5-12-2017

Lesbians & Gays: Attitudes Among U.S. Latino College Populations

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LESBIANS & GAYS: ATTITUDES AMONG U.S. LATINO COLLEGE POPULATIONS

A Thesis

by

AILEEN TERRAZAS

Submitted to Texas A&M International University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2017

Major Subject: COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Lesbians and Gays: Attitudes among U.S. Latino college populations (December 2017)

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Negative attitudes towards homosexuals in the United States amongst Latino populations have been associated with cultural factors such as *machismo* and *marianismo*, as well as acculturation, ethnic identity and religious involvement (Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne & Marin 2001; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Harris, 2009). Studies have indicated that the stronger the beliefs in traditional norms, religious affiliation and low levels of acculturation an individual has the more likely that they are to have negative attitudes towards individuals who identify as lesbian and gay (Ahrold & Meston, 2010). The following study aims to analyze the impact that acculturation, ethnic identity, traditional gender norms and religious involvement have on attitudes towards lesbians and gays amongst Latino college populations in the U.S.

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INTRODUCTION

      The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted over fifty years ago (Bornstein & Bench, 2015), and since then, there has been much change in the perception of the law and in the attitudes of the American population. Many Americans have decided to create change and equality for LGBTQ individuals (Bornstein & Bench, 2015). In 2012, the Equal Opportunity Commission indicated that Title VII of sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Act would include protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual identity (Bornstein & Bench, 2015). Additionally, the administration of President Barack Obama created several laws that offer protection and equality to the LGBTQ community. For example, his administration carried out the repeal of DADT (Do not Ask, Do not Tell) in 2010, which eliminated the ban that had been placed on lesbians, gays, and bisexuals from serving in the military, and five years later in 2015, the court overturned laws to ban same-sex marriage, giving the right to marriage to all Americans regardless of their sexual orientation or identity (Bornstein & Bench, 2015).

      In spite of these positive changes, negative attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals are still abound. Research has found that homosexuality is highly stigmatized among the Latino population of the United States (Diaz et al., 2001). As the largest and fastest growing minority group in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), the experience of the Latino LGBTQ community is one that merits attention. Previous research indicates that individuals with high religiosity, less education, and conservative sexual attitudes are more likely to have negative attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals (Olson et al., 2006; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). Moreover, studies amongst ethnic minority groups have revealed that LGBTQ individuals of color are more likely

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This thesis follows the model of *The Journal of Sex Research*.

to experience stigmatization, high levels of unfair treatment, and discrimination (Chae & Ayala, 2010; Diaz et al., 2001).

Brief History of Attitudes towards LGBTQ

As early as the 19th century, marriage was primarily regarded as the institution of wealth and property rights rather than a union based on emotional intimacy or romantic love (Herek, 2010). Acts of procreation were authorized only under heterosexual marriage, and any non-procreative or improper behaviors simulating procreation were viewed as animalistic and condemned by legal statues and religious teachings as sodomy (Herek, 2010). Sodomy was not limited to the description of homosexual behaviors but included masturbation, intercourse with animals, pre- and extramarital heterosexual acts, as well as sexual activity between a man and woman that did not involve vaginal penetration (Herek, 2010). By the time of the 1940s American psychoanalysis, the primary psychiatric theory, had fully adopted the view that humans by nature are heterosexual, and that homosexuality was a phobic reaction to the opposite sex (Herek, 2010).

Historical events however, such as the Stonewall riots of 1969 were the beginning of the U.S. gay civil rights movement (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). Other important events include the support that arose in aftermath of the assassination of Harvey Milk in 1978, the first openly gay elected official in the U.S, and the contributions of Evelyn Hooker, whose work on how mental illness was not more prevalent in homosexuals than it was in heterosexual men, provided the groundwork for the decision to remove homosexuality as a mental illness in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* by the American Psychiatric Association (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016).

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Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court has made remarkable changes throughout recent years in regards to gay rights, starting back in 2003 with their invalidation of the remaining sodomy laws, which made same-sex sexual activity legal in every state (Lawrence v. Texas, 2003), then in 2010 under the administration of President Barack Obama the repeal of DADT (Do not Ask, Do not Tell) eradicated the ban placed by the military in regards to allowing lesbian, gay, and bisexual from serving the country (Bornstein & Bench, 2015), and most recently in 2015, the decision that guaranteed marriage rights to same-sex couples (Obgerfell v. Hodges, 2015).

However, despite these changes the overall negative climate towards LGBTQ remains. Recent research shows that though there may be a greater acceptance of lesbian and gay rights, this accepting attitudes does not exactly translate into acceptance of LGBTQ people and their behavior. This is supported by Norton and Herek (2013), in which a national survey indicated that U.S. residents hold negative outlooks of LGBTQ. Additionally, Gallup (2015) and the Pew Research Center (2015) show that 34% of U.S. respondents view gay and lesbian behavior as immoral, and that 39% of U.S. residents still oppose gay marriage. Other national polls indicate that approval of gay marriage increased from 11% in 1988 to 48% in 2012, this shows 52% of Americans do not approve of gay marriage (Smith & Son, 2013).

International and regional measures of attitudes toward homosexuality suggest specific demographic correlates predict acceptance of LGB individuals (Smith, Son, & Kim, 2014). One of the main variables associated with positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals is age; support of gay rights is higher among younger adults (Smith et al., 2014). Social scientists suggest that as older cohorts die out, their values and attitudes are replaced with those of younger individuals (Smith et al., 2014). For example, support for racial equality in the early 1950s increased largely because of the replacement of older generations with pro-segregation values

with younger cohorts affirming of integration and civil rights (Smith et al., 2014). In addition, the college educated are significantly more likely to accept homosexuality and gay rights compared to their less educated counterparts according to data both from the U.S. and European national surveys (Smith et al., 2014).

Challenges Faced by LGBTQ Individuals

The term LGBTQ is applied to individuals who identify as either *lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender* (Sue & Sue, 2016). *Lesbians* and *gays* describe individuals who have sexual or emotional attraction to a person who is of their same sex; *bisexuals,* as individuals who are attracted to persons of both sexes; someone who identifies as *transgender* is an individual who identifies with a different gender than the one they were assigned to at birth; and the Q in LGBTQ describes those individuals who identify as *queer,* meaning that they are someone who is questioning their sexuality (Sue & Sue, 2016).

About 9 million Americans (3.5%) identify as either lesbian, gay, or bisexual. An additional 19 million have reported having engaged in some same-sex sexual activity, with about one-fourth of the adult population admitting to having some attraction to other same-sex individuals (Gates, 2011). Among millennials there are higher percentage reports of individuals who identify as LGBTQ, particularly between the ages of 18-25 (Public Relations Research Institute, 2014). From this age group about 4% identified as being bisexual, 3% as being gay or lesbian, and 1% as being transgender (Public Relation Research Institute, 2014).

The overall disposition of the U.S. reveals contradictory attitudes and behaviors towards sexual minorities (Sue & Sue 2016). Percentages in 1985 indicated that 89% of the public reported that they would be upset if their child reported that she or he identified as either lesbian or gay, whereas 9% reported that they wouldn't be upset (Pew Research Center, 2015). Recently

in 2015, the Pew Research Center again posed the same question to the public, with responses this time being that 39% of them reported they would be upset, and 57% reporting that they would not be upset if their child identified as being lesbian or gay. Within the same poll about 63% of individuals indicated that society should be accepting of homosexuality (Pew Research Center, 2015). However, another find of the poll was that among older generations of adults and individuals who identify as White Evangelicals strong feelings and attitudes towards lesbians and gays still remain.

   Sexual Identity and LGBTQ. For LGBTQ individuals the realization that they are different in comparison to their heterosexual peers can come as an agonizing discovery (Sue & Sue, 2016). In an interview with individuals who had discovered they identified as other than heterosexual, it was reported that having the conversation of *coming-out* with the significant others in their life was a very excruciating experience in which they were very self-conscious and terrified of the reaction they would get (Diehl, 2013). The awareness of sexual orientation usually begins in the early teenage years with experiences of self-identification and sexuality during the late teenage years, and the beginning of same-sex relationships during their late teens and early 20s (Pew Research Center, 2013).

       Having to maintain secrets about their sexual orientation or gender identity issues can greatly affect the relationship that LGBTQs have with their families (Sue &Sue, 2016). The process of *coming out* can be extremely difficult for many LGBTQs, and even more so by the overwhelming sense of isolation that many of them experience (Sue & Sue, 2016). During the initial stages of coming out the life satisfaction, self-esteem, and the happiness of LGBTQ individuals may decrease if they face negative responses or reactions from others (Chaney et al., 2011). In particular, bisexuals may face a harder time coming out to the significant people in

their life, as bisexuals are usually considered individuals who are simply going through a phase, or that they identify as homosexual but are reluctant to accept their sexual orientation (Sue & Sue, 2016).

For ethnic minorities, coming out poses an even greater challenge than it would for white homosexuals (Sue & Sue, 2016). For example, gay Mexican American men may have internalized homophobia which stems from the traditional gender norm value of *machismo* (Sue & Sue, 2016). Research among Latino communities demonstrates that strong negative responses to gay men, in which the use of slurs, such as *maricon* (sissy), and *joto* (fag), is very common (Estrada, Rigali-Oiler, Arciniega & Tracey, 2011).

Furthermore, in longitudinal research on 156 youth individuals who identified as part of the LGBTQ community, at least 57% remained consistent in their identity as lesbian or gay, 15% were consistent as identifying as bisexual, and 18% transitioned into identifying as either lesbian or gay (Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter & Braun, 2006). However, unlike their lesbian or gay peers, bisexuals are less likely to report that their sexual orientation makes an important part of their identity or did not come out to the people who were most important to them (Parker, 2015). Gender identity however is still a very important aspect in one's life (Sue & Sue, 2016).

For example, individuals who identify as transgender feel a great inconsistency between the gender they were assigned at birth based on their physical characteristics, and the gender with which they self-identify as being (Sue & Sue, 2016). For transgender individuals, their sexual orientation can be either heterosexual, bisexual, or same-sex (Wester, McDonough, White, Vogel & Taylor, 2010). However, the term *gender dysphoria*, places transgender individuals within the *DSM-V* has having a mental illness (Sue & Sue, 2016). According to the DSM-V, gender dysphoria occurs when a person experiences significant distress and impairment as a result of the

feelings of incongruence with their birth assigned gender and their personal gender self-identity (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Despite having gender dysphoria place transgender individuals as people who have mental illness, many transgender individuals remain hopeful that they can eventually be removed in the same way that being homosexual was eventually removed from the DSM (Sue & Sue, 2016).

Furthermore, reports of experiences of sexual assault by adult individuals of the LGBT community indicate that at least 12% of gay men, and 13% of bisexual men were assaulted in comparison to 2% of heterosexual men (Balsam, Rothblum & Beauchaine, 2005). The percentages for LGBTQ women were that about 13% of lesbian and 17% of bisexual women reported having experienced sexual assault in comparison to 8% of heterosexual women (Balsam et al., 2005). Moreover, over 94% of LGBTQ adults have reported experiencing hate crimes (Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002). In particular, experiences of hate crime victimization were on the rise after the tragic suicide of a student from Rutgers University, who was victimized, harassed and cyberbullied by his own roommate who publicized a recording he had taken in secret of the student engaging in sexual interactions with another man (Lederman, 2011).

Moreover, bisexual individuals can often face hostility not just from heterosexuals but from the gay community as well (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). This is due to the perception that heterosexuals consider bisexuals simply be sexually promiscuous individuals, while homosexuals view them as homosexuals who are unwilling to come out yet (Sue & Sue, 2016). Taking this into consideration, it is bisexual women who report higher levels of mental distress from these hostile actions (Ward, Dahlhamer, Galinsky & Joestl, 2014). Not to mention that transgender individuals face a significant amount as distress as well due to the perceptions that other people may have of them, such as that they have mental illness, and are delusional, which

is propagated not just by the general public, but by mental health workers as well (Mizock & Fleming, 2011).

In addition to openly experiencing antigay harassment, LGBTQ individuals, also experience more subtle forms of heterosexism. For example, the practice of many heterosexual individuals to use the word gay as a synonym to stupid, or automatically making assumptions that most people identify as heterosexual can create feelings of distress and self-worthlessness in individuals who identify as LGBTQ (Burn, Kadlec & Rexler, 2005). Moreover, microaggressions are another form of harassment that LGBTQs face. Microaggressions can include comments that invalidate their sexual orientation, such as using language and other terms that enforce heteronormativity, and emphasize heterosexual privilege (Smith, Shin & Officer, 2011). The perception of discrimination based on their sexual orientation places LGBTQ individuals at an increased risk of experiencing depression (McLaughlin, Hatzenbuehler, & Keyes, 2010).

The societal stressors and discrimination that LGBTQs face may explain the findings of reports that indicate that LGBTQ youth have higher levels of generalized anxiety disorder, major depression and substance abuse (Rienzo et al., 2006). Moreover, reports also indicate that LGBTQ adults are at an increased risk of alcohol and other substance abuse related problems (Ward, Dahlhamer, Galinsky & Joestl, 2014). However, although major depression is reported in higher rates among gay men, lesbians do appear to fare better and do report mental health issues that are similar to those of heterosexual women (DeAngelis, 2002).

However, various research studies suggest that even among mental health professionals, issues of bias towards LGBTQ exist (Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2013). For example, in a study consisting of 97 counselors, a fictitious intake report regarding a bisexual woman who was

seeking counseling services, which did not indicate that her sexual orientation was the presenting issue was given to counselors for analysis (Mohr, Israel & Sedlacek, 2001). The results indicated that despite her case describing that she had career choice issues, conflicts with her parents over her independence, the end of a two-year relationship with her ex-girlfriend, and current issues with her boyfriend, most counselors who had a negative attitude towards bisexuality attributed the root of her problems to her sexual orientation conflict and gave her lower scores on psychosocial functioning (Mohr et al., 2001).

Theories of Attitudes Influence on Behavior

Attitudes are a result of behavioral beliefs (i.e. belief that carrying out a behavior will yield certain outcomes), and their evaluative facet (i.e., evaluation of the outcome) (Ajen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Subjective Norms are viewed as the result of normative beliefs (i.e., the beliefs that a particular person or group has in regards to whether or not they should perform a specific behavior) and the motivation to fulfill the behavior (i.e. the extent to which a person wants to do what the referent thinks they should do) (Ajen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to Herek (1998, 1990) negative attitudes or prejudice towards gay men and lesbians come as a result of three functions; *value-expression, social-expression,* and *defense.* In *value-expression*, attitudes are the result of expressing important personal values in an individual; *social-expression* is engaging in actions which allows a person to obtain approval from those who are important and closest them; lastly, *defense,* is the mechanism of demeaning others in order to put at ease the psychic conflicts and anxieties they may have about themselves (Herek, 1998, 1990). Moreover, research has shown that behavior towards a target (i.e. person, place, etc.) is highly influenced by attitudes or beliefs that a person holds towards that target

(Fishbein & Yzer, 2003). For example, the *theory of reasoned action* proposes that behavior stems from two factors (Ajen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The first one being the attitude a person has towards implementing the behavior (i.e. the overall negative or positive feeling about carrying out the behavior), and their subjective norm in regards to the behavior (i.e. their perception of what others who are important to them think towards performing the behavior).

Other theories such as the *integrative model of behavioral prediction* suggest that there are three primary determinants of intention; the attitude a person has towards carrying out the behavior, the perceived norms of engaging in the behavior and the perceived amount of self-efficacy one thinks they have towards carrying out the behavior (Fishbein & Yzer, 2003). In all of these models/theories, attitudes are prescribed as one of the requirements for engaging in particular behaviors. Considering that discrimination and sexual prejudice towards LGBTQ is still present despite the continuous effort in the fight for civil rights (Bornstein & Bench, 2015), attitudes remain as one of the factors to be examined when analyzing behaviors towards LGBTQ populations.

The Impact of Beliefs and Attitudes on LGBTQ Individuals

Specifically, lesbian and gay individuals live in a society that considers heterosexuality a normative gender behavior and thus, homosexual individuals experience difficulty developing a healthy sense of self-identity because society views their sexual orientation as abnormal (Sue & Sue, 2015). For many individuals, awareness of sexual orientation begins in the teenage years, as they experience glandular awakening leading to the experience of sexual attraction; for many, self-identification as gay or lesbian happens in the mid-teenage years and their first same-sex relationship is experienced around the time they enter young adulthood (Rosario, Chrimshaw,

Hunger, & Braun, 2006). However, many gay and lesbian individuals acknowledge feeling different since childhood (Sue & Sue, 2015).

When LGB individuals acknowledge their sexual orientation, or 'come out' they immediately experience stress and stigma, as society considers heterosexuality the norm (Chaney et al., 2015). Moreover, the process of coming out to family and friends is fraught with the potential of rejection. In fact, research suggests coming out is associated with decreases in self-esteem, life satisfaction, and happiness due to the negative reactions faced by others (Chaney et al., 2011). This process is especially difficult for ethnic minorities, as they are more reluctant to disclose their lesbian or gay orientation and are less likely to reach out to gay support groups (Adelson, 2012).

Mental health concerns. Although there has been a movement towards more acceptance of LGB individuals, many LGB youths still face significant stigma and peer victimization when they come out to friends and family (D'Augelli et al., 2002). Moreover, social exclusion due to negative peer attitudes towards LGB individuals can make coming out a difficult process, which raises significant concerns about the mental health of this community (Poteat & Espelage, 2009; Russell et al., 2014). The literature on gay and lesbian youth has found that this group experiences increased rates of mood disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior compared to non-homosexual youth (Eskin et al., 2005; Fergusson et al., 2005; Marshal et al., 2011).

The elevated emotional distress associated with LGB status is linked to increases in the risk of anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as alcohol use and abuse (Bostwick et al., 2010; Cochran et al., 2003; Hatzenguehler et al., 2009; Burgard et al., 2005). A study found that 18% of lesbian and gay youth experienced depression, 11.3% experienced

(PTSD), and at least 31% experienced suicidal behavior in their lifetime (Kessler et al., 2012). These rates are in stark contrast to the national rates for the same disorders and behaviors among youth in which 8.2% experience depression, 3.9% experienced PTSD, and 4.1% reported suicidal behaviors (Kessler et al., 2012).

A meta-analysis showed that gay youth are more likely to engage in suicidal behavior, while lesbian youth are more likely to engage in substance abuse compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Needham, 2012). For lesbians and gays who are also ethnic minorities, their 'double minority' status is likely to compound mental health outcomes (Ryan et al., 2009). For example, Latino gay males reported higher rates of depression and suicidality compared to White gay males (Diaz et al., 2006; Ryan et al., 2009). Overall, poor mental health outcomes among LGB communities has been linked to the experience of oppression, discrimination, and rejection of their sexual orientation by their friends, families, and society as a whole.

Stereotypes about gendered behaviors. Research has shown that the stereotypes that a person has about LGBTQ are linked to their beliefs about heterosexual men and women; for example, gay men are usually associated to have heterosexual feminine characteristics, whereas lesbians are thought to portray heterosexual manly behaviors (Blashill & Powslita, 2009; Kite & Deaux, 1987). The common thought about lesbian and gay relationships is that one person takes the masculine role, and the other person takes the feminine role (Brown & Groscup, 2009). On the other hand, bisexuals are often stigmatized due to the belief that they are closeted homosexuals who do not have the courage to openly come out, and can therefore also be viewed as sexually promiscuous people (Isreal & Mohr, 2004; Zivony & Lobel).

Additionally, research has shown that individual differences exist between heterosexual males and females in the attitudes they have towards LGBTQ (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). In

particular, heterosexual men who have high authoritarianism beliefs, traditional gender roles, and fundamentalist religious beliefs are the ones who hold the most negative attitudes towards homosexuals (Herek, 2016). The impact that such beliefs have on LGBTQ has been well documented (Jewell & Morrison, 2012).

   Discrimination. According to the Human Rights Campaign (2014) on employment discrimination, 29 U.S. states do not protect workers on the basis of sexual orientation and 33 do not protect on the basis of gender identity. This lack of federal protection deeply affects the lives of individuals who identity as part of the LGBTQ population. For example, at least 53% of LGBTQ persons indicate that they feel it is necessary to lie about their personal life and hide their sexual orientation due to the fear that they may be discriminated against (Human Rights Campaign, 2014).

   LGBTQ's experience about 43% of discriminatory behavior in their workplace, such as being denied a job or promotion, being fired from their job, unequal pay, receiving negative work evaluations or receiving verbal and/or physical harassment (Badgett, Sears, Lau, Ho, 2009). One particular study analyzed whether employers discriminated on sexual orientation through the manipulation of the applicant's résumé interests section, in which associations to LGBTQ were made (Tilcsik, 2011). Their results found that about 70% of lesbian and gay applicants received fewer invitations for an interview than the heterosexual applicants (Tilcsik, 2011).

   Moreover, Meyer (2003) proposes that individuals who experience prejudice or discriminatory behaviors have an additional *minority stress*, which can have severe and long lasting effects on the physical and mental health of LGBTQ individuals. This approach suggests that the experience of chronic stressors related to stigmatized identities and the experience of

prejudice, victimization, and discrimination compromise the mental health of LGBT

communities (Meyer, 2003). Some of these stressors come as the results of experiencing

objective events such as comments that reflect heterosexual privilege, work discrimination, or

violence (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). For example, research shows that many members of the

LGBTQ community expressed significant concerns about the loss of gay and sexual minority

rights after the 2016 United States presidential election (Veldhuis, Drabble, Riggle, Wootton, &

Hughes, 2017). Specifically, results of this study showed many in the LGBT community

expressed psychological and emotional distress due to the possibility of increases in stigma,

rollback of rights and an increase in hate and discrimination (Veldhuis et al., 2017).

Additional stressors stem from the expectation that they will be rejected due to previous

personal experience with discrimination, and the state of vigilance this places them under in their

daily life (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). This is particularly troublesome when considering that

many institutions (schools, families, churches) do not offer protections for gay and lesbian

individuals despite the significant impact these rights and protections have on decreasing

victimization and harassment of these vulnerable groups (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014). In fact,

lesbian and gay youth living in places where there are no specific policies or protections

protecting sexual orientation and gender identity are more likely to report suicide attempts than

those living in areas where such protections are in place (Hatzenbuehler & Keyes, 2013).

 Moreover, studies suggest gay and lesbian youth living in geographic areas where there

are high rates of hate crimes against LGBT individuals and communities are more likely to

report suicidal ideation and attempts than in those areas where there is a low incidence of these

crimes (Duncan & Hatzenbuehler, 2014). Additionally, LGBT individuals who live in

communities with high levels of anti-gay prejudice are likely to experience a 12-year decrease in

their lifespan compared to those endorsing heterosexual identities (Hatzenbuehler, 2014). In other words, discrimination and negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals at the societal level have significant impact on the mental health of these sexual minority communities.

Furthermore, individuals of the LGBTQ community can eventually come to internalize the negative views of others, and this in turn creates even more stress (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). For example, research shows that gay and lesbian individuals who experience rejection from family and friends report increased rates of depression and anxiety (D'Augelli, 2002; Rosario et al., 2009). Moreover, family rejection of LGBT youth can result in homelessness, with rates among this population disproportionately higher than rates in the general population (Durso & Gates, 2012).

Development of maladaptive coping strategies can lead to poor emotional awareness and internalized homophobia, which can further increase risk of depression and anxiety among LGBT populations by emphasizing shame-focused coping such as self-criticism and self-harm (Greene, Britton, & Fitts, 2014; Hatzenbuehler, 2009). These coping strategies, in turn, may affect health outcomes among LGB individuals, as studies show that individuals with high internalized homophobia are less likely to disclose their sexual orientation to their healthcare providers, which prevents them from obtaining optimal care and may ultimately have a negative impact in the overall health and well-being of these communities (Durso & Meyer, 2013).

While negative attitudes towards the LGBT community can lead to negative mental health outcomes for gay and lesbian individuals, the opposite is also true; positive attitudes towards the LGBT community can create a positive climate that promotes well-being, safety, and positive mental health (Hatzenbuehler & Keyes, 2013). Evidence is emerging about various curricula targeting training of schools, teachers, and other stakeholders involved in educational

institutions on strategies to maintain a positive climate by fostering visibility and support of LGBT students, as well as creating groups or clubs affirming of diverse sexual orientations and identities (Snapp et al., 2015; Poteat, 2012). Thus, targeting the attitudes of individuals at various levels of influence is likely to bring about positive changes in the climate experienced by LGBT communities.

Religion's Impact on Perceptions of LGBTQ Individuals

In recent decades, various changes have taken place in regard to the perception of homosexuality (Roder, 2014). Many Western and European countries are now in favor of gay rights and permit civil unions or same-sex marriage (Roder, 2014). Nonetheless, attitudes within Europe and among eastern European countries remains less supportive of homosexuals (Roder, 2014). Across the globe, even more prominent differences can be observed, as the various global regions from which immigrants to Europe originate, have been shown that attitudes towards homosexuals are negative, for within these regions identifying as homosexual may be considered illegal and for which a person may suffer the death penalty (Stulhofer & Rimac 2009; Gerhards 2010).

Within this context, the role that religion plays is extremely important. Religious beliefs have been shown to have strong ties to various general prejudices, even if the religious scripture does not endorse the prejudices (Boswell 1980). Public debate within Europe has its main focus on Islam, which is generally associated to the maintenance of strong patriarchal norms (Roder, 2014). According to Kugle (2010), the scripture of the Koran does not explicitly express the condemnation of homosexuals; although in later part of the text the Sharia do criminalize and stigmatize homosexual relationships.

Nonetheless, the idea that homosexuality is wrong has become a prominent

misinterpretation within Muslim countries which is then utilized to justify the homophobia embedded within their culture (Roder, 2014). However, Islam in not the only religion that views homosexuality as wrong; various other countries have similar sanctions against homosexuality, and express them to different degrees (Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006). Boswell (1980) argues though that in the scripture of Christianity there is very little that is strongly connected to homosexuality, nor is there much evidence that the early Christians condemned it, and yet Christian churches have promoted the stigmatization of homosexuality for several centuries, and have just recently began to be more accepting or open about homosexuality, with Eastern Orthodox remaining very conservative in this regard (Turcescu & Stan 2005).

Research shows that religion plays an important role in shaping attitudes within the individual and society as a whole (Yuchtman-Yaar & Alkalay 2007; Finke & Adamczyk 2008; Adamczyk & Pitt 2009). Individuals who belong to a religion and demonstrate higher levels of religiosity are less likely to have tolerant or accepting attitudes towards homosexuals (Roder, 2014) In comparison, those who do not consider themselves as a member of a religious group or have low religiosity, are more likely to have accepting or tolerant attitudes towards homosexuals (Brewer 2003; Francoeur and Noonan 2004).

Overall, the existing differences among religious denominations and Muslims seem to uphold the condemnation of homosexuals more strongly (Yuchtman-Yaar & Alkalay 2007; Finke & Adamczyk 2008; Gerhards 2010). Notwithstanding, the complexity of homosexuality within Islam beliefs, the overall view within the western world is that in Islamic culture, homophobia and gender discrimination are deeply embedded (Roder, 2014). Debates about homosexuality are increasingly relevant especially when taking into consideration of Muslims

who are now living in Western countries (Roder, 2014). This is due to the fact that within western countries, homosexuals are gaining recognition and becoming much more vocal of their demands for equal rights (Roder, 2014). Within this context, attitudes, towards homosexuality point to a much broader question about the approval of western norms and values that are often in direct opposition to an immigrant's own beliefs and traditions (Roder, 2014).

Moreover, in additional research regarding religious affiliation and attitudes towards gay men, Reese, Steffens, and Jonas (2014) identified that the effect of religious affiliation on attitudes towards gay men was moderated by the perceived threat a man felt to their masculinity. Specifically, Muslim men were more likely to perceive gay men as less masculine and experienced more masculinity threat than individuals who identified as Christian (Reese et al., 2014). The more an individual believed a gay man to be feminine the more likely the participant was to indicate that they had a strong religious affiliation, as well as higher levels of negative attitudes towards gay men (Reese et al., 2014).

However, additional research indicates that differences in an individual's affiliations and commitments levels create varying degrees of opinions and tolerance towards individuals who identify as gay and their stance on gay rights (Bramlet, 2012). For example, other studies have shown that individuals in more liberal Christian traditions are more likely to have higher tolerance of LGBTQ, particularly if they have had more college years of study (Holland, Matthews & Shott, 2013). Those that identify as part of non-Christian faiths, non-religious, and as well as those belonging to career fields within the arts and sciences who are further along in their field of study also demonstrate more tolerant attitudes towards individuals who identify as LGBTQ (Holland et al., 2013). Moreover, undergraduate students who have had more interaction with lesbians and gays on campus demonstrate having more favorable attitudes towards LGBTQ

issues such as being less likely to consider same-sex relationships unnatural, being more open to a gay presidential candidate, being friends with masculine women or feminine men, and being comfortable with the idea of a gay or lesbian roommate (Sevecke, Rhymer, Almazan & Jacob, 2014).

Additionally, beliefs about sexuality and whether one identifies as heterosexual male or female also has in impact on an individual's views regarding LGBTQ populations (Worthen, 2012). Females have been shown to have positively related attitudes towards individuals who identify as either gay or transgender but not for lesbians (Worthen, 2012). Contact with individuals who identify as gay or lesbian has shown to positively influence the opinion and attitudes of people with religious affiliations, particularly Catholic Latinos, and black Protestants. (Bramlet, 2012). On the other hand, Bramlet (2012) found that white Evangelical and white Protestants are more likely to have negative views on LGBTQ individuals and oppose gay rights policies. Additionally, those who were religiously unaffiliated had more favorable views towards gays and were unlikely to oppose gay rights (Bramlet, 2012). This effect, however, is influenced by the level of commitment an individual has to their religion, as well as the differences amongst religions in their opinions towards same-sex policies; some religions may have different messages regarding individuals of the LGBTQ community (Bramlet, 2012).

Research has found that participating in organized religion can have a negative impact on the mental health of LGB individuals because it is likely to include negative messages about their sexual orientation, only including activities for heterosexual couples and families, and prohibiting the ordaining of gay religious leaders (Gage Davidson, 2000; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). In fact, it has been established that major religions of the world such as Christian Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, and Judaism strictly prohibit homosexuality

and may trigger internalized homonegativity among individuals from the LGBT community (Clark, Brown, & Hochstein, 1990; LeVay & Nonas, 1995).

   Religions and Same-Sex Marriage. Court battles and public debates about gay marriage have been prominent in the United States going back further than ten years, before the presidential election of 2004 (Andersen, 2005; Mellow, 2004). Moreover, in 2003 the issue of gay marriage was held at national visibility due to the case of *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* in 2003 which made it legal to marry for individuals of the same-sex in the state of Massachusetts (Olson, Cadge & Harrison, 2006). In particular, members of religious faiths, such as evangelical protestants, lead several movements that successfully amended various state constitutions that would prohibit same-sex marriage (Green, 2000; Herman, 2000).

   Later, and through their continuous efforts at the federal level after the *Goodridge* decision, amendments were made to the U.S. Constitution that prohibited the right to marry for homosexual couples (Olson et al., 2006). Therefore, in July of 2004 the U.S. senate rejected the Federal Marriage Amendment, though various activist groups continued to make efforts to pass the amendment in 2005 (Easton, 2005; Liu & Macedo, 2005). Previous research has described the relationship religion and people's opinion about homosexuality. However, specific studies about how religion affects public opinion of same-sex marriage is still largely unexplored (Olson et al., 2006).

   In their study, Olson et al., (2006) found that religious affiliation and religiosity affected the opinion of individuals in the subject of same-sex marriage. Olson et al., (2006) found that the more an individual is involved with organized religion, the more likely he or she is likely to hear messages that denounce same-sex marriage. Their study noted that non-Protestants were more likely to have positive opinions towards same-sex marriage than individuals of other religions

who held much more conservative attitudes on morality, and had a higher religious involvement in their life (Olson et al., 2006). It was also observed that Americans who believed themselves to be high on morality were more likely to showcase that sense of morality through their opposition of gay rights (Olson et al., 2006).

Additional studies suggest other demographic factors such as gender, education, and age have a significant influence on public opinions about homosexuality, as well as the amount of contact that a person has with lesbians, and gay men, as well as their attitudes towards traditional morals (Brewer, 2003). Moreover, studies also demonstrate that religion, as indicated by the individual's religious affiliations, beliefs and behaviors, has a consistently reliable influence on their opinions about homosexuality (Olson et al., 2006). In particular, Jews, and liberal Protestants as well as people who have no religious affiliation are more likely to have liberal attitudes towards homosexuality (Olson et al., 2006). This may be due in part to the fact that many of the religious traditions included within those groups do not typically condemn homosexual behaviors (Olson et al., 2006). On the other hand, Catholic and protestants tend to express more generally tolerant attitudes, with Evangelical Protestants having the most conservative attitudes, which strongly reflects their theological beliefs, and congregational stances on homosexuality (Finlay & Walther, 2003).

Religiosity, as indicated by the by the frequency with which one attends religious services has also been found to be a significant predictor of the opinions a person might have towards homosexuals (Olson, et al., 2006). It has been shown that individuals who attend religious services regularly, such as Evangelical Protestants, are more likely to have conservative attitudes in regard to homosexuals and sexuality (Beatty & Walter, 1984). Moreover, of interest to researchers is the effect that religious organizations and the existing reference groups within it,

such as friendship networks, and other forms of group support also affect the opinions a person may have about homosexuality (Olson et al., 2006). Studies suggest that individuals who have social networks that are deeply associated to religious congregations have a tendency to be less likely to accept homosexuality (Olson et al., 2006). In essence, the more that an individuals close friends are within their respective congregations, the more likely that a persons outlook of life is structured by the sentiment that exists within the social networks, which do not usually promote a tolerance for social deviation (Petersen & Donnenwerth, 1998).

Religion and Internalized Homonegativity. Few research has focused on the reasons why men and women are homonegative (Jewell & Morrison, 2012). *Homonegativity,* refers to the perpetuation of stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes, and engaging in discriminatory behavior towards gay men and lesbian women (Jewell & Morrison, 2012). Most religions of the world perceive homosexuality as sinful, aberrant, and immoral (Clark, Brown, & Hochstein, 1990). Exposure to these doctrines has been linked to internalized homonegativity, which is the negative attitudes an individual holds about his or her own homosexuality (Malyon, 1982). Research has linked higher levels of internalized homonegativity to increased levels of shame, psychological distress, low self-esteem, and lack of perceived social support among individuals identifying as gay and lesbian (Allen & Oleson, 1999; Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam, 2001). However, subsequent research focusing on the impact of organized LGBT-affirming religious groups such as Dignity, Lutherans Concerned, and the Metropolitan Community Church show that LGBT individuals derive significant levels of affirmation and belonging from membership in these faith-based communities.

Latinos' Traditional Gender Roles

Marianismo. The term *marianismo* was first introduced into the academic literature in the

and was viewed as a phenomenon that had a great influence on Latina behavior (Stevens, 1973). The roots of this phenomenon traced back to the cultural norms and traditional values of the Catholic Church, in which women were socialized to emulate the virtues of the Virgin Mary, which include behaviors such as care-taking, duty, self-sacrifice, passivity, honor, duty, and sexual morality (Jezzini, Guzman & Grayshield, 2008). As such, *marianismo* can often be viewed as a negative concept for Latinas since it places importance on women being self-sacrificing and subscribing as passive characters in their own life (Hussain, Leija, Lewis & Sanchez, 2015). However, early research has shown that despite the negative outlook that embodying *marianismo* values may have, Latinas adopt these gendered norms with pride and dignity as it is built on the symbol that women are superior to men in morality and spirituality (Stevens, 1973).

For example, the concept of *Marianismo* represents for Latina women a symbol of their attempt to acquire near semi-divinity, as within these values enduring pain and suffering is internalized and viewed as the strength and martyrdom that is modeled by the Virgin Mary (Stevens, 1973). Additionally, within *Marianismo* is the concept of virginity and that leaving their virginity intact is equal to brining honor to one's self and their family, it is critical to preserve their virginity until marriage or otherwise risk bringing shame to their family (Stevens, 1973). According to Gutierrez (2004), these characteristics have been established as the moral code that Latina women should follow, as it exemplifies what is the desired role model of femininity.

However, despite these values being highly esteemed and desired, when it comes to sexuality, the *marianismo* values may create some problems for Latinas and their sexual satisfaction, due to the conflict that sexual morality presents if a Latina derives pleasure from

engaging in sexual activity (Hussain et al., 2015). A common verdict embedded in the concept

of *marianimso* is that sex is only for procreation and not for personal pleasure (Jezzini et al.,

2008). The emphasis that sexual morality has on Latina values is so great that even women who

are viewed as lazy, or ill-tempered are still considered good mothers and wife's so long as they

are not viewed as being sexually promiscuous (Stevens, 1973).

      In 1996, Gil and Vasquez summarized the expectations established by the *marianismo*

concept in an article that included a list titled "Ten Commandment of Marianismo". The

commandments included the following: Do not forget the place of a woman; Do not forsake your

tradition; Do not be independent, single or independent-minded; Do not use sex for anything

other than making babies, sex is not for pleasure; Do not be unhappy with your husband

regardless of what he may do to you; Do not ask other for help; Do not tell others about your

personal issues outside the home; Do not change (Gil & Vasquez, 1996). As mentioned

previously, despite evoking a negative reaction to others, *marianismo* to many Latina women is a

moral code and brings a sense of pride in an attempt of achieving that semi-divinity to the Virgin

Mary (Stevens, 1973).

      Machismo and Caballerismo. Early research on the term *machismo* indicated that

machismo is an important cultural concept among Latino men that designates them as the head of

household, and as the owners of women and children (Mayo, 1997). The term *machismo* derives

its roots from the Spanish word *macho* which is indicative of a male animal and has hardly a

close relationship to the Spanish word for man, or manly, which can be more appropriately

described with the word *varon (male)* (Mayo, 1997). Nonetheless the term *machismo* has

become associated to Latino men as embodying behaviors such as domineering, as womanizers,

using women for physical pleasure, and for being strict with their children. The term *machismo*, is thus seen as a negative construct that Latino men embody.

However, a different side to *machismo* is *caballerismo*, which can be viewed as two sides from the same coin. Whereas, *machismo* embodies all the rough and rugged behaviors that men should be, *caballerismo* promotes the more positive aspects of Latino men, such as that of preserving honor, duty, being nurturing, and protectors. The term *caballersimo* traces its root to the Spanish word for horse/horseman (*caballo/caballero)* (Arciniega, Tovar-Blank, Tracey & Anderson, 2008).

Caballerismo then, refers to a code of chivalrous masculinity (Arciniega et al., 2008). Much like the roots of English chivalry, *caballerismo* developed form the medieval standpoint of the sociohistorical class structure in which people who were wealthy and of high status owned horses for the purposes of transportation (Arciniega et al., 2008). Therefore, *caballero* referred to property owning Spanish gentleman who had ranches or estates (Arciniega et al., 2008). Similar English terms are words such as knight and cavalier (Arciniega et al., 2008). Through time the usage of the word *caballero* grew to signify a Spanish gentleman who was proper, had respectful manners, and lived life through a chivalrous ethical code (Arciniega et al., 2008). Through modern day lenses, the term *cabellerismo* still embodies many of the aspects of a chivalrous ethic man, however it is more applied to the protection of family values.

Latinos and Sexual Identity

Sexual identity among Latinos is formed from an early age and delivered through cultural messages that establish proper sexual behaviors (Hussain et al., 2015). The cultural constructs of *machismo* and *marianismo* define gender appropriate roles for men and women. In particular, for women the concept of *marianismo* emphasizes that sexual pleasure is not the purpose of sex, and

therefore the exploration of their sexual identity is limited within their own heterosexual relationship (Hussain et al., 2015).

The topic of sex among Latino culture and households is considered one of the biggest taboos and therefore any discussion to it is avoided (Hussain et al., 2015). The theory of ambivalent sexism proposes that power within a patriarchal society is maintained through prejudiced beliefs that are aimed at both genders and manifest as either benevolent or hostile sexism (Hussain et al., 2015). Hostile sexism maintains power overtly through offensive behavior and stigmatization of those that defy gender norms (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism on the other hand, covertly maintains power by appearing as overtly positive but delivers the prejudice behavior indirectly (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Through benevolent sexism the prejudiced behavior is not seen as hostile but is rather portrayed as protective behaviors for the individuals who conform to the set gender norms (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For Latina women in particular, *marianismo*, is a benevolent form of sexism; Latinas who conform to the traditional gender norms are protected and awarded high status through their dedication to the family, their self-sacrifice, and chastity (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Fischer, 2006). Therefore, the dominant patriarchal group projects hostile sexism towards women who defy the traditional gender norms, for which then *marianismo* also serves as a self-protective coping mechanism for Latina women in a highly patriarchic structured culture (Hussain et al., 2015: Jezzini, 2013).

Moreover, research has shown that homosexuality is highly stigmatized among the Latino population of the United States that has strong Mexican roots (Diaz et al., 2001). Mexican Americans' attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals depend on views regarding traditional gender roles, religious beliefs, age, marital status, personal contact with lesbians and gays, political

ideology, cultural identity, and level of education (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). Therefore, the aforementioned cultural factors of *machismo* and *marianismo* that are associated with the Latino population of the United States can have an influence on the acceptance and tolerance of the LGBTQ community.

Latinos' Perception of the LGBTQ Community

The beliefs of *marianismo* and *machismo* in the Latino culture dictate certain behaviors as acceptable according to the sex of an individual. In Latino culture *machismo* refers to the responsibility that is put on men to have to provide and defend the family (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002).   However, *machismo* is also interpreted as arrogance and aggressiveness between man and woman, since man is seen as giving the orders in the family (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). On the other hand, *marianismo* is perceived as the duty of the woman to her home and her children. The responsibility of the woman is to be humble and to maintain the spiritualism of the family, they are also not permitted to demonstrate any independent behaviors nor should they complain about their troubles to others (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Moreover, it is the duty of women to maintain family values (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Endorsement of traditional gender roles has been linked to attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals.

Research shows Mexican American males were more likely to express negative attitudes towards gays than lesbians, whereas the opposite was true of women's views (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). In other words, each gender was harsher in maintaining the gender norms of their own gender than they were of those of the opposite sex. Herek and Gonzalez-Rivera (2006) found that in general the participants expressed negative attitudes depending on whether they believed more in the traditional gender roles, had less years of education, had more

children and had an active involvement in the practices of their religion, in addition to having less contact with people who identified as homosexual. A significant fact of the study found that women were given less opportunity to explore in their sexuality than men, which is in conjunction with the *marianismo* beliefs of Latino culture (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006).

Research on Latin American and Caribbean populations indicate that gender is central and rigidly divided into two norms (Asencio, 2011). Heterosexuality within these societies is strongly based on the *machismo* and *marianismo* constructs (Asencio, 2011). Carrillo (2003) found that being masculine was a very important value amongst gay men because it permitted them to maintain the status privileges experienced by heterosexual men, thereby avoiding possible stigma associated with their sexual orientation. Overall, behaving as a heterosexual man allowed them to be able to better fit in within their family and work environments (Carrillo, 2003). As a result of rigid gender roles found in Latino culture, men often distance themselves from anything feminine (Nierman et al., 2007). However, in contradiction to some of the *marianismo* values of Latin American culture, in which women must maintain the rigid norms of their sexuality, men express having to maintain anti-homosexual attitudes to be able to claim masculinity and respect, whereas they believed women are granted more flexibility in their sexuality (Nierman et al., 2007).

Attitudes towards lesbians and gays across cultures seems to be strongly connected to gender role belief systems (Nierman et al., 2007; Carrillo, 2003; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera 2006). Particularly, Latino traditional gender values have demonstrated to express anti-homosexual prejudice, more so towards gay men than women (Nierman et al., 2007). Nonetheless, Nierman et al., (2007) states that if both men and women hold strong traditional gender role beliefs then they are both likely to hold negative attitudes towards homosexuals due

to the perception that they have violated the cultural expectations and standards of males and females.

     Acculturation. Acculturation refers to the adoption of cultural concepts within the mainstream society, such as norms and attitudes (Arends-Tóth & Vijver 2009). It is generally accepted that cultural traits remain relatively stable if they were formed in a person's early years of life, and that changes within a generation are attributed to the shifting of attitudes (Roder, 2014). Among mmigrants, this holds particularly significant, as it suggests that firs-generation immigrants will be strongly shaped the social context in which they grew up with in their native country, and will therefore be able to maintain a good extent of the scoailization experienced in their native country even when moving to and living in a more tolerant society (Roder, 2014). In particular, this is closely observed in relations to gender roles (Scott, Alwin & Braun 1996; Bolzendahl & Myers 2004; Pampel 2011).

     On the other hand, however, the children of the first-generation immigrants are more strongly influenced by the host country through the exposure of the mainstream culture (Roder, 2014). Socialization theory proposes that the first socialization of a family is in the successful transmission of parent attitudes to their children, which has been shown to be the case in regard to political and gender roles attitudes (Jennings 1984; Kulik 2002). For example, one study of young individuals in Brussels, found that children of first generation immigrants were more likely to have higher levels of sexual prejudice than the children who were native to the host country (Teney & Subramanian, 2010). Furthermore, secondary socialization that happens outside the family unit is also important, with education being the main promoter of more tolerant attitudes within the context of homosexuality (Meerendonck & Scheepers, 2004). Though parents may try to keep the ethnic identities and cultural values of their native country

within their children by attempting to shelter them from exposure to the mainstream culture of the host country, is has been reported that this is only partially efficient in the transmission of tradiational values, such as atttiudes towards gender roles (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Read, 2003).

Furthermore, additional research shows that religiosity, characteristics of country of origin and generational status influence attitudes towards homosexuality among immigrants in Europe (Roder, 2014). In general, first-generation immigrants display having less acceptance of an individual who has a homosexual lifestyle, which is generally attributed to the fact that their country of origin does not have a strong support for homosexuality (Roder, 2014). However, their opposition to homosexual lifestyles declines over time, this may be due to the fact that their country of origin begins to lose prominence the longer they stay in the host country (Roder, 2014). Overall, the second generation is then more likely to show more support than the first generation, which provides support for the concepts of inter and intra-generational change (Roder, 2014). Nonetheless, differences among religious groups prevail, indicating that acculturation does not occur uniformly.

The strength of traditional gender roles beliefs can be affected by the extent to which an individual has endorsed the host culture. Acculturation is considered the result of groups of individuals from different cultures coming into contact and having changes occur in the original culture in one or both groups (Cuellar, Arnold & Maldonado, 1995). Ahrold and Meston (2010) analyzed the ethnic differences in regards to sexual attitudes amongst Euro-Americans, Asians and Hispanics and found that Asians held more conservative sexual attitudes than Hispanics or Euro-Americans (Ahrold & Meston, 2010). Euro-Americans had the most liberal attitudes towards sexuality than Asians and Hispanics, however the higher the levels of acculturation in

these two ethnicities the more similar their attitudes were to those of Euro-Americans (Ahrold &
Meston 2010).

The results of their study suggest that acculturation can have two types of effects: 1) an
individual may hold two completely different perspectives on their culture, in which they do not
absorb elements of one of the cultures (their own or the mainstream), or 2) they form a blend of
both cultures, in which they are not wholly one or the other (Ahrold & Meston, 2010).
Variability in the attitudes towards sexuality was mostly accounted for by acculturation amongst
Asians than it was of Hispanics; meaning that acculturation may have a bigger impact on
determining attitudes towards sexuality amongst Asians than Euro-American or Hispanics
(Ahrold & Meston, 2010).

Ethnic Identity. Ethnic identity is an important aspect of an individual's self-concept that
intertwines with an individual's progression in acculturation (Phinney, 2003). Ethnic identity is
defined as the sense of belonging to an ethnic group in which an individual's thinking process
and behaviors are attributed in part to their membership of their particular group (Phinney,
2003). Research indicates that a sense of belonging is particularly important for individuals who
have faced various levels of oppression and marginalization based on their self-identity (Yuval-
Davis, 2006).

Overall, research suggest that a sense of ethnic development increases the likelihood of
healthy well-being and development (Umana-Taylor, 2011; Smith & Silva, 2011). Ethnic
identity development includes the personal exploration of one's ethnicity, identifying the level of
commitment to one's ethnicity and the ethnic affirmation associated with their ethnic group
(Brittian, Umana-Taylor, Lee, Zamboanga, Kim, Wiesskirch, Castillo & Whitbourne et al.,
2013). In particular, ethnic affirmation is a very critical part of ethnic identity development for

ethnic minority groups who may experience social devaluation which is a significant contributor to stress and is known to have a negative impact on mental health (Brittian et al., 2013).

Moreover, ethnic affirmation, which is the positive feelings an individual associates as part of identifying with their ethnic group, appears to facilitate adaptive functioning skills among members of minority racial and ethnic groups (Brittain et al., 2013). For example, studies regarding youth of African American ethnic groups have demonstrated that high levels of ethnic affirmation were predictors of lower alcohol and drug use (Brook & Pahl, 2005). Additionally, further study into African Americans' health development reveals that ethnic affirmation creates higher self-esteem and improved academic achievement (Umana-Taylor & Shin, 2007).

However, studies among Latino ethnic minorities have revealed mixed results in regards to ethnic affirmation and its role in healthy development (Umana-Taylor & Shin, 2007). Some studies report that ethnic affirmation is a predictor for lower rate of delinquency and higher self-esteem whereas, other findings suggest that ethnic affirmation is a predictor of higher rates of delinquent or deviant behavior (Umana-Taylor & Shin, 2007; Marsiglia, Kulis, Hecht & Sills, 2004).

For example, Black Americans have demonstrated a lower likelihood of having negative attitudes towards LGBTQ communities compared to White and Hispanic Americans (Elias, Jaisle & Morton-Padovano, 2017). This is attributed to the fact that Black Americans may be able to identify with their fellow Black LGBTQ members due to having similar experiences of identity discrimination (Elias et al., 2017). However, Carbado (2000) states that for many Black individuals, ethnic identity is linked to their sexual identity; meaning that those who identified as non-heterosexual were seen as less ethnically authentic than someone who identified as a Black heterosexual.

Identifying the associations between sexuality and ethnic identity commitment may help researchers explain how attitudes and sexual behaviors vary within ethnic groups based on their commitment to values and practices in their ethnic group (Espinosa-Hernandez & Lefkowtiz, 2009). For adolescents, it has been observed that ethnic identity is achieved through an exploration process of their commitment and self-identity towards their ethnic group, and whether they experience a sense of belonging and positive attitude towards their group (Phinney, 1992). For example, research has shown that African American and Latino American adolescents who have a strong ethnic identity are less likely to report ill well-being and more likely to have healthier coping skills, which in turn enables them to develop a healthier sexuality (Ong, Phinney & Dennis, 2006).

In particular, ethnic minority university students should be of particular interest to researchers. This population is important due to the increase in college attendance among ethnic minority individuals and what this implies for mental health considering that Latino/as and Asian Americans demonstrate some of the fastest rates of enrollment (Fox & Kewal-Ramani, 2010). Overall, literature indicates that ethnic identity is an important factor for minorities within the LGBTQ community, particularly for those who have faced oppression due to their sexual and ethnic/racial identity (Harris et al., 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Given the findings of previous studies, this study expects to find the following:

Hypothesis 1: It is expected that acculturation will be a significant positive predictor of attitudes towards lesbians and gays, and for *machismo/caballerismo*, *marianismo*, ethnic identity, and religious involvement to be significant negative predictors of negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited from undergraduate courses at Texas A&M International University. Inclusion criteria for the study required students to be enrolled in at least one undergraduate class, to identify as Latino, and be between the ages of 18-25. A total of (N = 350) people were recruited. However, after eliminating cases due to not meeting the criteria specified, or having incomplete responses, a total of (N =326) participants were used for analysis. The total sample included N= 84 biological males, and N = 242 biological females, with 89% (N = 286) identifying as heterosexual, and 11% (N = 40) as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other.

Measures

Traditional Machismo & Caballerismo Scale. A 20-item self-report measure that analyzes *machismo* in two subscales; traditional *machismo* and *caballerismo* (Arciniega et al., 2008). Traditional *machismo* is defined as aggressive, sexist, chauvinistic, and hyper masculine, and *caballerismo* is defined as nurturing, family centered and chivalrous (Arciniega et la., 2008). The internal consistency for the traditional *machismo* scale was α = 0.85 and *caballerismo* α = 0.80. The scale contains questions such as "Men are superior to women", "Men hold their mothers in high regard", as well as, "Men should be affectionate with their children", in which participants respond in a likert-type options scale (Arciniega et al., 2008).

Marianismo Beliefs Scale. A 24-item self-report scale that measures the extent to which an individual believes that they should embody and maintain the value systems associated with Latina gender roles (Castillo, Perez, Castillo & Ghosheh, 2010). *Marianismo* behavior in Latinas

is defined as being submissive, selfless, the religious stronghold of the house, and as maintaining their purity (Castillo et al., 2010). The MBS consists of 5 subscales, that of Family Pillar, Virtuous and Chaste, Subordinate to Other, Self-silencing to Maintain Harmony, and Spiritual Pillar. In their internal reliability, the coefficient alphas were 0.77, 0.79, 0.76, 0.78, and 0.85 in their respective order (Castillo et al., 2010). The scale provides questions in topics such as how women should be the strength of their family, maintain their virginity until married, should not speak out against men, and how they should be the spiritual guidance of the family (Castillo et al., 2010).

Brief Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II. A 12-itme scale consisting of 6 items from the Anglo Oriented Scale (AOS), and 6 items from the Mexican Oriented Scale (MOS). The purpose of the Brief ARMSA-II is to measure the cultural orientation of an individual towards either Mexican or Anglo culture (Buaman, 2005). The Brief ARSMA-II includes 5-point Likert type scale items that ask questions such as "I speak Spanish", "I enjoy speaking Spanish", and "My friends are of Anglo origin", with response options of "Not at all" to "Extremely Often or Always" (Bauman, 2005).

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure - Revised (MEIM - R). A Likert-type questionnaire containing 12 items measuring ethnic identity which is defined as an aspect of an individual's social identity and self-concept (Roberts et al., 1999). The scale is composed of components found across all ethnic groups so as to be able to be used with all groups. Responses on the scale range from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The scale items include questions such

as "I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life ", and "I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group" (Roberts, 1999).

Beliefs into Actions Scale. A 10-items self-report scale that measures belief in terms of actions; action is defined as the way in which individuals spend their time, how they spend their financial resources and how they live their life in regards to their religion (Koenig, Wang, Al Zaben & Ahmad Adi, 2015). The scale contains questions such as, "How often do you attend religious services?", "On average, how much time in a day (in 24 hours) do you spend listening to religious music or radio, or watching religious TV?" as well as "To what extent have you decided to conform your life to the teachings of your religious faith?" (Koenig et al., 2015). The participants are allowed to respond on a 10-point likert-type scale. Internal reliability for this scale was high with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient score of .89 in a female caregiver population and a score of .83 in Chinese student samples from three different universities in Mainland China; thereby demonstrating that this scale was reliable in different populations (Koenig et al., 2015). Additionally, the BIAC has a high correlation with other religious scales such as the Religious Commitment Inventory (with interpersonal and intrapersonal subscales); correlations amongst these two scales were high, $r = 0.67$ for intrapersonal religiosity and $r = 0.60$ for interpersonal religiosity.

Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale. A brief self-report, 10-item, likert-type scale, measuring attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Herek & McLemore, 2011). The 10-item scale was adapted from the original 20-item scale of the ATLG; the shorter version has demonstrated to have high correlation with the original scale, with rs > .95 between the shorter

item scale and the original counterpart. Reports amongst college student indicate a $\alpha > .85$ and a $\alpha > .80$ with noncollege adults (Herek & McLemore, 2011). Questions in the scale consists of items such as "Sex between two men is just plain wrong", "Female homosexuality is a perversion", and "Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned", in which participants respond in a 7-point likert-type scale of "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" (Herek & McLemore, 2011).

Procedure

IRB approval was obtained before the implementation of this study. Recruitment of participants was done through contact with TAMIU professors via e-mail and through university affiliated social media announcements which contained a description and online link to the study. Google Forms was the platform used to create the survey. Participants completed the survey online through any device that gave them internet service, including but not limited to computers, phones and other media tablets. The estimated completion time was between 30-40 minutes. No personal information was collected; all information was anonymous. After completion of survey students had the option to print out the confirmation page as extra credit for the professors.

RESULTS

In order to test the proposed hypothesis, I conducted a standard multiple regression analysis to observe the effects that acculturation, ethnic identity, *machismo/caballerismo*, *marianismo*, and religious involvement had on the Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays Scale scores.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the variables in the present study.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays	2.8295	1.35767	326
Ethnic Identity	2.9118	.59789	326
Beliefs into Action Scale	29.4286	17.19323	326
MBS Family pillar	3.0591	.66048	326
MBS Virtuous	2.4747	.74046	326
MBS Subordinate	1.5961	.67200	326
MBS Silence	1.5103	.63752	326
MBS Spiritual	2.1299	.81722	326
Caballerismo	58.7240	12.71480	326
Machismo	23.6331	9.52240	326
Acculturation Score	.6423	1.29024	326
Heterosexual	.8961	.30562	326
Ages 18-19	.2045	.40403	326
Ages 20-21	.3344	.47255	326
Ages 22-23	.2338	.42391	326
Ages 24-25	.2273	.41975	326

Of the variables of significance, the mean for the Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay scale was 2.89 ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.35$). For the variable ethnic identity the means was 2.91 ($M =$

2.91, *SD* = .59). For the Marianismo Beliefs Scale (Virtuosity), the Beliefs Into Action Scale,

machismo, caballerismo, as well as the acculturation scale had a means of 2. 47 (*M* = 2.47, *SD* =

.74), 29.4 (*M* = 29.4, *SD* = 17.1), 23.63 (*M* = 23.63, *SD* = 9.5), 58.7 (*M* = 58.7, *SD* = 12.7), and

.64 (*M* = .64, *SD* = 1.9), in that respective order.

Table 2. Model Predicting Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays

Variable	*B*	*SE*	β
Ethnic Identity	-.273	.116	-.120***
Beliefs Into Action Scale	.026	.005	.329***
Caballerismo	-.014	.006	-.132***
Machismo	.015	.009	.103
Acculturation	-.133	.056	-.126***
MBS Virtuous	.395	.136	.216***
MBS Family Pillar	.003	.122	.001
MBS Subordinate	.069	.174	.034
MBS Silence	-.257	.184	-.121
MBS Spiritual	.158	.114	.095
Heterosexual	.712	.218	.160***
Age18-19	-.125	.191	-.037
Age 22-23	.203	.183	.063
Age 24-25	-.144	.181	-.044

R^2 = .32   *** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; *= $p < .05$

In Table 2, I present regression results where the dependent variable is attitudes towards

lesbians and gays. The fit of this model is about R^2 = .32, meaning that 32% of the variation in

attitudes toward lesbians and gays can be explain by the set of independent variables in my

model. Based on the table, being heterosexual is a statistically significant positive predictor of

attitudes toward lesbians and gays. More specifically, being heterosexual is associated with a

more favorable attitude toward lesbians and gays (β = .16; $p \leq .001$). Another statistically

significant positive predictor of attitudes toward lesbians and gays is religious involvement

(Beliefs Into Action Scale). Specifically, religious involvement is also associated with more favorable attitudes towards lesbians and gays (β=.32; p$\leq$ .001).

An additional statistically significant positive predictor of attitudes in Table 1 is *marianismo* (virtuosity), (β=.21; $p \leq$ .001), meaning that that the more an individual believes in these principles, the more favorable their attitudes towards lesbians and gays. Lastly, the table shows that acculturation (β= -.12; $p \leq$ .001), ethnic identity (β= -.12; $p \leq$ .001, and *caballerismo* (β= -.13; $p \leq$ .001) are also statistically significant negative predictors of attitudes. What this indicates is that the more an individual is acculturated to Anglo culture the more likely they are to have unfavorable attitudes toward lesbians and gays. The same applies if they identify strongly with their ethnic identity and if they endorse *caballerismo*.

DISCUSSION

In the U.S. about 3.5% of the population or 9 million Americans identify as either lesbian, gay, or bisexual, with at least 0.3% identifying as transgender (Sue & Sue, 2016). Moreover, about 19 million Americans have stated to have engaged in some form of same-sex sexual behavior and about one fourth reports having some form of same-sex attraction (Gates, 2011). Among the millennial generation there are even higher reports of individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ community, with 3% identifying as either lesbian or gay, 4% identifying as bisexual, and 1% as transgender (Public Relations Research Institute, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to explore how ethnic identity, acculturation, *marianismo*, *machismo*, *caballerismo*, and religious involvement, influence attitudes among Latino students towards lesbians and gays. Results from this study suggest that *machismo* did not have a significant impact on the Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gays Scale whereas the higher the score on the *caballerismo* scale the less likely they were to have a positive attitude towards those who identified as lesbian and gay. This finding was not expected, as it was hypothesized that machismo would be a positive, significant predictor of attitudes towards lesbians and gays.

It is possible, however, baseline machismo levels were not high for this sample of college students who are young and well on their way to earn a bachelor's degree. The fact that caballerismo was associated with more negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians was also surprising, as this aspect of the machismo construct tends to be associated with more positive male gender norm values such as duty, chivalry, and dignity. Nonetheless, it is perhaps those values that make it impossible for an individual to have positive attitudes towards the lesbian and gay community. We speculate that male gender norms consistent with honor cultural values may

be more important in predicting the acceptance of gays and lesbians because honor cultures value reputation and dignity above all (Johnson & Lipsett-Rivera, 1998).

According to gender belief theory, Latinos with high levels of traditional gender norms, such as *machismo*, are more likely to view lesbian or gay couples as a violation of their beliefs and therefore uphold negative attitudes towards them (Michiyo, Winkel & Popan, 2014). Previous studies, though not focused on *caballerismo*, have also found contradictions to their expected outcome and analyzed the effect of *machismo* on prejudice towards lesbians and gays, and argue that personality traits can act as moderators (Michiyo et al., 2014). In particular, Michiyo et al., (2014) found that contrary to their own predictions, Latino college students who had higher levels of Openness to Experience from the five factor model of personality, demonstrated stronger relationships between attitudes towards gay men and *machismo*.

Meaning that those who had scored higher on Openness to Experience also had high levels of traditional *machismo* beliefs and had high prejudice attitudes towards gay men (Michiyo et al., 2014). Their study speculated that this could be due to the possibility that for the individuals who had high levels of Openness to Experience, their experience with gay men may have been a negative one (Michiyo et al., 2014) Therefore, their negative perception of the experience could have been due to their strong beliefs in traditional gender roles (Michiyo et al., 2014).

Moreover, contrary to most research findings in the literature, having high scores in religious involvement demonstrated a favorable attitude towards lesbians and gays. Most literature findings indicate that individuals who are more actively involved with their religion are less likely to have positive attitudes towards individuals who identify as part of the LGBT community (Olson et al., 2006; Bramlet 2012). However, in the present study religious

involvement was found to be associated with more favorable attitudes towards lesbians and gays (β=.32; p≤ .001). Several potential factors may have influenced this result.

One possible explanation for this result could be the level to which the students of this current study apply the doctrinal beliefs of their religion, despite engaging in activities relating to their religion. For example, a study analyzing attitudes towards education about homosexuality among American Catholics found that whereas most participants agreed that Catholic colleges should offer more courses on human sexuality, they were less likely to agree that the course should include education about justice, and equality for lesbians and gays (Kirby & Michaelson, 2008). A particular result of their study was finding that while Catholics in general uphold the teachings of their church, some adopt a more practical manner as to how they would apply the teachings into their everyday lives (Kirby & Michaelson, 2008). This study placed the argument that the thinking and behavioral actions of the students were shaped not only by the catholic teachings of their church but by the cultural climate of their community whose focus on social justice and concern for a person as a whole could have encouraged them to apply their doctrinal selectivity and practice it even if it contradicts the Catholic church doctrine (Kirby & Michaelso, 2008).

Moreover, it is likely that the age and educational attainment of the college students in the sample influence the likelihood of endorsing positive attitudes towards members of the lesbian and gay communities. The literature shows younger cohorts tend to be much more open and supportive of gay rights compared to their older counterparts (Smith et al., 2014). In addition, cross-country data also showed consistently that higher educational attainment tends to predict positive attitudes towards LGB individuals (Smith et al., 2014). As stated earlier in previous literature findings, some key factors that impacted attitudes towards lesbians and gays

in U.S. populations of Mexican descent were less education, religiosity, amount of contact with LGBT communities, and belief in traditional gender roles (Herek-Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). Specifically, despite having high religious involvement individuals with more years in education may be more likely to have a higher tolerance towards lesbians and gays as the ATLG scores for this study indicate. Whereas the results of the study did not support the initial hypothesis, other studies suggest higher education may play a key role in attitudes towards homosexuals (Holland et al., 2013; Kozloski 2010; Lambert et al., 2006).

According to some studies the level of education that students have has an impact on the acceptance level they have towards individuals who identify as LGBT (Lambert, Ventura, Hall & Cluse-Tolar, 2006). Lambert et al., (2006) noted that students in their senior or junior year of college were more likely to have accepting attitudes of lesbians and gays; which may be due to having had more experiences both outside and within the university setting to homosexual populations. Moreover, some studies note that students who study the arts and sciences, and are within their junior and senior years of college are more likely to have more tolerant attitudes towards LGBT (Holland et al., 2013). Other studies suggest that a difference should be made between moral acceptance and social tolerance, and the effect that education has on each (Kozloski, 2010). Thus, it is speculated that for this sample, age and education likely override the potential negative effect of high religious involvement on attitudes towards Latino lesbians and gays.

On the other hand, it is also plausible that the measure of religious involvement used did not fully capture the individual beliefs about homosexuality for participants in the sample; after all, even if an individual is fully involved with their religion, such activities may not reflect their own idiosyncratic views about homosexuality. Moreover, yet another possible factor influencing

the results could be that other factors potentially affecting attitudes towards lesbians and gays were not measured. For example, some studies suggest that entering college facilitates contact with other groups and it is possible students in their junior and senior year have had more experiences inclusive of the LGB community on campus, thus positively influencing their attitudes toward this community.

Moreover, having high scores in ethnic identity demonstrated a favorable association to attitudes towards lesbians and gays. While this variable had not been previously studied on the literature, it seems to be an important aspect of the Latino experience as bicultural individuals often have a choice in which identity they will endorse. It is speculated that a stronger sense of ethnic identity makes it less likely that an individual could feel threatened by the acceptance of those with diverse sexual identities.

However, the most perplexing result of the current study is that acculturation was a significant negative predictor of attitudes toward lesbians and gays. Acculturation throughout existent literature on various ethnicities consistently finds that individuals who have higher levels of acculturation are more likely to have positive attitudes towards individuals who identify as part of the LGBT community (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Branton, Franco, Wenzel, Wrinkle, 2014; Röder & Lubbers, 2015). Several possible factors may explain this finding.

First, the measure of acculturation used in this study focuses on behaviors rather than values. Thus, it is possibly not fully capturing the values endorsed by the participants in the sample. Previous literature has found that many individuals engaging in behaviors consistent with high acculturation may still endorse some of the traditional values of their culture of origin. Second, it is possible the acculturation profiles of the participants in the sample had too little variation and this established a floor effect for the model. It is suggested that future research

examine the effects of using value-based acculturation measures that can more fully capture the nuances of bicultural individual's experiences.

Nonetheless, the results of this study should be taken into consideration not only by counselors, but by other professional university workers. Due to the discrimination and prejudice still present within the American society, it is imperative that mental health professionals become aware of the issues LGBTQ individuals may face, and work towards an affirmative position that helps to validate and normalize their identity (Sue & Sue, 2016). Since much of American society is still propagated by primarily heterosexual norms this can often create much stress and depression within individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ community (Sues & Sue, 2016).

The fear of the consequences of their sexual identity disclosure and the struggle of coming to terms with their own identity is often a struggle that LGBTQ individuals face alone, without the support of family, friends or others who may be confronted with the same struggle (Sue &Sue, 2016). In fact, within LGBTQ youth who are facing the challenges of coming to terms with their sexual identity, discrimination and harassment within the school environment is not a strange occurrence (Sue &Sue 2016). In a survey of middle school and high school students, more than 80% of the students identifying as LGBTQ reported having experienced harassment at their school within the last year, and at least two-thirds reported that they did not feel safe at school because of their gender or sexual orientation (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Bosen & Palmer, 2012).

Moreover, about 40% reported having experienced physical harassment, and at least 18% had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw et al., 2012). Additionally, at least 55% were victims of cyberbullying from their peers and other outside

individuals through emails, text messages, and internet posting on social media sites (Kosciw et al, 2012). LGBTQ youth are also more likely than heterosexual youth to attempt suicide, and of being at high risk of substance use and abuse (Hatenzenbuehler, 2011; McCabe, Hughes, Bostwick, West & Boyd, 2009). The rates of suicide attempts are even higher for LGBTQ individuals who belong to ethnic minorities such as Blacks or Latinos (Meyer, Dietrich & Schwartz, 2008).

In regard to university populations, the fact that students attending college are now confronted with career-making decisions makes it imperative to analyze how the various identities that a student may have will impact their future career choices. Career and identity development have a complex relationship that affects the aspects of a person's everyday life. The struggles of gays and lesbians in career development has been previously well documented in literature (Chung, 2003).

Counselors and other professional university administration should be aware that individuals who identify as part of the LGBT community may be struggling to maintain multiple identities. Chen and Vollick (2013) explain that some LGBT individuals may be facing the difficulty of not having revaeled their sexuality to others and may then be giving the appearance of being heterosexuals to others despite already having an LGBT romantic partner. On the other hand, for individuals who may have already revealed their sexual identity they may then struggle with the issue of facing discrimination not only in the home or school environment, but also in their work, or in their future careers (Chen & Vollick, 2013). Furthermore, in the case of immigrants or Latino, LGBT persons may struggle with their personal sexual identity and that of the values and the roles that may have been assigned to them by their family (Chen & Vollick, 2013). In either case that a student may be presenting, a counselor should be competent enough

to help the student understand and explore their own identity, and be able to help the student learn how to manage and process the stress that often accompanies the issues of discrimination, career development and family roles.

In theory, the findings of this study highlight the importance of continuing to study the interactions between the variables of acculturation, religious involvement, ethnic identity, traditional cultural gender norms, and the impact of education on attitudes towards lesbians and gays among Latino populations. As professionals who strive to be multiculturally competent, issues about gender, sexuality and culture are imperative topics of which all counselors as well as other college professionals should be knowledgeable about. Additionally, it is that of which we should continue to learn about through both scientific research and clinical practice.

LIMITATIONS

Various limitations should be noted of this study, the first one being that there is an imbalance between the biological male (*N*=84*)* and female (*N*=242*)* population. Future studies should strive to acquire a bigger population size that has a more equal ratio of biological males and females. This may have been one of the main contributions for the lack of significance for *machismo*, as previous literary findings do suggest that in general males tend to have more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays than women (Lambert et al., 2006).

Moreover, the population of this study are students who reside in a border city between the U.S. and Mexico and as such may have other variables that may have not been accounted for. As such further factors that may be influencing individuals' responses should be analyzed, one of the primary ones being acculturation. As it was observed acculturation was one of the contradictory results obtained in this study.

On a similar note, the results of this study are not generalizable to the entire Latino population. The population within this study was focused to one university within Laredo, TX. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies sample more than one university from different geographical areas within the U.S. Additionally, a larger sample of the non-heterosexual population is needed. The current sample size of this study was not sufficient to observe possible differences in attitudes between heterosexual (*N*=286*)* and non-heterosexual (*N*=40*)* students. This would be interesting for future studies to implement since it could give a general idea if the cultural traditional gender norms may create internalized stigmatization within lesbians and gays.

It is also recommended that in order to account for education, a comparison group between non-college individuals and those attending college should be done in order to assess whether the results of the impact education might have had on this study would be supported.

Lastly, the present study did not include a measure of behavior. Previous research has shown that behavior stems from an individual's personal attitudes towards a target (Fisbein & Yzer, 2003; Herek, 1998, 1990, Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In order to assess whether attitudes truly determine behavior future studies should include a measure of behaviors towards lesbian and gays.

CONCLUSION

The present study sought to analyze whether ethnic identity, acculturation, religious involvement and traditional Latino gender norms of *machismo* and *caballerismo* would predict attitudes towards lesbians and gays. A total of (N = 350) people were recruited. After eliminating cases for having incomplete responses and for not meeting the specified criteria a total of (*N* =326) participants were used for analysis.

The total sample included *N*= 84 biological males, and *N* = 242 biological females, with 89% (*N* = 286) identifying as heterosexual, and 11% (*N* = 40) as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other. A standard multiple regression analysis was run and revealed statistically significant results. The fit of this model was R^2 = .32, indicating that 32% of the variation of attitudes towards lesbians and gays can be attributed to the set of independent variables within the model. The variables with statistically significant results were those of acculturation, religious involvement, *marianismo (virtuous)*, *caballerismo,* and ethnic identity.

Previous literature indicates that men are more likely than females to have negative attitudes towards individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ community, and that in particular for Latinos, gender norms, and religiosity play a strong factor in determining attitudes (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Hussain et al., 2015; Nierman et al., 2007; Carrillo, 2003). However, contrary to most literary findings and of particular note are the results of religious involvement (β=.32; p≤ .001) as a significant positive predictor, acculturation (β= -.12; $p \le .001$) as a significant negative predictor and *caballerismo* (β= -.13; $p \le .001$) as a significant negative predictor of attitudes towards lesbians and gays. As stated previously the implications of these findings and other existent literature suggest that additional factors such as personality traits, educational level, experiences with LGBTQ communities and, the level of doctrinal selectivity in

their religion could be additional influences affecting the results for *caballerismo,* and religious involvement (Michiyo et al., 2014; Holland et al., 2013; Kirby & Michaelso, 2008).

The negative predictor of acculturation towards attitudes towards lesbians and gays remains the one factor that has not been observed in previous literature and should be continued to be explore in future studies. Limitations in this study included that the present findings are not generalizable to the Latino populations due to it being limited to one university in the city of Laredo, TX. Moreover, the participants of N= 84 males, and N = 242 females is imbalanced, a study with a more even population sample is recommended. Additionally, the sample size of heterosexuals 89% (N = 286) versus non-heterosexuals 11% (N = 40) was not enough to determine differences there may be in the population.

Existing literature indicates that attitudes play a key role in determining whether or not an individual will engage in certain behaviors ((Fishbein & Yzer, 2003; Ajen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The subjective norms and the importance placed by others on the individual to perform certain behaviors demands that more research be focused on the relationship that exists between attitudes and behavior. In our case, future studies should examine whether the variables in this present study do influence behavior by including a scale that measures behavior. Other recommendations for future studies include that a larger population sample for biological males and females be obtained, as well as a larger non-heterosexual sample. It is recommended, that in order to fully test the effect that education may have on attitudes that samples of both college and non-college populations be analyzed from different universities that have Latino populations.

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APPENDIX

MEASURES
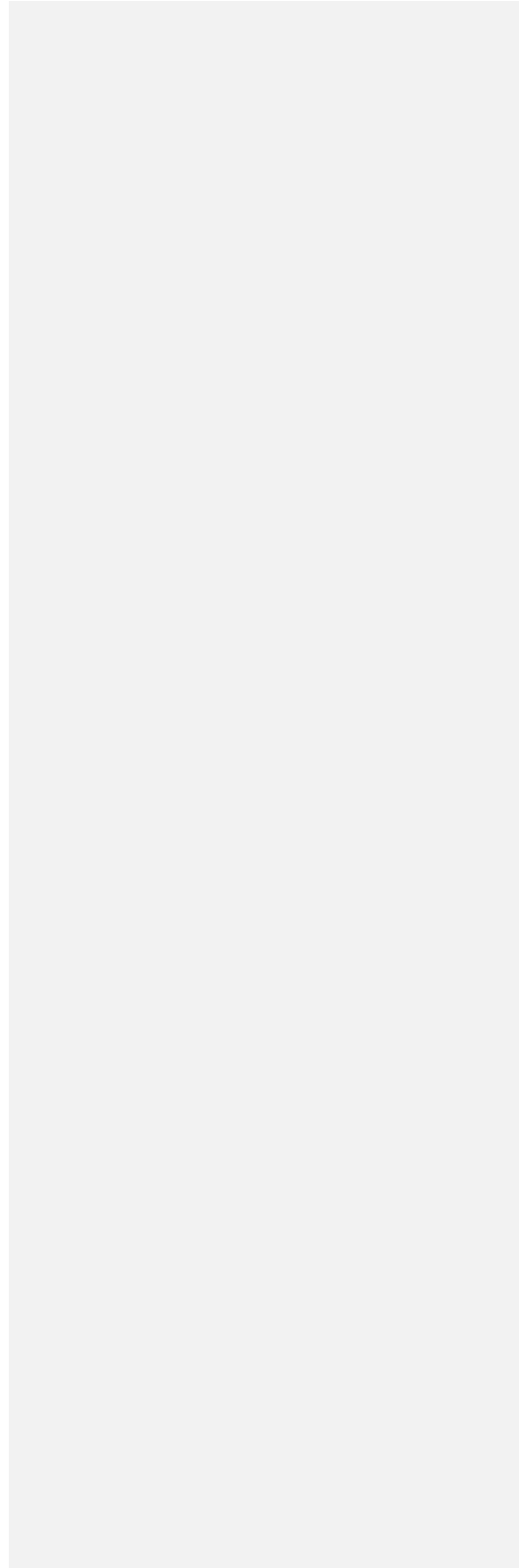
Brief ARSMA-II
(Bauman, 2005)

Please read each statement and then circle the number corresponding to the appropriate point on the following five-point scale.

	Not at all	Very Little	Moderately	Very Often	Almost Always
1. **I speak Spanish**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. **I speak English**	1	2	3	4	5
3. **I enjoy speaking Spanish**	1	2	3	4	5
4. **I associate with Anglos**	1	2	3	4	5
5. **I enjoy English language movies**	1	2	3	4	5
6. **I enjoy Spanish language TV**	1	2	3	4	5
7. **I enjoy Spanish language movies**					
8. **I enjoy reading books in Spanish**	1	2	3	4	5
9. **I write letters in English**	1	2	3	4	5
10. **My thinking is done in the English language**	1	2	3	4	5
11. **My thinking is done in the Spanish language**	1	2	3	4	5
12. **My friends while I was growing up were of Anglo origin**	1	2	3	4	5

Marianismo Beliefs Scale

Instructions: The statements below represent some of the different expectations for Latinas. For each statement, please mark the answer that best describes what you _believe_ rather than what you were taught or what you actually practice.

A Latina . . .	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
1.) must be a source of strength for her family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.) is considered the main source of strength of her family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.) mother must keep the family unified.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.) should teach her children to be loyal to the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.) should do things that make her family happy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.) should (should have) remain(ed) a virgin until marriage.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.) should wait until after marriage to have children.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.) should be pure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.) should adopt the values taught by her religion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.) should be faithful to her partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.) should satisfy her partner's sexual needs without argument.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.) should not speak out against men.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.) should respect men's opinions even when she does not agree.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.) should avoid saying no to people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.) should do anything a male in the family asks her to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.) should not discuss birth control.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.) should not express her needs to her partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.) should feel guilty about telling people what she needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19.) should not talk about sex.	☐	☐	☐	☐
20.) should be forgiving in all aspects.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21.) should always be agreeable to men's decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
22.) should be the spiritual leader of the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23.) is responsible for taking family to religious services.	☐	☐	☐	☐
24.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Traditional Machismo and Caballerismo Scale

	Very Strongly Disagree						Very Strongly Agree
Men are superior to women	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In family, a father's wish is law.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The birth of a male child is more important than a female child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is important not to be the weakest man in a group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Real men never let down their guard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would be shameful for a man to cry in front of his children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A man should be in control of his wife.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to fight when challenged.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is important for women to be beautiful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The bills (electric, phone, etc.) should be in the man's name.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men must display good manners in public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men should be affectionate with their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men should respect their elders.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A woman is expected to be loyal to her husband.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men must exhibit fairness in all situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men should be willing to fight to defend their family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The family is more important than the individual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men hold their mothers in high regard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A real man does not brag about sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men want their children to have better lives than themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or <u>ethnic groups</u> that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

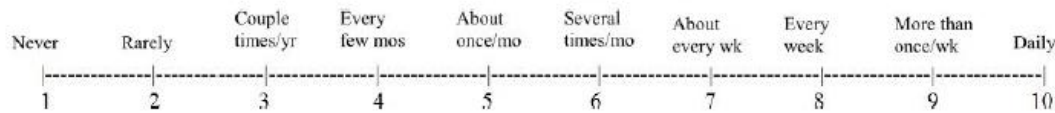**(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree**

 1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as
        its history, traditions, and customs.
 2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members
        of my own ethnic group.
 3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
 4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
 5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
 6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
 7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
 8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked
        to other people about my ethnic group.
 9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food,
        music, or customs.
11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

13- My ethnicity is
        (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
        (2) Black or African American
        (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
        (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
        (5) American Indian/Native American
        (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
        (7) Other (write in): _____

14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
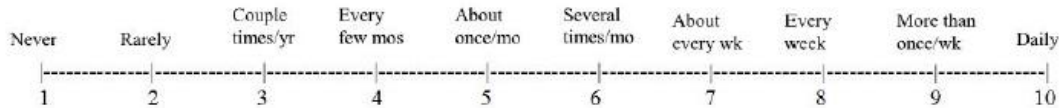
Belief into Action Scale

1. Please circle the highest priority in your life now? (most valued, prized) [circle only one]
    1. My health and independence
    2. My family
    3. My friendships
    4. Job, career or business
    5. My education
    6. Financial security
    7. Relationship with God
    8. Ability to travel & see the world
    9. Listening to music and partying
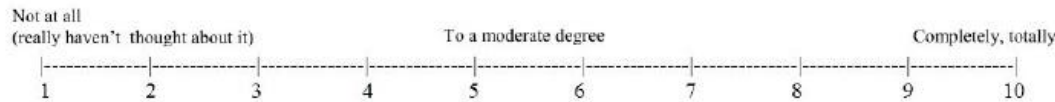   10. Freedom to live as I choose

2. How often do you attend religious services? (circle a number below)

Never	Rarely	Couple times/yr	Every few mos	About once/mo	Several times/mo	About every wk	Every week	More than once/wk	Daily
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Other than religious services, how often do you get together with others for religious reasons (prayer, religious discussions, volunteer work, *etc.*)?
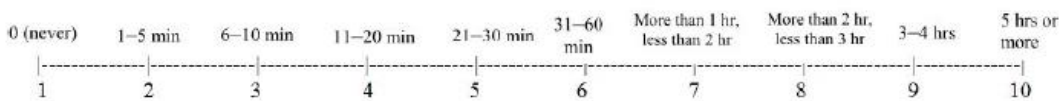
Never	Rarely	Couple times/yr	Every few mos	About once/mo	Several times/mo	About every wk	Every week	More than once/wk	Daily
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. To what extent (on a 1 to 10 scale) have you decided to place your life under God's direction?

Not at all (really haven't thought about it)				To a moderate degree				Completely, totally	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. What percentage of your gross annual income do you give to your religious institution or to other religious causes each year?

0%	Less than 1%	1%–2%	3%–4%	5%–6%	7%–8%	9%–10%	11%–12%	13%–14%	15% or more
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
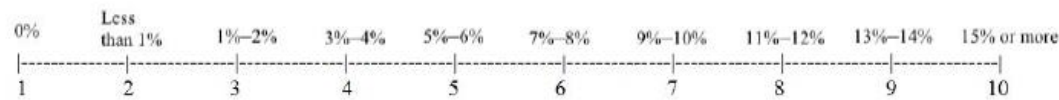
6. On average, how much time each *day* (in 24 hours) do you spend listening to religious music or radio, or watching religious TV?

0 (never)	1–5 min	6–10 min	11–20 min	21–30 min	31–60 min	More than 1 hr, less than 2 hr	More than 2 hr, less than 3 hr	3–4 hrs	5 hrs or more
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

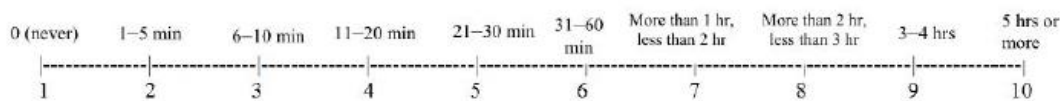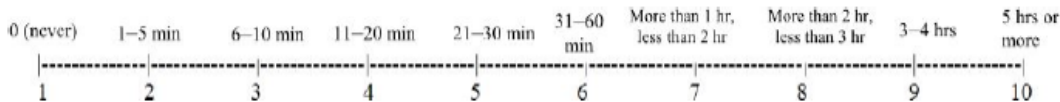7. On average, how much time each *day* do you spend reading religious scriptures, books, or other religious literature?

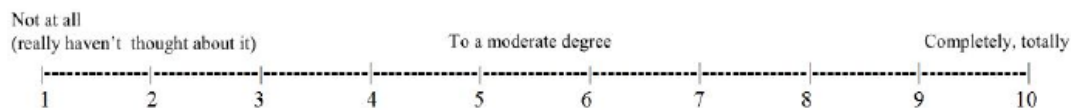| 0 (never)	1–5 min	6–10 min	11–20 min	21–30 min	31–60 min	More than 1 hr, less than 2 hr	More than 2 hr, less than 3 hr	3–4 hrs	5 hrs or more
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
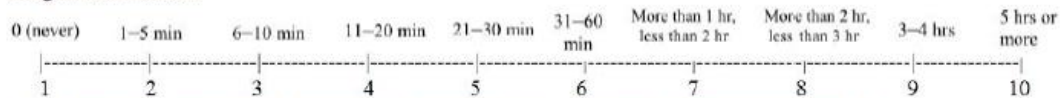
8. On average, how much time each *day* do you spend in private prayer or meditation?

0 (never)	1–5 min	6–10 min	11–20 min	21–30 min	31–60 min	More than 1 hr, less than 2 hr	More than 2 hr, less than 3 hr	3–4 hrs	5 hrs or more
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. On average, how much time each *day* do you spend as a volunteer in your religious community or to help others for religious reasons?

0 (never)	1–5 min	6–10 min	11–20 min	21–30 min	31–60 min	More than 1 hr, less than 2 hr	More than 2 hr, less than 3 hr	3–4 hrs	5 hrs or more
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. To what extent (on a 1 to 10 scale) have you decided to conform your life to the teachings of your religious faith?

Not at all (really haven't thought about it)				To a moderate degree				Completely, totally	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Scoring instructions:

(1) Recode Q1 as follows: 7 = 10, all other answers = 1
(2) Sum recoded Q1 + Q2 thru Q10 to arrive at total score (range 10–100)

BIAC is also available in Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish

Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale, Revised 5-Item Version

Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG-R-S5) Subscale

1. Sex between two men is just plain wrong.*
2. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.*
3. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.* (Reverse scored)
4. Male homosexuality is a perversion.
5. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned. (Reverse scored)

Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL-R-S5) Subscale

1. Sex between two women is just plain wrong.*
2. I think female homosexuals (lesbians) are disgusting.*
3. Female homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in women.* (Reverse scored)
4. Female homosexuality is a perversion.
5. Female homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned. (Reverse scored)

*This item is included in the 3-item version (ATLG-R) of the subscale.

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