme of this study was the *intersection of manhood and machismo*. Notably, several participants struggled to explicate their personal definition of manhood and articulated that manhood was a difficult concept to define. All participants referenced the term *machismo* or *machista* throughout their interviews. However, no participants endorsed the qualities of *machismo* as their personal meaning of Mexican manhood. It was common that participants criticized the application of *machismo* to reference Mexican manhood. A few participants displayed an aversion to manhood and deemed it secondary to their identity as human beings.

### **Ability to Define Manhood, Mediated by Education and Consciousness**

The subsequent theme that resulted from participant's interviews was the *ability to define manhood, mediated by their education and consciousness*. Many participants gave clear and descriptive qualities that defined manhood. Qualities such as being respectful and being a

provider and protector were among the most common to define manhood for this sample. Common explanations also included that they chose to take the positive qualities from their culture or male role models, such as their fathers, to help them identify their meaning of manhood.

A significant subtheme in this category included participants' desire to redefine manhood. Participants challenged presumed ideologies about manhood and believed it was important for men to be emotionally expressive, good communicators, and aware of their own sexism. Men should be aware of their own socialization process and not blindly accept what society dictates a man should be.

Going to college and being exposed to higher education was credited for participants increased level of consciousness regarding their ethnic identity and identity as men. Going to college provided participants the tools, language, and critical-thinking skills to understand themselves within a sociopolitical context. Participants explained that they learned about important social movements within the Mexican-American culture of which they were not aware previously. College not only offered participants the tools to challenge patriarchal notions of manhood, but also the language to be able to redefine manhood on their own terms.

### ***El Deber: Being Educated Influences One's Relationships to Self, Others, and the Community***

The last theme to represent the lived experience of this study's sample was "*El deber: Being educated influences one's relationship to self, others and the community.*" Participants provided powerful testimonials regarding the ways going to college had impacted their sense of self. Seeing themselves as college-educated Mexican-American men gave participants a great sense of pride and confidence. Many participants agreed it made them proud to be Mexican-American men and college-educated, to show "others" that "we are not all bad." Participants

witnessed a common understanding with other Mexican-American men who were also college-educated. One participant summed up this understanding as an “elegant bro-code.” For all participants, the privilege to be among “the few” educated Latino men gave them a sense of purpose to give back to their community and culture. This *deber* (duty) was seen as participants’ responsibility to give back to their families, mentors, and the community that had supported them, encouraged them, and given them so much throughout their personal and academic endeavors.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this heuristic inquiry was to explore the experiences and meanings of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American, college-educated men between the ages of 25 and 40. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews, 10 participants described and interpreted their experiences and meanings of manhood. The primary research question that guided this study was, “How do college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men define and interpret their lived experience of masculinity?” A relevant sub-question explored was, “What meanings do Mexican-American college-educated men attribute to the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experiences of manhood?”

An in-depth, within and across group analysis resulted in four themes that represented the experiences and meanings of manhood among research participants. The following are the four major themes along with 14 relevant subthemes: Influences on identity (being Mexican-American, primary role models, sociocultural factors); Intersection of manhood and machismo (not defining manhood—“I don’t think of it that way,” Difficult to answer—“Hard to articulate what the fuck manhood is,” machismo/patriarchy, aversion to the term and meanings associated with manhood); Ability to define manhood mediated by education and consciousness (defining manhood, re-redining manhood, taking the good/roles, education and *consciencia*); *El Deber*: Being Educated influences one’s relationships to self, others and the community (relationship to self, relationship to others— “It’s like an elegant bro-code,” relationship to community).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an interpretive analysis of the research findings based on the theoretical frameworks of Chicana feminism (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009) and symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2007). Additionally, the chapter emphasizes significant literature related to the findings provided in the previous chapter. Subsequently, I present the



training, clinical, and research implications, along with the limitations of the study. Lastly, the researcher's reflections and creative synthesis will follow.

### **Demographics**

The data resulting from the demographic questionnaire provided important information. Although the study did not focus on the experience of heterosexual men, 90% of participants in this study self-identified as heterosexual and only 10% as queer/*joto*. This finding is significant, as scholars identified the lack of research published on the experiences of gay/queer Latinos (Hernandez & Curiel, 2012). Hernandez and Curiel (2012) could identify no published family-therapy articles based on the experiences of gay Latinos over a 10-year period in select family therapy journals such as *American Journal of Family Therapy*; *Contemporary Family Therapy*; *Family Process*; *Family Relations*; *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*; *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*; *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*; and *Journal of Marriage and Family*. Further discussing the experience of gay Chicanos, Rodriguez (2004) specifically stated that few studies focus on the unique issues of self-identified gay Chicanos. Authors also contended that the experience of masculinity and manhood should be described as “masculinities” to account for the varied ways people experience masculinity (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016). Thus, the experiences and meanings of manhood among queer/*joto* Chicano/Mexican-American men should not be overlooked. Researchers agree careful attention and future research should focus on further understanding of the experience of manhood among queer/*joto* Chicano/Mexican-American men (Arcinega et al., 2008; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008).

The demographic results, based on self-identified race and ethnicity among participants in this study, merits further attention. Scholars have long identified that Latinos can be of any race; however researchers often provide racial comparisons among groups such as Whites, Blacks, Asians, and Latinos (Falicov, 2015; Garcia-Preto, 2005; Suárez-Orozco & Paez, 2008).

Additionally, researchers have not paid close attention to differentiating race and ethnicity among Latinos (Hernandez & Curiel, 2012). Given the propensity to designate “Hispanic/Latino” as a racial categorization, this study asked participants to provide their self-identified race *and* ethnicity.

The self-identified racial and ethnic identities of participants were similar to Pew Hispanic reports but different from national census data. For race, 60% of respondents in this study identified as “Other,” 30% identified as biracial/multiracial/Mestizo and 10% identified as White. Of participants who identified as “Other,” 66% wrote in “Mexican” and 33% wrote in “Mexican-American” as their race. These findings correspond with data provided by the Pew Hispanic Center, which found that 51% of Latinos prefer to identify themselves by their family’s country of origin, such as Mexican (Taylor et al., 2012). However, in comparison to the 2010 U.S. Bureau of the Census, 53% of Latinos racially identified as White. These statistics serve to highlight a few essential points about race among Latinos and Mexican-Americans. First, since its inception, the U.S. Census has struggled to consistently and clearly capture racial demographics among the U.S. population, especially among Latinos and Mexican-Americans. Second, as demonstrated by participants’ propensity to racially self-identify as “Other,” it is imperative for clinicians and researchers to understand Mexican-American men’s experience of race and self-identification. Given the immense diversity that exists in the Mexican culture, ignoring the significance of personal identifiers of an individual could lead to further homogenization of this cultural group or fragmentation of that identity (Rinderle, 2005). Likewise, therapists and researchers also should be cognizant of the potential for Mexican-American men to avoid discussing issues of race due to internalized racism or issues of skin color, otherwise known as “colorism” (Falicov, 2015).

When discussing a Mexican-American man's ethnic self-identification, understanding the personal significance of their chosen ethnic self-identification could provide vast knowledge of their personal experiences. The men in this study provided rich information pertaining to the significance of their ethnic identity. Some men discussed feeling more connected to their "Mexican" identity because their Mexican culture was a salient aspect of their family history. Others described the developmental process of their ethnic self-identification. Similar to the experience of many Latino immigrants, few participants felt they did not "belong" or did not quite fit into either "American/White" or Mexican cultural groups (Parra-Cardona, Wampler, & Busby, 2004). The experience of "*ni de aqui ni de alla*" (neither from here nor there) summarizes what participants experienced when they were described as "American" by extended family in Mexico, but perceived as "Mexican" by their White peers. Thus, racial and ethnic self-identification can be a complex and multifaceted experience among Mexican-American men. Consequently, understanding the meaning and significance behind racial and ethnic self-identification of Mexican-American men could provide deeper knowledge of that person's cultural context and life experiences.

### **Influences on Identity: Role Models and Sociocultural Factors**

Theme 1 represents the significant influences on participants' identities. In this theme, emergent subthemes were being Mexican-American, primary role models, and sociocultural factors. In the context of Chicana feminism, the primary theme is to place the lived experience of Chicana/o at the center (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). The first subtheme of Theme 1 was the significance of *being Mexican-American* in participants' lives, a multidimensional experience. Eight participants identified that their parents' cultural heritage was "very important" in their upbringing as children. Additionally, nine participants reported that their current Mexican heritage was "very important." However, participants also shared descriptive and meaningful

examples of the importance and centrality of their Mexican heritage in their families. Enrique started his interview by stating that identifying as Mexican-American was “everything I believe.” Other participants described their strong connection to Mexico and that being Mexican-American was “always there” and “so many things—culture, values, how you treat others, make life decisions.”

All participants described the values that were important to their families in being Mexican. The values participants identified were the importance of family, respect, speaking Spanish in the home, food, religion, and education. The importance of family to Latinos was corroborated by extant literature pertaining to Latino families. Scholars have long identified the most significant value to Latino families as *familismo* (Garcia-Preto, 2005; Paniagua, 2014). In a study conducted by Bermúdez, Kirkpatrick, Hecker, and Torres-Robles (2010), researchers asked Latino participants to identify the statements with which they most agreed from marriage and family therapy literature. The statements in the study represented the cultural values that were espoused as significant in working with Latino families. Bermúdez et al. (2010) found that the most endorsed cultural value was familism (also referenced as *familismo*). *Familismo* as a social construct was generated by social scientists to explain Latino families’ preferences for close family relationships, interdependence, cohesiveness, and cooperation among family members (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo, 2002; Smith & Montilla, 2006). Although participants did not use the term *familismo* in this study, they supported the overall meanings associated with the construct, particularly as they relate to the centrality of family in one’s life, importance of family, loyalty and cohesion, and sacrificing individual needs for the group. Studies such as that by Hurtado and Sinha (2008) supported that Latino men construct their meaning of manhood in the family and cultural context.

Participants in this study identified speaking Spanish in their home as an important value in their Mexican identity. Although researchers studied the relationship between language and ethnic identity, it is uncommon for family therapy literature to cite the importance and the nuances related to the use of Spanish among Mexican families (Hernandez & Curiel, 2012). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, all animals and humans communicate. However, what makes people unique is the ability to develop and depend on “symbols” to communicate (Charon, 2007). Symbols are the building blocks of human society. It is through symbols that humans are socialized, cultures are created, and that humans pass down cumulative knowledge. Charon (2007) described, “the human being, because of the symbol, does not respond passively to a reality that imposes itself but actively creates and re-creates the world acted in” (p. 69). Therefore language as a special type of symbol becomes a building block for human reality, society, culture, and individual life.

Consequently, it is significant that participants identified speaking Spanish in their family as central to their cultural identity as Mexican-Americans. In the National Survey of Latinos, 75% of respondents believed it was “very important” for future generations of Latinos to speak Spanish (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, & Velasco, 2012). Thus, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, language has the ability to give human lives meaning. The meanings specific to culture transmitted within the Mexican family were an essential aspect of participants’ experiences.

*Respeto* as a principal value in the lives of Latino and Mexican families has been well documented (Arredondo et al., 2014). Similarly, the second most endorsed Latino cultural value in the study by Bermúdez et al. (2010) was personalism (also referenced as *personalismo*). A major aspect of personalism is *respeto* or respect. *Respeto* is seen as one of the most important

qualities of interpersonal relationships (Falicov, 2015). Participants avidly described being taught the importance of respect at a young age. They were taught to be respectful to their spouses, children, women, and elders, particularly grandparents. These lessons were carried on in their definitions of manhood. One participant, who was a father, specifically described the significance of this lesson for him: it was so important that he was currently working on teaching his son and daughter these lessons. He described actively trying to model appropriate and respectful conversations between his wife and him so his son and daughter would learn how boys and girls (men and women) should treat each other. The value of respect was a positive attribute that several participants learned from their families and wished to emulate in their current life. Thus, participants in the current study supported scholars' descriptions of the significance of respect among Mexican families.

In relation to the experience of manhood, this study furthers the recommendations of Torres et al. (2002) to deconstruct meanings of *machismo* in the context of Latino cultural values such as *familismo* and *respeto*. Many participants in this study described being taught the value of *respeto* at a young age. *Respeto* was also related as an important aspect of participants' definitions of manhood. Symbolic interactionists similarly posit that culture is a shared perspective among a group with shared knowledge, language, and values that merge (Charon, 2007). Learning how to respect themselves, their parents and other family members, partners, and children were all central to their positive meanings of manhood. Thus, participants in this study symbolically gained their cultural knowledge from group identity influences.

The framework of symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2007) is also useful in understanding the influence of role models on participants' meaning and experiences of manhood. A symbolic interactionist framework posits that individuals make meaning of their lives through social and

human interaction. Therefore, the men in this study identified having meaningful interactions with their fathers as the primary influence in their experiences and identity as men. Other significant role models included their mothers, grandparents, godparents, uncles, mentors, and other men in their lives. This concept highlights the notion of symbolic interactionism that the society presumes the individual. It is through meaningful interactions with key people that knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next through symbols. These findings corroborate research suggesting that the home environment is a powerful socializing agent in the lives of Latino men regarding gender-role norms (Saez et al., 2009). Thus, participants observed shared symbols and meanings of manhood through their role models' actions or through verbal communication. This process parallels the multigenerational transmission process described by Bowen (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Respondents in this study described participating in their families, culture, and society in ways that demonstrated shared meaning around the symbolism of being a Mexican-American man.

Another finding was the influence of sociocultural factors on participants' identity as Mexican-American men. Factors such as gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and citizenship status impacted participants' identity as Mexican-American men. A few empirical studies explored the intersectional identities of men as they are privileged by their gender identity but also hold positions of subjugation according to their sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and citizenship status (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008). This experience among participants resembles the Chicana feminist theme known as multiplicity. Multiplicity helps to understand how men of Mexican origin occupy various social identities based on their social locations (race, ethnicity, class, immigration status, gender etc.) (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009). Chicana feminism explains that each social location is not experienced

separately. Thus, multiplicity is compatible with the experience of participants who did not separate their various subjugated identities (race, ethnicity, and immigration status) from their privileged identity of being a man.

### **Intersection of Manhood and Machismo**

Participants' level of awareness and the construct of *machismo* impacted their ability to define manhood. Several participants experienced difficulty when trying to define and interpret their experience of manhood. Participants' experience of "I don't think of it that way," was not supported by previous studies of masculinity with feminist-identified Latino men or incarcerated Mexican men (Bitar et al., 2008, Hurtado & Sinha, 2008). Similarly, the study conducted by Hammond and Mattis (2005), with a sample of African American men, stated that 15 participants, 11% of the original sample, did not answer the open-ended question, "What does manhood mean for you?" However, the authors did not include further discussion from these participants, as they were omitted from their sample. Some participants were able to articulate their difficulty in answering, "What does manhood mean to you?" It was much easier for them to discuss behaviors and interactions related to manhood than it was to discuss the meanings associated with the concept of manhood. Studies conducted by Hurtado and Sinha (2008) and Hammond and Mattis (2005) could provide critical information on the experiences of manhood among men of color. From the perspective of multiplicity (Lucero-Liu & Christensen, 2009), the intersectionality of race or ethnicity with gender among men of color could lead to understanding the feelings of inferiority men of color might face in a White-male dominated society. Such considerations confirm Chicana feminist ideology that understands that Chicano men experience oppression due to social and societal impositions.

In general, people have long associated the concept of *machismo* with Mexican-American masculinity (Arciniega et al., 2008; Cervantes, 2006; Torres et al., 2002). Although the word



*machismo* was not included in the interview guide, all participants referenced or discussed the term *machismo* in their interviews. It is important to note that even though the concept of *machismo* was mentioned, none of the participants endorsed the ideals or aspects of *machismo* as their preferred definition of manhood. The men in this study often mentioned the term *machismo* as a reference point for the type of manhood they eschewed and did not support.

An interesting finding from this study was that participants struggled to define manhood because they knowingly or unknowingly associated manhood to *machismo*, which they were trying to avoid. No studies could be found that explored the confluence of manhood, *machismo*, and the definitions of Mexican-American manhood. In the present study, several participants directly spoke of their disapproval of *machista* behavior. Participants' relationship to the concept of *machismo* can be defined as a stereotype threat (Steele, 1997). Stereotype threat is the fear that one's behavior may confirm or be understood in terms of a negative stereotype associated with one's social group (Steele, 1997). Therefore, as clearly explained by a participant in this study when he heard the term "manhood," he thought *machismo* and thus his fear of validating the *machismo* concept inhibited him from defining manhood.

Scholars have theorized about the impact of stereotypes on Chicana/o family functioning and gender roles (Niemann, 2004). Similar to a symbolic interactionist approach, Niemann indicated that the family is the main conveyer of culture and, thus, the Chicano family can also perpetuate the stereotype of the *macho* man. Niemann suggested that Chicanos internalize the stereotypes of *machismo*, which can perpetuate the dichotomous depictions of Chicano men as only bad (*machista*) or good (*caballero*). However, like participants in this study who discussed the variance of being a Mexican-American man, Niemann's primary solution was to expand the definitions of manhood among Chicano communities. In accordance with a Chicana feminist

perspective Lucero-Liu and Christensen (2009) and Neimann (2004) expanded and redefined manhood among Mexican-American men, which was a primary finding in this study.

Participants' inability to define manhood can be understood as a low level of consciousness of their gendered identity. Scholar Patricia Gurin and colleagues (1980) provided a useful distinction between identification and consciousness. Identification is the awareness of having ideas, feelings and interests similar to others who share the same stratum characteristics (Gurin et al., 1980). However, consciousness is differentiated from awareness by obtaining a set of political beliefs or action orientations arising out of the identification awareness.

Findings from the current study demonstrated an array of positions in the process of identification and consciousness or *consciencia*. A few participants were not able to define manhood or did not "think of [manhood] that way." These participants demonstrated a lack of identification and consciousness, according to Gurin et al (1980). Participants' inability to define their experiences as men could be a product of embodying dominant and subjugated identities. A person of a dominant group (systematically advantaged by society), such as gender in the case of these participants, may take that identity for granted (Tatum, 2000). In contrast, those aspects of a person's identity that are subjugated or systematically disadvantaged by society become an identity of primary focus. Thus, given that participants all identified as male and the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and meanings of manhood, it is likely that some participants had not reached a higher level of awareness and consciousness regarding their privileged identity of gender. Moreover, a compelling characteristic of a few participants who were not able to effectively define manhood was that they were among the four participants with highest current annual income. Thus, their privileged identities of gender and socioeconomic

status could have constrained their ability to think critically about their taken for granted identity as men.

A few men exhibited awareness of their gendered identity by stating that defining manhood was difficult. This position demonstrated that participants were aware of their gendered identity; however, they did not provide further analysis to demonstrate consciousness about this identity. Some participants were able to demonstrate awareness and consciousness in their identity and definition of manhood. This subset of men will further be described in the section entitled “Ability to Define Manhood Mediated by Education and Consciousness.”

In contrast, the experience of one participant demonstrated his awareness of his gendered identity but also an aversion to his perception of manhood. This participant’s experience superseded the experience of stereotype threat and appeared to be internalized racism. He spoke passionately about wishing “the culture was more progressive.” He described circumstances in which he did not agree with “problem behaviors” among Mexicans such as not going to college or starting a family at a young age. He often suggested other Mexicans who did not agree with him or share his belief system were problematic, especially pertaining to the significance of education. This participant appeared to strongly believe the qualities and characteristics of *machismo* were inherent in all Mexican culture and hence had negative views of his own culture. He also found problematic traditional gender roles, which he believed to be *machista*.

### **Ability to Define Manhood Mediated by Consciousness and Education**

Participants demonstrated that their educational experiences and level of consciousness influenced their ability to define manhood. Notably, participants who demonstrated a high level of consciousness were most likely to articulate meaningful experiences and definitions of manhood. Chicana feminist scholarship acknowledges the role of consciousness in a person’s ability to make sense of a person’s Mexican-American experience. Particularly, borderlands

theory, explicated by Anzaldúa (1987), helps individuals make sense of the complexity of social identities. Borderlands are defined as “that space in which antithetical elements mix, not to obliterate each other nor to be subsumed by a larger whole, but to combine in unique and unexpected ways (Hurtado, 2003). Applying borderlands theory to Mexican-American men’s experience of manhood provides a framework for understanding the complexity of their intersecting social identities: gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.

Several men in this study defined manhood as a man having integrity and good character. Participants described such qualities as being trustworthy, respectful, and aware of one’s emotions. The qualities described by the men in the study adhere to the qualities summed up as *personalismo* by many social scientists (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2015; Ho et al., 2004; Smith & Montilla, 2006). The construct of *personalismo* encapsulates the manner in which Mexicans interact in personal relationships. Mexicans seek to build relationships that are warm, inviting, and caring. Many Mexicans define their inner worth by honoring caring interactions, being respectful, and personal goodness. Thus, it was not surprising that this study’s participants identified aspects of their manhood by such qualities. One participant could not define manhood, but repeatedly insisted that he wanted to be “a good person.”

Participants endorsing the importance of being a Mexican man of good character corroborated findings by Bitar et al. (2008) of Mexican-American men on federal probation. Participants in Bitar et al.’s study described moving away from negative traits of *machismo* and moving toward more positive traits such as focusing on love for the family, expressing emotion in a good way, and being respectful. Additionally, Hurtado and Sinha (2008) found that participants in their study described “Positive Ethical Positionings” such as “standing behind

one's word, and not cheating or being untruthful, being a good human being and respecting others" (p. 346). These values clearly were reflected in the depictions of manhood in this study.

The Hurtado and Sinha (2008) Latino male participants explained manhood as a developmental process. Participants, particularly those who were married and raising children, indicated that manhood was a process that culminated in a commitment to family and community. Similarly, working and middle-class African American men defined manhood through these terms. The men in the current study emphasized that the meaning of manhood was different now from when they were younger. Interestingly, the two participants who endorsed this sentiment were fathers.

Participants credited going to college and obtaining a college education as offering the ability to develop their consciousness. Many participants described that a college education gave them the opportunity to develop their consciousness in regards to their Mexican-American identity, discussing race relations in the U.S.A., discussing issues of power and privilege, and understanding the historical context between Mexico and the U.S.A. One participant stated that "higher education gave [him] the language and *herramienta* (tools)" to be able to challenge his previous definitions of manhood. The process of having an increased level of consciousness regarding their identity as Mexican-American men helped participants deconstruct the concept of *machismo*.

One participant said that it was through college that he was able to understand that *machismo* did not encompass only negative qualities but also could include positive qualities such as being honorable, family oriented, and committed (Torres et al., 2002). Additionally, increased levels of consciousness led one participant to explain that many gender inequalities,

gender-power dynamics, and homophobia he witnessed in his family resulted from patriarchy and not *machismo*.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2015) defined patriarchy as a “social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line.” Social scientists added that patriarchy is characterized by male domination and power, which govern most of the world’s religions, school systems, and family systems (hooks, 2004). Feminist scholar bell hooks defined patriarchy as

a political-social system that insist that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (hooks, 2004, p. 47)

Participants in this study corroborated the hooks’ (2004) definition, stating that they observed the pervasiveness of patriarchy in their socialization and early experiences of manhood. They reflected on hearing messages about the importance of male dominance, the need to be tough, and always standing their ground. Participants also desired an emotional connection with male role models, specifically fathers. Rhetoric denigrating female-dominated activities or interests was critiqued profoundly in the experience of participants. One participant was severely disappointed when his interests in the arts were disparaged, because it was “for *viejas*” (for women) compared to his brother’s interest in soccer—a male-dominated sport. Other participants expressed their dislike for sports, refusal to drink alcohol at a young age, or disinterest in “chasing after girls”: all activities they believed boys/men should do.

hooks (2004) explained this phenomena as the “normal traumatization of boys.” Further, the most dangerous form of patriarchy is psychological patriarchy: “the dynamic between those

qualities deemed ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in which half of our human traits are exalted while the other half is devalued” (hooks, 2004, p. 62).

Psychological patriarchy is a phenomenon that infiltrates the minds of the entire society, males and females alike. Several participants described the need to value females and males equally in defining the meaning of manhood. These participants embodied what hooks (2004) exalted as necessary to end patriarchy: the need to challenge the psychological and concrete manifestations of patriarchy in one’s daily life. Valuing the feminine and masculine spirits in him was another example of how one participant defined manhood.

Participants in this study provided various definitions, descriptions, and experiences of manhood. All participants recognized the gender norms, roles, and behaviors categorized by social scientists as *machismo* (Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010). Most notably, the entire sample also rejected those common preconceptions of *machismo* as their definition of manhood. Several participants explicitly opposed the notion that to be a man one must exert hypermasculine traits such as fighting, drinking, and being dominant over women (Mirandé, 1997). In fact, several participants identified the importance of respecting women, treating them as equals, sharing in the caring, and providing for their families as what it meant to be a man. Furthermore, a portion of participants spoke confidently about the need to redefine manhood.

### ***El Deber: Being Educated Influences One’s Relationship to Self, Others, and the Community***

Completing a college education is an exceptional achievement. Most men in this study did not take this achievement lightly. Participants in this study reported feeling an increased sense of pride, confidence, and changed perspective in seeing themselves as men. Participants reported receiving messages of the importance of getting a college degree by their parents. The college achievement of first-generation Mexican-American men should be acknowledged and

celebrated. Research into the impact of educational accomplishments on the experience of Mexican-American manhood is scant. However, an abundance of literature explores psychological coping, well-being, social supports, academic persistence, and academic nonpersistence among Latinos broadly (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Gloria, Castellanos, Scull & Villegas, 2009; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Ojeda, Navarro & Morales, 2011).

Knowing that there “are not many of us” helped some participants understand the importance of their academic accomplishments. Participants recognized that connecting to other educated Mexican-American men was a unique experience. There was a common understanding in this experience that was summarized as “an elegant bro-code.” Seeing themselves as educated Mexican-American men gave participants an increased sense of responsibility to their families and communities. The majority of men expressed the importance of being positive role models to younger generations in their families, but also of committing themselves to public service through their jobs, volunteering, or mentoring younger Mexican-American males.

### **Clinical Implications**

Findings from this study highlighted the unique experiences and definitions of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American men who are college-educated. Mexican-American men play an integral part in their relationships, families, and communities. Therefore, their presence cannot be undervalued or overlooked. The negative theorizing based on narrow understandings of masculinity has plagued Mexican-American men, families, and communities for decades. The stories shared from participants in this study can be used to further inform the clinical training of future clinicians.

**Assessing complexity and meanings of cultural values.** Consistent with most family therapy literature, all participants affirmed that Mexican cultural values were enacted in their



families (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2015; Flores & Carey, 2000; Ho et al., 2004). The most prevalent values identified by participants in this study were the importance and centrality of family, *respeto*, and speaking Spanish in the home. Participants explained that they were taught to honor and value their family throughout their lives. Although this finding supports the Latino cultural value of *familismo*, participants described various characteristics and experiences associated with *familismo*. The experience of growing up in a large extended family that shared many traditions and experiences was vastly different from that of the participant who overcame a 10-year cut-off from his family due to his gay identity. The variation in these experiences supports researchers' requests to explore the within-group differences among Latino groups associated with general Latino cultural values (Domenech-Rodriguez et al., n.d.).

The importance of language was significant among participants. This finding is important because therapists and helping professionals should know the extent to which the Spanish language might play a role in a Mexican person's ethnic identity or influence their interactions with others. Also, it is important to recognize the possible existence of a language-fluency continuum in Mexican families, which might create various family dynamics and affect family functioning. For example, some family members might only speak in English to each other and others might only speak in Spanish, or a combination of the two.

Food also was identified as an essential part of participants' Mexican heritage. This finding could help therapists discuss the role of food in their client's individual and family dynamics. Dialogue focusing on which food was most shared in the home, at family gatherings or celebrations, or rituals around meals could help therapists build rapport and share a deeper connection with their clients, as well as gain a better understanding of important family interactions.

**Exploring “masculinities.”** Participants in this study rejected and opposed the traditional and negative perceptions of *machismo*. Therefore, it is critical that therapists working with college-educated Mexican-American men suspend their current conceptualizations of Mexican-American manhood, as defined by the concept of *machismo* (Bitar et al., 2008). Culturally sensitive therapy with Mexican-American men should begin with therapists identifying their current belief system about Mexican-American men (Arredondo et al, 2014). Often, therapists are unaware of the ways the historical categorization of Mexican-American men as *machista* may influence their worldview. A therapist’s ability to critically self-interrogate his or her perceptions of Mexican-American men will aid in the process of culturally sensitive therapy with Mexican-American men (Falicov, 2009). Therapists could seek a more client-centered definition of manhood and be curious about the experiences that have shaped their clients’ meaning. Questions such as “What is the meaning of manhood for you?” “What experiences have most shaped your meaning of manhood?” or “Who has most influenced your experience and meaning of manhood?” could facilitate an in-depth conversation with clients that would offer a client-centered understanding of their experiences of manhood. These questions particularly could be useful in assessing value-centered family and couple dynamics.

### **Training Implications**

There are several significant implications for the training of future couple and family therapists. First, it is imperative that couple and family therapy programs commit to the values of diversity and social justice. This commitment should be reflected across several paradigms including program mission, program values, faculty research agendas, and overall teaching philosophy. It is vital that training programs prioritize a commitment to diversity and social justice to challenge the theoretical myth of sameness among all Latinos, which promotes a

deeper understanding of the experience of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A. (Hardy, 1989; Hernandez & Curiel, 2012).

All therapists potentially hold biases that can impact clinical effectiveness with Mexican-American men. Given the pervasiveness of perceiving Mexican-American men from a deficit-based paradigm, exploring one's own belief system relevant to Mexican-American men is critical (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2010, 2015; Gloria et al., 2009). Authors agree that clinical sensitivity and cultural responsiveness in working with Mexican families can be attained by understanding the self-of-the-therapist (Arredondo et al., 2014; Bermudez, 1997; Hardy, 1989; Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995). Examining the self-of-the-therapist can encourage future trainees to explore their own belief systems regarding Mexican-American manhood. By fully understanding their own values, perceptions, and biases regarding Mexican-American manhood, future therapists will be positioned better to help Mexican-American men and their families understand if they, too, subscribe to popular stereotypes regarding their own culture.

To better understand the complex and multidimensional experience of Mexican-American manhood, clinicians need to learn about these men's sociohistorical context. Falicov (2014) provides the multidimensional ecosystemic comparative approach (MECA) to working with Latinos. MECA offers a comprehensive framework to integrate cultural sensitivity into the observation, conceptualization and implementation aspects of therapy. MECA is not only a framework for clinicians to better understand the living experience of their clients; it is also applied to the therapist's own cultural and social location, as well as that of the clinical supervisor. Thus, when applied across the several levels of the therapeutic model, MECA offers increased opportunities for Mexican-American men to be treated within a culturally attuned therapeutic context. First, the MECA framework offers clinicians the opportunity to better

understand the therapeutic context through several tools (Falicov, 2014). The ecological niche exercise can be used to further support the self-of-the-therapist work given that the goal is to help clinicians understand their cultural context vis-à-vis that of their clients. Second, the MECAMap allows clinicians to explore several domains related to the participants' experience. The major aspects of a MECAMap include the client's ecological context, family lifecycle, migration/acclimation, family organization, and experiences related to cultural diversity and social justice. Additionally, the therapist is encouraged to process and understand the areas of similarity and difference in comparing his or her own MECAMap to that of the client. Lastly, the MECAMap can be enhanced with the family genogram to obtain a significant historical account of important family dynamics, stories, and triumphs (Falicov, 2014).

Future couple and family therapists should be trained to be critical consumers of science. As the researcher, it was difficult to identify studies centered on the experience of Mexican-American men's manhood. Several studies that highlighted an aspect of Mexican-American manhood applied constructs of male identity normed on general constructs of gender and manhood (Fraguso & Kashubeck, 2000; Saez et al., 2009; Ojeda, Rosales & Good, 2008). Measurement instruments created to measure factors such as hypermasculinity or male role attitudes and to infer levels of *machismo* among Mexican-American men continue to perpetuate inaccurate representations of Mexican-American manhood. Thus, in the training of future clinicians, trainees should be taught to critically examine scholarly articles.

### **Research Implications**

This research examined the experiences and meanings of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American, college-educated men. The unique findings regarding this population's experience of manhood lends important research implications. Current research on the experience of manhood among Mexican-American men is minimal. Additionally, the extant

contribution of current theorizing on Mexican-American manhood is based on anecdotal, pejorative, and simplified understandings of this population. More qualitative research with men of Mexican descent on the experiences of manhood would contribute to participant-centered data for future research with this population. The value of qualitative data with underrepresented populations, including Mexican-American men, will aid in having their voices heard and can further inform future quantitative studies normed on this population (Ojeda, Flores, Meza, & Morales, 2011).

Future research on the experience of manhood among Mexican men also should include men of diverse backgrounds. Conducting studies with Mexican men of immigrant, second, or third generations could lead to a broader knowledge base to inform clinical practice and training of mental health professionals. Including participants of various age groups, gay/queer/*joto*-identified, or different educational backgrounds would further enhance knowledge on the experience of manhood among Mexican men. Thus, including Mexican men of diverse backgrounds could assist in combating current conceptualizations of homogeneity among men of Mexican descent.

Furthermore, future studies should continue to employ a heuristic inquiry model to provide additional, in-depth knowledge of the ways Mexican men are similar *and* different. Lastly, the addition of longitudinal studies also is important in bolstering understanding of the development of Mexican men's experience of manhood over time. Such studies would provide a well-rounded portrait of the experience of manhood for Mexican-American men.

### **Limitations**

The findings from this study provide unique insights into the experiences and meanings of manhood among a select group of Mexican-American men; however, it is not without limitations. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth description of the lived

experience of each participant (Patton, 2002). Although the sample size for this study is within the recommended size for in-depth qualitative research, findings from this study should not be used to infer generalizations to all Mexican-American men. The experiences and meanings drawn from this study represent a select sample of Mexican-American, college-educated men and any inferences to the larger subset of Mexican-American men should be performed cautiously.

Although consistent with the inclusion criteria for using heuristic inquiry, a possible limitation of this study is the homogeneity of the sample. This present study excluded Mexican-American men of other backgrounds and solely focused on the experience of college-educated, first-generation, Mexican-American men between the ages of 25 and 40. Thus, this study excluded the voices of Mexican-American men who were not college education and hailed from varying generational groups such as immigrants; second, third, or further generations; or Mexican-American men living in other parts of the U.S.A. Furthermore, I required both parents to be immigrants from Mexico, which therefore excluded participants whose parents were born in the U.S.A. or other countries. Lastly, the perspectives of Mexican-American men under the age of 25 and over 40 also were not examined.

A significant limitation of this study was the lack of representation of gay, bisexual, or transgender Mexican-American men. The majority of the study's participants identified as heterosexual and one participant (10%) identified as gay/queer/*joto*. Additionally, I did not ask participants to disclose any gender identification and thus they were assumed to be cisgender individuals. Therefore, the experiences and meaning of manhood among gay, bisexual, or transgendered Mexican-American men could have provided critical perspectives in further

understanding this phenomenon. Future research should continue to seek the varied experiences and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Finally, although my cultural, ethnic, and academic background was an asset to this study, my gender could be a limitation. Sharing similar social locations to those of the participants in ethnicity and educational achievements was valuable in building rapport with participants during the interview process. However, as participants struggled to identify the meaning of manhood, it is unclear whether participants were influenced by my gender. Conversely, research with immigrant Latino men suggests that a Latino man may more openly express emotion with a woman (Ojeda, Flores et al., 2011). I made much effort to create an environment of openness and acceptance of participants' experiences during the interview. I expressed words of comfort such as, "It's your experience"; "there is not a right or wrong answer"; "we can come back to that if you'd like"; or "whatever you think is fine" if participants struggled to identify their experience or meaning of manhood. Additionally, to minimize this limitation, I engaged in ongoing self-reflection and documented potential biases through constant memoing and journaling. I addressed specific concerns with members of the research team throughout the process of data collection and data analysis.

### **Reflections of the Researcher**

Consistent with the heuristic inquiry methodology, it is important for me to put my experiences of the phenomenon at the forefront and the conclusion of this study. Below I share my reflections of this research process and the affect it has had on my meanings associated with Mexican-American manhood. This research endeavor has been an overwhelming mixture of emotions, thoughts, and experiences. My project began with an intense desire to highlight the voices of men who carry my ancestral blood: to explore an alternative story to the one that has been told about them. It was also my goal to provide first-hand accounts of the experiences of

manhood among men who represented members of my family and ultimately to honor men such as my late father.

My first couple of interviews seemed quick and lacked what I thought would be an earth-moving experience. I was nervous that I was not capturing enough information or that I was “doing it wrong.” Speaking to colleagues with research experience helped me calm my worries and gave me the encouragement to keep going. Once I settled into the project and gained more experience fielding interview questions, my experience changed. I found myself in a much more comfortable, relaxed, yet determined position. I found ways to hold the tension of giving participants more time and probing just a little bit more; a skill I credit to my clinical experience. I recall my sense of centeredness by my third interview and was excited that I felt more “like me.”

Reflexive memoing allowed me to process my reactions, thoughts, impressions, and emotions. It also provided a space to hold important perceptions and biases so I could be fully present to participants’ experiences throughout the research process. I often processed feelings such as frustration and confusion through memoing. I also expressed happiness, appreciation, and gratitude toward participants. Based on the heuristic model, I related to some of the participants’ stories and experiences of being Mexican-American. We shared in mutual experiences and collaborated in putting forth their stories.

Once data collection was completed I began to listen to the interviews repeatedly. I started to memorize words and contexts for each participant. I realized I became very protective of each participant. I held onto their words and felt very committed to depicting their experiences as accurately as possible. I also felt frustrated for many reasons: at the lack of depth from some participants; the lack of consciousness in their maleness; the lack of ethnic identity and prowess and for “not getting it” or for not connecting to the topic as much as I desired. Once again,



memoing and sharing these feelings with the research team facilitated my ability to stay close to participants' true experiences without my interpretations.

As the data analysis continued, I felt a deep sense of appreciation and responsibility to the participants. Their experiences were so profound and each one of them provided a unique contribution to this study. I also felt very grateful to my committee members for their support and encouragement, especially for the assistance of Dr. Bermúdez. At times when I felt lost in the data, Dr. Bermúdez helped me stay focused and helped me pick my head up a little higher to keep going.

Wrapping up this research project was no small feat. I was thankful for my colleagues who consistently checked in and encouraged me because I was “almost there.” In the closing of this dissertation I also continued to mourn the loss of my father. As I read the poetic words of bell hooks (2004), I was forever changed. I echoed hooks's sentiments for a true revolution of masculinity that would help participants in this study—and all men—feel a sense of wholeness, so they did not have to deny parts of themselves. Two days after reading *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*, I had a powerful emotional response. hooks (2004) vulnerably recalled childhood stories of rage and violence at the hands of her father and stated, “My longing for my father's death began in childhood.” The patriarchal abuse of power exhibited by hooks's father and the men in the author's life spoke to the suffering and powerlessness women and children often feel; however, it was not an applicable experience in my life. Having recently lost my own father, I collapsed into the arms of my partner, weeping uncontrollable tears, while saying, “I would do anything to have him back.” In those moments, I was reminded of the unconditional and unrelenting love I shared with my father. I was grateful beyond words that I will never share hooks's or others' traumatic experiences of their fathers.

Lastly, I am honored that the men in this study granted me the opportunity to bear witness to their private experience of manhood. I am indebted to their courage, tenacity, and resilience in striving to be pillars of “*mi gente*” (our people). My hope is that this small contribution of research will be able to lift the voices and experiences of Mexican-American men.

### **Creative Synthesis**

In accordance with the heuristic inquiry model, I will conclude this research with a creative synthesis. In the final stage of heuristic research, the researcher provides a creative synthesis of the major qualities, themes, meanings, and details of the experience as a whole. Having been immersed in the data, I have developed a deep admiration for the participants in my study. They embodied and confirmed a central tenet of my belief system: the experience of manhood among Mexican men is far more diverse than the concept of *machismo*. My early research interests at the beginning of my graduate school tenure were focused on the diversity of Latino families. Reading all the “cookbook” style chapters, articles, and books on how to work with Latino families laid an important foundation for knowledge, but I was enraged. I was unclear about the purpose of those books and about whom, exactly, they were talking, because my experience did not match the descriptions they provided. The experience of the participants in my study confirmed that the experience of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A., in particular, is multidimensional. I am grateful for the participants who confirmed my experience and belief: that Latinos can be similar *and* different. The experiences captured in this study truly represent the within-group differences among Mexican-American men.

The participants in this study shared deeply of themselves. They were open about the major experiences that helped shape their identity throughout their lives. Being Mexican-American was important for all participants, although less so for a few. They identified key persons instrumental in shaping their identity as Mexican-American men, mainly their fathers,

but gave honorable mentions to their mothers, grandparents, uncles, coaches, and other mentors. Several sociocultural factors, especially race and ethnicity, provided context to the development of their identities as men. An interesting theme among participants emerged highlighting the intersection of the concept of *machismo* with the experience of manhood. As the researcher, one of my biases was that I do not perceive machismo as synonymous with Mexican manhood. Thus, I was committed to not interjecting the concept of *machismo* in the study, as my goal was to understand the experience of manhood. It was surprising to me how the concept of *machismo* was introduced in this study. Many times, participants seemed to pose it as question. When I asked, “What does being a man mean for you” or “Has being Mexican-American influenced the meaning of what being a man is for you? If so, how?” participants eventually introduced the concept, “Do you mean machismo?” or “Like some people say machismo.” It appeared as though many participants understood a common stereotype, that all Mexican men are *machista*. However, none of the participants identified *machismo* as their own definition of manhood.

It also was apparent that increased levels of consciousness, particularly associated with their experience of being educated, influenced participants’ ability to provide their own definition of manhood. A few participants were passionate about the importance of redefining manhood. Participants also felt a sense of great pride in their academic accomplishments. They recognized that they embodied a different role as educated Mexican-American men. They felt a special connection with other Mexican-American men who were educated, but most of all felt the power of their “deber” (duty) and demonstrated an increased sense of responsibility and duty to be positive male role models to others in their families and communities.

My findings have encouraged me to continue the endeavors of many Chicana and Black feminists such as Aída Hurtado, Gloria Anzaldúa and bell hooks. These women are passionate

about the importance of creating a deeper understanding of the ways patriarchy affects all, with special attention to the impact on men in particular. I am eager to find ways to improve the clinical practice, training, research, and scholarly work that impact the lives of Mexican-Americans and Latinos.

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## Appendix A: IRB Application Form

### 1) Protocol Title

An Exploration of College-educated, First Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

### 2) IRB Review History

Does Not Apply

### 3) Objectives

The purpose of is to explore the experiences and meanings of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American college-educated men. This study will additionally explore participants' perceptions of the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experience of manhood.

### 4) Background

Social scientists have long questioned the negative effects of perceiving, describing, and treating men through a singular paradigm of masculinity<sup>4</sup> (Connell, 1995; Connell & Meserschmidt, 2005; Levant, 1996; Shek, 2006). As research on masculinity grew, much of the focus was on White/European middle-class, American men. Qualities such as assertiveness, individualism, aggression, competition, adventurousness, and achieving power or status were highlighted as important in male masculinity (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank & Tracey, 2008; Falicov, 2010; Levant & Pollack, 2003; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). However, when the same characteristics are applied to Latino masculinity, they are often wrought in negative connotations (Bacigalupe, 2000; Mirandé, 1997; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Historically, Latino men, regardless of ethnic background, have been categorized as aggressive, domineering, authoritarian, promiscuous, full of bravado, emotionally unavailable, and sexist (Arciniega et al., 2008; Baca-Zinn, 1982; Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Levant & Pollack, 2003; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). The aforementioned characteristics used to describe Latino masculinity can be summarized into one concept that is commonly associated with Latino masculinity: "machismo."

The characteristic of machismo can be described as cultural attitudes about gender norms, roles, behaviors, and expectations; in addition, it is said to reflect a male's strong orientation toward domination and having control (Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010). The most common preconceptions and descriptions of machismo include the male's images of being dominant over females, defending himself to other males, and proving his manliness through fighting, drinking, and an overt male bravado (Mirandé, 1997). Additional descriptions include having increased sexual drive and seducing women (Torres et al., 2002).

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<sup>4</sup> The terms masculinity and manhood will be used interchangeably to describe the sum total of all psychological, emotional, societal, and emotional experiences associated with being a man i.e. gender norms (Levant, Hirsch, Celentano, & Cozza, 1992), male sex roles (Pleck, 1981), gender stereotypes (Connell, 2005).



Falicov (2010) specifically states that the representation of Latino men in U.S.A. society and the social sciences specifically has been derived from a pathologizing and stereotypical portrayal. The mystique of manliness among Latino men described as “machismo” includes additional characteristics such as hypermasculinity, overindulgence in alcohol, and exuding sexual prowess (Falicov, 2010; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Authors agree that the literature on the interpretation of machismo is largely based on stereotypes and anecdotal observation, and has led to an inconsistent, negative, oversimplified, and monolithic representation of Latino men (Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, Delgado-Romero & Zapata, 2014; Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012; Torres, Solberg & Carlstrom, 2002). A significant problem with the concept of machismo is that it is used as an all-encompassing concept to describe Latino masculinity (Felix-Ortiz, Ankney, Brodie, & Rodinsky, 2012).

However, recent scholarship has highlighted that machismo also entails positive characteristics (Arciniega et al., 2008; Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2010; Mirandé, 1997). As a positive value, machismo has been related to a father’s responsibility in taking care of and providing for his family, bravery, honor, respect, generosity, and loyalty (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falicov, 2010, 2014; Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012). The concept of machismo needs to be understood as a multidimensional concept as outlined by Arredondo et al. (2014): “gender socialization is complex and must be understood as it relates to an individual’s entire upbringing and other dimensions of his or her identity (i.e., geographic origins, parent’s education, generational and socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and status as an immigrant or non-immigrant” (p. 26).

Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus (2012) agree there is a glaring lack of research on Latino men. Authors focused on Latino populations have argued that, despite longstanding scholarship challenging unidimensional models of masculinity, Latino men, specifically Mexican-American men, are still treated through the prism of machismo (Arciniega et al., 2008; Falicov, 2010; Torres, Solberg & Anderson, 2002). Several authors propose that Mexican men in particular condone and subscribe to particular notions of masculinity referred to as machismo (Cervantes, 2006; Falicov, 1998, 2010; Mirandé, Pitones & Diaz, 2011; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Unfortunately, these pervasive stereotypes have developed into what Falicov (2010) and Mirandé (1997) have critiqued as the “deficit model” that used Mexican masculinity as the source of various pathologies within the Mexican family. Research continues to neglect the nuanced experience of masculinity, especially as it pertains to the ways in which various cultural groups define and experience manhood.

Thus, even within the Mexican culture, it is important to pay attention to the various ways masculinity can be defined and experienced based on a host of contextual variables—e.g., generational cohort, country of birth, immigrant status, languages spoken, level of education, and many other factors. Given the pervasive negative perceptions of Mexican-American men in the U.S.A., much research is needed to further understand the vast and complex experiences of Mexican-American men, specifically as it relates to their masculinity. It is of grave importance that the field of Couple and Family Therapy (CFT)

strives to understand Mexican-American men in their context and challenge rigidly held beliefs about their experience and meaning of masculinity. Understanding the experience of a diverse population of Mexican-American men will allow mental health professionals to in turn have a multi-faceted view of Mexican-American men that will help inform training, research, and clinical interventions that are more sensitive to the diverse needs of this population. This proposed study will help fill the gap in the field of CFT that is created by the lack of empirical studies exploring the experiences and meanings of masculinity among first-generation Mexican-American men.

## 5) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order to qualify for the study, participants will have to meet a set of inclusion criteria:

1) men who are between the ages of 25 and 40; 2) self-identify as Mexican, Mexican-American or Chicano; 3) first generation born in the U.S.A.; 4) raised by both parents who were born in Mexico; and 5) must have completed at least a bachelor's degree.

Participants will be excluded from the study if they are under the age of 25 or over the age of 40 and not born in the U.S.A. Additional exclusion criteria includes if either parent is born in any other country besides Mexico, or if participants are not aware of parents' country of birth due to cut-off. Lastly, if participants were reared by anyone other than their biological Mexican-born parents will also be ground for exclusion

*Adults unable to consent*

*Individuals who are not yet adults (infants, children, teenagers)*

*Pregnant women*

*Prisoners*

*Not Applicable*

## 6) Study Timelines

Participants will spend 15-20 minutes completing the demographic survey, followed by the semi-structured interview that will last approximately 2 hours. Researchers expect to complete data analysis in December 2015.

## 7) Study Endpoints

The researchers expect to find out how college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men define and interpret their lived experience of masculinity. Also, the researchers intend to identify what meanings Mexican-American college-educated men attribute to the relationship between their ethnic identity, academic success, and experiences of manhood.

## 8) Procedures or Methods Involved

This study will be a qualitative heuristic inquiry. A purposeful homogenous criterion-based snowball sampling approach will be used to identify men between the ages of 25-40 who identify as Mexican-American and have completed at least a bachelor's degree. Participants will be recruited via mass email through several organizations and local agencies such as Napa County Hispanic Network, Napa Valley Latino Heritage Committee and Palo Alto University (letters of support included as Appendix H).

Information and recruitment flyer will be emailed to key community agencies such as Puertas Abiertas and Napa Valley College (letters of support included as Appendix H). In addition, a snowball sampling approach will allow the researcher to inquire from participants if they would have additional referral contacts that could serve as information-rich key informants for the study.

Recruitment flyers describing the purpose of the study and the principal investigator (PI) will be distributed to the aforementioned agencies to post at their headquarters. With the support of the key community agencies, the PI also will attend community events hosted by these agencies to distribute flyers and to discuss the purpose of the study. As recommended for the recruitment of Latino participants, recruitment procedures will also involve posting and distributing informational flyers about the study's purpose at local stores such as the Coliseum Sports (letters of support included as Appendix H).

After verbal informed consent is established, participants will complete a demographic questionnaire (see appendix). Participants will then participate in a 2-hour face-to-face, semi-structured interview (see appendix) that will be audio recorded. The research team will transcribe the audio recording of the interview to accurately capture participant's answers to interview questions. Transcripts will then be used for data analysis. Line by line analysis and thematic clustering will render the individual depictions, exemplary portraits and composite depictions of participants in the phenomena according to Moustakas (1990). The heuristic inquiry research design was chosen for its ability to maintain the individual's experience within the phenomenon being investigated.

There will be no identifiable information collected from the participants nor long term follow-up that will help lessen the probability of risks.

## **9) Data Banking**

Data will be stored on an encrypted, password protected device such as the SanDisk Cruzer Switch (model SDCZ52-064G) that includes SanDisk Secure Access Software. The SanDisk Secure Access Software allows the use to create password protected folders for the protection of stored data. Data and storage devices will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the home of Yajaira Curiel for possible future analysis in the time length of 5 years. At the end of this time period, the data will be destroyed in a secure and safe method.

## **10) Data Management**

All interview transcripts will be associated with participant's chosen pseudonym. The data will not include any identifiable information and only the research team will access data. Data will be stored in the home of Yajaira S. Curiel and will be kept for 5 years. At the end of that time period, the data will be destroyed in a secure and safe manner.

Data analysis will follow the steps of heuristic inquiry as outlined by Moustakas (1990). There are six phases to heuristic inquiry research that guides its methodology. These phases are the following: 1) initial engagement; 2) immersion; 3) incubation; 4) illumination; 5) explication and 6) creative synthesis. The creative synthesis is the final reflexive product and integration of the researchers experience with the phenomenon and the results of thematic analysis of interview transcripts.

**11) Provisions to Monitor the Data to Ensure the Safety of Subjects**

Does Not Apply

**12) Withdrawal of Subjects**

Does Not Apply

**13) Risks to Subjects**

Researchers do not anticipate physical, social, legal or economic risk to study participants. It is foreseeable that participants could experience minimal psychological or emotional distress or discomfort while discussing their views and experiences of manhood as college-educated, first generation Mexican-American men.

**14) Potential Benefits to Subjects**

There is no direct benefit to participating in this study. However, participants may benefit from having an increased level of awareness of their own experiences and meanings of manhood. Participants may learn something new about themselves as result of sharing their stories that might have a positive influence on their perception of manhood.

**15) Vulnerable Populations**

Does Not Apply

**16) Multi-Site Research**

Does Not Apply

**17) Community-Based Participatory Research**

Does Not Apply

**18) Sharing of Results with Subjects**

Does Not Apply

**19) Setting**

Study participants will be recruited through mass email and advertisement flyers in their community. Local community organizations and agencies will be used as recruitment sites. Organizations and agencies that have demonstrated support (letters of support

included as Appendix H) of this research study include: Palo Alto University; Puertas Abiertas, a Latino-based community resource center; Napa Valley College; Napa Valley Latino Heritage committee, Napa County Hispanic Network, and Coliseum Sports. Study interviews will be held at community agencies or participant's home.

## **20) Resources Available**

The researchers anticipate recruiting 6-12 participants to be very feasible in the time period following IRB approval. Both researchers have access to over 12 participants who will meet the inclusion criteria and anticipate eligible participants will refer other eligible men via snowball sampling. In addition, researchers anticipate full support of professional networks to assist in disseminating information regarding to potential participants. Both researchers have advanced degrees in the field of Couple and Family Therapy and have presented numerous conference workshops on the topics related to Mexican-American communities. Data collection is expected to be completed in two months with an additional two months for data analysis.

## **21) Prior Approvals**

Does Not Apply

## **22) Recruitment Methods**

Participants will be recruited via e-mail and study advertisements inviting their participation in the study. There will be no compensation for participation.

## **23) Number of Subjects**

This study seeks to obtain 6-12 individuals to participate in the study who meet the inclusion criteria.

## **24) Confidentiality**

Data that is collected will only be associated to each participant via the pseudonym they have chosen for the study. The study's demographic questionnaire does not collect any identifiable information. Contact with participants will be made via a private email account that is set up for the purpose of the study specifically. Only members of the research team will have access to the study's email account and collected data. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the home of Yajaira S. Curiel and stored for the time period of 5 years for future analysis and will then be properly disposed.

## **25) Provisions to Protect the Privacy Interests of Subjects**

During verbal consent, participants in the study will be informed that their participation is completely voluntary and have the right to drop out of the study without any penalty. They will also be informed they do not have to answer any interview questions that they do not feel comfortable answering.

## **26) Compensation for Research-Related Injury**

Does Not Apply

**27) Economic Burden to Subjects**

Does Not Apply

**28) Consent Process**

The consent process will take place prior to beginning the demographic questionnaire and participant's interview. Participants will be read the Consent to Take Part In a Research Study (enclosed) prior to their participation. Participants will also be given a paper copy of the Consent to Take Part In a Research Study form. If participants agree to the informed consent they will begin the demographic questionnaire, which contains no identifiable information. Upon completion of the demographic questionnaire, the audio recording of the interview will begin. Upon beginning the interview, investigators will ask participants if they have received a copy of the informed consent documentation and make sure they understand their rights as participants.

**29) Process to Document Consent in Writing**

Does not apply

## Appendix B: Informed Consent

### Appendix B: Informed Consent



Drexel University

#### Consent to Take Part In a Research Study

**1. Title of research study:** An Exploration of College Educated, First Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

**2. Researcher:** Kenneth V. Hardy, PhD and Yajaira S. Curiel, MA

**3. Why you are being invited to take part in a research study**

We invite you to take part in a research study because you will be able to contribute your experiences and meaning of manhood as a college educated, first generation Mexican-American man between the ages of 25-40.

**4. What you should know about a research study**

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part now and change your mind later.
- If you decide to not be a part of this research no one will hold it against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

**5. Who can you talk to about this research study?**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team Kenneth V. Hardy at [kvh24@drexel.edu](mailto:kvh24@drexel.edu) or Yajaira S. Curiel at [MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com](mailto:MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com) or (707)592-3879.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). An IRB reviews research projects so that steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans subjects taking part in the research. You may talk to them at (215) 255-7857 or email [HRPP@drexel.edu](mailto:HRPP@drexel.edu) for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

**6. Why is this research being done?**

This research study is being conducted in partial fulfillment to obtain a doctor of philosophy degree from Drexel University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the meaning and experiences of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American men, born in the U.S.A, who are college educated.

**7. How long will the research last?**

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You will participate in one semi-structured interview that will last approximately 2 hours.

**8. How many people will be studied?**

We expect to interview 6-12 participants for the entire study.

You will participate in a basic demographic questionnaire (age, gender, employment, marital status, number of children, education, family background income, and current family income). The duration of the questionnaire should be no longer than 10 minutes.

**9. What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?**

1. You will participate in a basic demographic questionnaire (age, gender, employment, marital status, number of children, education, family background income, and current family income). The duration of the questionnaire should be no longer than 10 minutes.
2. You will participate in a 2 hour semi-structured, face-to-face individual interview where you will talk about your experiences of manhood as a first-generation Mexican-American, college education man. Interviews will be held in the privacy of your own home or a previously identified safe location.
3. Each interview will be audiotaped, coded with a pseudonym (not your real name) and transcribed by the research team. Audiotaped and transcribed interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home of Yajaira S. Curiel. Data will be stored for 5 years for future analysis and then properly destroyed.
4. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse participation or stop at any time. Your identity will be protected by not using your real name and all information collected about you will be kept in a locked file.

**10. What are my responsibilities if I take part in this research?**

If you take part in this research, it is very important that you:

- Follow the researcher's instructions.
- Complete demographic survey
- Participate in an audiotaped 2 hour long, face-to-face interview
- Tell the investigator or researcher right away if you have a complication or injury.

**11. What happens if I do not want to be in this research?**

You may decide not to take part in the research and it will not be held against you.

**12. What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?**

If you agree to take part in the research now, you can stop at any time it will not be held against you.

**13. Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?**

There are no anticipated risks by participating in this study.

**14. Do I have to pay for anything while I am on this study?**

There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

**15. Will being in this study help me in any way?**

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include an increased level of awareness of their own experiences and meanings of

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manhood. Participants may learn something new about themselves as result of sharing their stories that might have a positive influence on their perception of manhood. There are no benefits to you from your taking part in this research. We cannot promise any benefits to others from your taking part in this research.

**16. *What happens to the information we collect?***

Efforts will be made to limit access to your personal information including research study records, treatment or therapy records to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization.

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

**17. *What else do I need to know?***

This research study is being done by Drexel University.

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**Appendix C: Demographic Survey**

**APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

Participant's Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were you born? (City, State): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which best describes how you self-identify your ethnic background? (Please circle one)
  - a. Mexican-American
  - b. Chicano
  - c. Mexican
  - d. Latino
  - e. Hispanic
  - f. American of Mexican descent
  - g. Other (Please fill in): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which best describes how you self-identify racially? (Please circle one)
  - a. Black
  - b. White
  - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - d. Asian
  - e. Biracial/Multiracial/Mestizo (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which best describes your sexual orientation?
  - a. Heterosexual

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- b. Bisexual
  - c. Gay
  - d. Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you currently?: (Please circle one)
- a. Single
  - b. In a relationship
  - c. Living with a partner
  - d. Separated
  - e. Divorced
  - f. Widowed
7. Do you have children?: (Please circle one)    Yes        No
- a. If yes, please indicate number of children: \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your highest level of education?
- a. Bachelors Degree
  - b. Masters Degree
  - c. Professional Degree
  - d. Doctoral Degree
9. What is your current employment status? (Please circle one)
- a. Full-Time
  - b. Part-Time
  - c. Unemployed
  - d. Disabled
  - e. Student

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10. If employed, please describe your current job position:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Current annual personal income (Specify in dollars): \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions regarding your *parents and family*:

12. Where was your mother born? (Please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Number of years in the USA: \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is your mother's highest level of education?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. If employed, please describe your mother's current job position:

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Where was your father born? (Please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

a. Number of years in the USA: \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is your father's highest level of education?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. If employed, please describe your father's current job position:

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Which best describes your parents' relationship status:

a. Married

b. Partnered (never married)

c. Separated

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- d. Divorced
- e. Widowed (Please identify which parent is deceased)

---

15. What languages were spoken in your home?

---

16. Do you have siblings? (Please circle one): Yes      No

a. If you answered yes, please identify the sibling and their age:

Sibling: Sister or brother	Age

17. Does your family have mixed-citizenship status? Meaning does anyone in your family have “undocumented status,” “resident status,” etc.

Yes                      No

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## Appendix D: Interview Guide

### APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What meaning do you attribute to your identity as a Mexican-American?
2. What has it meant to you to identify as Mexican-American?
3. What was it like growing up in a Mexican family? Can you describe that to me?  
What values did you learn? How were your values similar and different from those of your parents?
4. What does being a man mean for you?
5. Has being Mexican-American influenced the meaning of what being a man is for you? If so, how?
6. What aspects of your life or personal experiences have been important in shaping the meaning of manhood for you?
7. Who has most influenced your definition or experiences of what it means to be a man? How so?
8. How has being Mexican-American and a college graduate shaped your meaning and experiences of manhood?
9. Is there anything else that you want to say that I didn't ask about your sense of manhood?

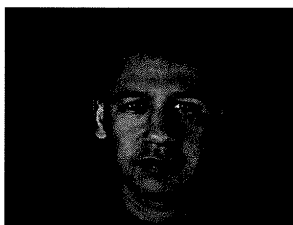


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## Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer



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### Volunteers Needed for a Research Study



**Research Title:** An exploration of college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men's meaning and experiences of manhood: Implications for family therapy.

#### Research Objectives:

The purpose of this research is to explore the meaning and experiences of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American men, who are also college educated. The study involves participating in a 2 hour, in person interview.

#### You can participate in this study if you meet the following criteria:

##### Criteria:

- First generation Mexican-American (born in the U.S.A.)
- Raised by both parents who were born in Mexico
- Age 25-40
- Obtained at least a bachelors degree

If you meet the above criteria, please contact us using the contact information provided below.

This research is approved by the Institutional review board.

#### If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact

Yajaira Curiel  
(707)592-3879  
MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com

This research is conducted by a researcher who is a member of Drexel University.

Mexican-American  
Manhood Study  
707-592-3879  
[MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com](mailto:MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com)

Mexican-American  
Manhood Study  
707-592-3879  
[MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com](mailto:MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com)

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Mexican-American  
Manhood Study  
707-592-3879  
[MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com](mailto:MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com)



## Appendix F: Recruitment Email/Letter

### APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT EMAIL/LETTER

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Yajaira S. Curiel, I am a doctoral student, at Drexel University, Couple and Family Therapy Department. I am inviting you to participate in a research study as part of a requirement for my doctorate degree in Couple and Family Therapy. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not.

I am interested in learning more about the meaning and experiences of manhood among first-generation Mexican-American, college educated men. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to give your verbal consent and complete a demographic survey, followed by a semi-structured interview that will ask you about your experiences and meaning of manhood. Your entire participation in this research study will take approximately two hours. The semi-structured interview session will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. All information will be kept confidential. The pseudonym chosen by you will be used throughout the interview. The tape will only be reviewed by members of the research team who will transcribe and analyze them.

If you are uncomfortable answering any questions you may skip them. The benefit of this research is that you will be helping me to understand the meanings and experiences of manhood among Mexican-American men. This information could potentially help the mental health professionals such as Couple and Family therapists better understand the meanings and experiences of manhood. In addition, the findings of this study could result in effective therapeutic treatments and culturally sensitive interventions for Mexican-American men. If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me at (707)592-3879 or email me at MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com or my faculty advisor, Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy at 215-762-6932 or kvh24@drexel.edu. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study or about the study, please contact Drexel University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 215-255-7857.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate please contact me at the number or email listed below to discuss your participation in the study.

With kind regards,  
Yajaira S. Curiel, MA, MFT  
(707)592-3879  
MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com

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## Appendix G: Letter to Administrators Requesting Support for Recruitment

### APPENDIX G: LETTER TO ADMINISTRATORS REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT

Dear Administrator:

My name is Yajaira S. Curiel. I am a Mexican-American student in Drexel University's Doctoral Program in Couple and Family Therapy. I am writing to respectfully request your assistance and support in recruitment for a confidential dissertation research study with Mexican-American men.

The purpose of the study is to explore the meaning and experiences of manhood among college-educated, first-generation Mexican-American men between the ages of 25-40. This study will provide understanding regarding the meaning Mexican-American men attach to their manhood and their experiences of this process. Findings from this study could potentially help mental health professionals such as Couple and Family therapists, better understand the experiences and meanings of manhood of Mexican-American men, which could result in more effective and culturally sensitive treatments Mexican-American men.

This study will require approximately 2 hours of volunteers' time to participate in the study. I am looking to recruit 12, first-generation Mexican-American men who are born in the U.S.A., who are between the ages of 25-40 and have completed at least a bachelors degree. Participants must have been raised by parents who were both born in Mexico.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and participants can refuse to be in the study or stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences should volunteers choose to not participate, or discontinue participation. The research is confidential and no indentifying information will be collected.

I would truly appreciate your assistance in placing the enclosed recruitment flyers in the designated areas of your establishment. Please feel free to forward information regarding the study to any potential participant. Please accept my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your anticipated support.

Sincerely,

Yajaira S. Curiel, MA, MFT  
(707)592-3879 or MexicanAmericanManhood@gmail.com

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## Appendix H: Letters of Support



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through the Masters of Counseling Program at Palo Alto University. As the Program Director, I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting participants by posting her recruitment flyer or distributing her recruitment flyer to potential participants. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

I can be reached at (831)246-2440 or [WSnow@paloalto.edu](mailto:WSnow@paloalto.edu), should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'William H. Snow'.

William H. Snow, Ph.D.  
Director, M.A. in  
Counseling Palo Alto  
University



**Puertas Abiertas Community Resource Center  
2013 Nonprofit of the Year**

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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Member

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*Melissa Patrino*  
Executive Director

*Jennifer Fuentes*  
Program Associate

*Blanca Huijon*  
Case Mentor

Puertas Abiertas is a  
501(c)(3) nonprofit  
organization  
Tax ID #20-3126333.  
Legal incorporated as Spirit  
of Unity Inc., dba

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through Puertas Abiertas, Community Resource Center. As the Executive Director, I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting participants by posting her recruitment flyer or distributing her recruitment flyer to potential participants. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Kind regards,



Melissa Patrino  
Executive Director



July 14, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through Napa Valley College. As the Vice President of Student Services, I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting participants via email listservs or distributing her recruitment flyer to potential participants. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Oscar De Haro".

Oscar De Haro  
Vice President, Student Services

**Committee Members**

7/9/2015

**Frances Ortiz-Chávez**  
**Debbie Alter-Starr**  
Co-Chairs

To Whom It May Concern:

**Juan Diaz**, Chair  
Día de los Muertos

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through the Napa Valley Heritage Committee. As the committee co-chair I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

**Brad Wagenknecht**,  
Honorary Member

**Members**

**Maria Cisneros**

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

**Sandra Garcia**

**Carlos Hagedorn**

**Blanca Huijon**

**Icela Martin**

**Lilia Navarro**

**Laura Valencia**

**Richard Ybarra**

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting participants via our email listservs and Facebook Page, Napa Valley Latino Heritage. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Sincerely,

Frances Ortiz Chávez,  
Co-Chair

Debbie Alter-Starr,  
Co-Chair

Fiscal Sponsor,  
Puertas Abiertas CRC  
Non-Profit Organization  
501(c)(3)  
Tax ID #20-3126333.

**Fiscal Sponsor****Puertas Abiertas Community Resource Center**

952 Napa St., Napa CA 94559 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3009, Napa, CA 94558  
T: (707) 224-1786 F: (707) 224-1719 • www.puertasabiertasnapa.org



July 14, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through Napa Valley College. As the Vice President of Student Services, I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting participants via email listservs or distributing her recruitment flyer to potential participants. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Oscar De Haro".

Oscar De Haro  
Vice President, Student Services

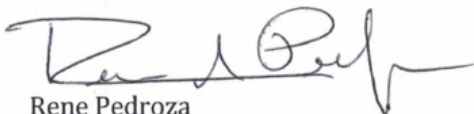
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through The Coliseum. As owner of Coliseum Sports I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

We are excited about the opportunity to assist Yajaira in recruiting by placing her recruitment flyer in our store. Also we hope this research will provide valuable information that will contribute to mental health professionals' understanding of the lived experience and meaning of manhood among Mexican-American men.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rene Pedroza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rene Pedroza  
Owner  
The Coliseum  
(707)226-7069





The mission of the NCHN is to establish collaborative relationships and advocate for cultural, educational and leadership opportunities for our Latino Community.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Edward Shenk**  
*Fundraising*

*501(c)(3) Federal Tax Id  
#: 68-0220885*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in full support of helping Ms. Yajaira S. Curiel recruit participants for her dissertation research study through the Napa County Hispanic Network. As the President, I am happy to extend support to this qualitative research project entitled: An Exploration of College-Educated, First-Generation Mexican-American Men's Meaning and Experiences of Manhood: Implications for Family Therapy.

It is my understanding that all of the participants who are being asked to volunteer in this research will consist of first-generation Mexican-American Men, who have completed a bachelor's degree and are between the ages of 25-40. It is further understood that no one will be obligated to participate; all participants will volunteer on their own free will and give verbal consent stating they consent to participate in this research study.

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Sincerely,

*María L. Cisneros*

María L. Cisneros  
President  
Napa County Hispanic Network