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# Mexican Masculinities: Migration and Experiences of Contemporary Mexican American Men

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# Mexican Masculinities: Migration and Experiences of Contemporary Mexican American Men

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Submitted to Scripps College in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelors of Arts

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## **Introduction**

Before, I delve into my thesis, there are some matters that need to be addressed. I have taken the introduction to introduce these matters and set the foundation for what I am doing along with why and how I am writing my thesis in a particular way.

### **Positionality**

First things first, who am I as a researcher, and what are the dynamics are at play? I'm a white, middle to upper class, heterosexual female who has had and continues to have an incredibly privileged life. I never really had to work in order to put myself through school. I always knew that my education would be taken care of and my mom insured that I went to the top schools in the area. Sure I worked a bit to help out, but it was never, "if I don't work we're not going to eat or I'm not going to school". It was just like oh, so I don't have spending money or I'll have my mom pay for gas this week. My education thus far, has allowed me to even be at Scripps and to have the opportunity to go to graduate school and to have the mentality that I am going to college and I am going to graduate school. Education was and is always pushed.

I'm white. In terms of the hierarchy of race in the United States, being white is the top of the tier. It has and continues to afford me privileges. Privileges, that I may yet be unaware of. In terms of sexuality, being heterosexual is also at the top of the tier. The only mark against me is that I'm a female; other than that, there are no "strikes against me". So just being me, I am privileged. The men I have interviewed are male, Mexican Postundergraduate students who come from working to middle class backgrounds and from interviews all present and identify as heterosexual.

As such there are and were inherent power dynamics between the men that I interviewed and myself. Although I did try to mitigate these power dynamics as much as possible by letting each man be as involved in my thesis as possible, it's not enough to mitigate these dynamics. Furthermore, I was the one doing the interviewing so there were and are power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee. Again, I tried to make sure that each man felt comfortable asking me questions either about what I was doing or who I was, but again my position is highly privileged and gives me power. So my position even though I tried to be open may have prevented them from asking questions or commenting on matters.

### **So why Male, Mexican American Postundergraduate Students?**

It might seem strange to some people why a “gringa” would want to interview male Mexican American post-undergraduates, but for me, writing my thesis around their stories was a journey that has traversed many years. When I was around two years old, two of my aunts would take me out to a ranch<sup>1</sup> over in ----- to see the horses. I had and have another aunt who works at the ranch and would always go over to see the babies. Over the years, my mom or my aunts would take me over to ride horses. When I was around eight I was diagnosed with cancer and so didn't make it out there as much. Once I was done with chemo, I started helping my aunt out in the office and as a reward or “payment” I got to go on a ride.

As the years passed, I got better and better and started getting paid for working. Since I was only around fifteen or sixteen at the time, I couldn't take people out on solo. Through working there, I started to form familial relationships with the men there. They

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<sup>1</sup> This is a horse rental ranch.

have and continue to be a significant part of my life. Slowly, as I became a better rider and was able to spend more time at the ranch, I became a member of the community.

Although I will always be the boss's niece, ahora ellos me aceptan menos de este identidad y más como una amiga quien entiende como el rancho funciona y que estoy de acuerdo con los opiniones de ellos y no con el rancho. Los hombres en los 40's -70's llámame hija, mijita, o niña. Originalmente algunos me llaman Guerra pero despues que ellos me conocen ellos me llaman como ya te explico. Tambien yo llamar uno padre, algunos tío, y de los "nicknames". Se llamo Gabriel por su nombre verdadero o cuando estamos jugando niño como las otras personas llamaban él pero solo de vez un cuando ahora porque él ya esta creciendo. Tambien ellos me tratan como familia y yo les trate como familia tambien. Ellos tienen confianza en mi y miráme con respecto y yo tambien.<sup>2</sup>

Things also became interesting once I learned Spanish. I can remember the day they realized I knew Spanish well enough. I laughed when they called one of guy's barbas de leon when they were joking y unos de ellos, me pregunté que significa barbas y yo le digo beard y ellos respondieron, Oh pero tu no debias entender este. Meaning that I shouldn't have known what they were talking about. Despues de este Alberto dice a todos que cuidan lo que tu dices porque ella sabe español.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Now they accept that identity less and see me as a friend who understands how the ranch functions and that I agree with their opinions about the ranch. The men in their 40's- 70's call me daughter, or girl. Originally some called me white woman, but after they knew me, they called me daughter or girl. Also, I call one person father, some uncle, and others by their nicknames. I call Gabriel Gabriel but when we are joking, boy, like the other people call him, but only every once in awhile because he is close to 30. Also, they treat me like family and I treat them like family too. They trust me and treat me with respect, as I do them.

<sup>3</sup> After this, Alberto, told everyone to watch what they said around me

Here, I was able to learn what the true meaning of community and family are. During my adolescent years, it was a difficult time as my mother was dating a guy, Michael, whom she eventually married. This was a really difficult time and still is for me, and my family at the ranch was incredibly supportive of me and provided a refuge from the chaos. I honestly don't think I would be where I am or would have managed as well as I have without them. Gabriel (mi hermano) and Rafael (mi primo) came to my graduation party, which meant that they had to drive over to redwood city, a 30-45 minute drive and ask permission to take a few hours off of work. I would have loved my whole family come, but knew that that just wasn't feasible.

Today, whenever I am home, even before I get home, I plan on how I can get out and see my family. Even though I love my biological family, I feel that they are my true family and get to see the true me. Me recuerde cuando el housekeeper, Connie, mi mayor hermana me dice que mi primo y hermano preguntaban "porque ella esta muy caida alli, ella no es como asi alla". Essentially saying that how I acted at home was quite different from how they knew me.

Throughout the semester, I hand write letters to my family at the ranch telling them how I am doing and asking how they are doing. Gabriel and I text at least once a month and are friends on facebook. According to Garcia, the "family became the most important cultural institution that Mexicans carried with them to their new immigrant communities" (Garcia 22). I feel like the importance of family and community has been deeply instilled in me by my family at the ranch. Although it is not a "traditional" family structure, whatever that is, we still function as a community and family. My family here has always been there for me and I am and continue to be grateful for them.



## **Courses and How they Led me to My Specific Thesis**

It was through classes and my experience working at the ranch that I came to writing my thesis. Throughout my time at Scripps, I have taken classes that centered on citizenship, immigration, the border, Latinos in general, Mexican, and feminist theories. Starting sophomore year I got to take a class that looked at citizenship and sexuality. Although I have always been aware of citizenship and immigration, this class was the first class that had me start to think of citizenship as having layers. In this class I was also introduced to the idea of intersectionality and positionality. Ideas that were developed in my Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies class, Gender, Justice, and Social Movement, and in Doing Feminist Research class. This past semester I took two classes that more specifically discussed the border and examined the practice of oral history. In the Gender, Justice and Social Justice class, I did an oral history with my brother and that's what led me and instilled in me the importance and power of oral histories.

## **Methodology and Interview Process**

As there is incredible power in oral, histories, I have centered my research around them. Garcia writes, "Oral Tradition as providing immigrant with a connection to their homeland".<sup>4</sup> Oral histories are incredibly empowering and they "give us a sense of the issues and experiences around which identities are formed and a sense of how they change over time".<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, "...oral historical theories and methods have the ability to disrupt master narratives, traditional theoretical paradigms, and canonized literary readings of texts...".<sup>6</sup> Oral histories are often seen as less than scholarly sources as not up

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<sup>4</sup> Garcia, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Gluck and Patai, 159.

<sup>6</sup> Barnett, 58.

to par. However, they have the power to disrupt these normative constructions and offer different and equally if not more important views on a particular matter.

### ***So who did I interview?***

I interviewed male, Mexican American post college students. All four men that I interviewed went to college in California and were between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-seven. Generally speaking they were from working class backgrounds and had at least one sibling. I chose this population because I wanted to be sensitive to issues around immigration. As a further precaution to protect their identities, pseudonyms have been used and any identify information like their hometown, places of work have been crossed out. I also sent the transcripts to each of the men I interviewed, to see if they had any questions or concerns about what I had written. Sending each of the men their own transcripts was one of the ways I tried to mitigate power dynamics at play.<sup>7</sup> In oral histories and other forms of research where there are power dynamics at play it is important not only to be cognizant of them but also to ensure that you aren't just taking. I received a mix of responses. Some didn't respond and others responded with a few comments, which we addressed collaboratively.

The question remains though, how did I come to interviewing the men I did? My search for people who would be willing to speak with me began the end of junior year. Piya tried to connect with people and I connected with them but in the end many of the connections didn't work out for various reasons. So initially it was really a struggle to find orators. And then at the beginning of this past semester, I "remembered" that my mother's husband, is Mexican American and his involvement in Latino organizations and

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<sup>7</sup> I have tried to make the interview process as inclusive as possible.

other events meant that he knew a lot of young Mexican American men. When I say young, I mean around my age (twenty-one). Through his network of other Latino men he knew, he either directly or his connections put me in contact with the four men I ended up interviewing.

I don't know too much about the interaction before I started contacting the men, but the response time varied from a couple of days to a few weeks. I'm not quite sure why times varied, but some factors may have been work schedules, difficulty of the topic, and anxiety. For the most part, all of the men were really open with me, which was surprising. I mean, discussing family, labor/work, and masculinity/macho/machismo are not easy topics to discuss, let alone with a stranger. In all but one of the interviews, I did a pre-interview to inform each of them what I was doing, how I got to be doing this thesis, go over the consent form, and to address any questions or concerns that they may have had. The pre-interviews were not recorded and it was more of a way of us acquainting ourselves with one another. The interest in the thesis ranged, but for the most part, the men were genuinely interested in the topic and reading my thesis when I completed it. After each interview was finished, I downloaded the audio onto a secured folder on my desktop. I then transcribed each interview and subsequently deleted the audio file.

However even before the process of interviewing could start, I needed to complete and go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Scripps. IRB at Scripps could be a whole chapter in itself. It isn't so much that it's difficult, but is an incredibly detail oriented process. In total, I went through IRB three times. I started out by meeting with Professor Spezio and asking him for any advice he may have so that I could be

approved in little time as possible as I only started IRB first semester. I know it seems like that would give me plenty of time, but it was almost not enough. The questions are centered around the ethics and practices that I would be using. The questions force one to critically examine what you are doing. Since I was speaking with male Mexican American college students, IRB was especially concerned with issues around citizenship. As such, I submitted the form an additional two times to make sure precautions were in place. Once I was approved, I began the process of interviewing. The flow of the chapters is reflective of the process that went into interviewing and speaking with each of these men.

### **Flow of the Chapters**

The flow of chapters is designed to aid readers in understanding who each of the orators are and the history behind who they are and where their constructions of masculinity might come from.

This first is divided into two main parts: one, immigration and labor and two, kinship. The role of this chapter is to set up background information on the aforementioned topics as they have if not directly, indirectly influenced the orator's histories. The focus on labor and immigration is done because the two are closely related. After the U.S. annexed parts of Mexico, there were a series of events that resulted. Although I am not focusing in on these events, the effects are still felt today. The contentious relationship between the U.S-Mexico via Border Patrol, NAFTA, and The Bracero Program are of focus as they locate U.S.-Mexico relations. Labor was and is often a driving force for immigration and the aforementioned areas highlight this.

The second part, kinship looks at the way migration has forced the reconceptualization of family and community. It examines communities and preservation of culture. At the end of this entire chapter, I want my reader to be able to locate and understand the history and circumstances that have influenced the orator's lives. I see the past as informing the future and so want my reader to be familiar with past and present events that may or may not inform orator's lives. This chapter is the foundation, if taken from a building prospective.

Chapter two is heavily theory based. It explores three main areas: masculinities, macho/machismo, what it means "to be a man". The goal of this chapter is to examine what goes into constructing these three main areas. I want my reader to be clear that masculinity, macho, and machismo are not interchangeable terms and that each has its own history and denotes something different. I am examining how these areas are embodied and the signifiers for each. The goal is not for readers to compare the theory here to the orators but to see the value that both theory and oral history have together. I want readers to understand that there are multiple perspectives one can use to look at the three areas. This chapter then is the framing, if taken from a building prospective.

At the end of chapter one and two, I want readers to be able understand the big picture. I believe that through the use of history and theory I can accomplish this. The big picture in that they are able to understand the general location of the orators and the history behind their stories.

Chapter three examines concepts like: family, home, religion, work, labor, jobs, gender roles, and parenting. This chapter is based on grounding the reader in who these men are and helps to facilitate this connection to how they construct masculinity.

Although I have used quotes in this chapter, I have chosen to summarize for the most part as this chapter is about setting up chapter four.

In chapter four the oral histories speak each man's views on masculinity. Like how they construct masculinity, what it is to them, which term they use masculinity or machismo, etc. I begin by briefly locating the men and constructions of home. Home and constructions of home, at least for me relate to belonging. Home is also where many of the values that, I and the majority of people, initially construct their values. This chapter is all about voices and how the people behind these voices see Mexicaness, Machoness, and Belonging in America. At some point I will problematize the term America, but as America is a term generally used to describe the U.S., I will still use it. I will generally try to keep the voices in their original form. Meaning that I will try to use direct quotes as often as possible. Analysis is added to each of the men's statements at the end of each section. Each man's voice is powerful and the subsections will help you organize what they are saying about a certain topic.

Like chapters one and two, these final chapters work together to create a more complete picture of where and how each man (Luis, Enrique, Javier, and Miguel) construct(ed) their notions of masculinities.

### **Terminology**

Throughout my thesis, there are terms that I have used numerous times. Due to the possibility of interpretation, I have included my definitions for a few of the words.

1. Immigrants: refers to both men and women Mexican immigrants
2. The nation: refers to the U.S. unless otherwise specified
3. The border: refers to the U.S.-Mexico border unless otherwise specified

## **Migrating Gender: Labor and Kinship in Mexican American Experiences**

This chapter is divided into two different parts: Immigration & Labor and Kinship. I start the first section by looking at the need for labor. Historically the U.S. has needed immigrants (read: inexpensive laborers) during times of war or rapid industrialization. As one begins to examine labor, it becomes readily apparent that immigration and labor are intertwined. The U.S.-Mexico border relations begin when the U.S. annexed Mexico at the end of the Mexican-American War with the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). From this point on U.S.-Mexico relationships were contentious at best. This section examines the outcome of these events via The Border Patrol, NAFTA, and The Bracero Program. These three areas highlight both the past and present state of immigration and labor. The need and want for labor is often a driving force for immigration and the aforementioned areas highlight this.

The second section, kinship dissects the way migration has forced the reconceptualization of family and community. Through the examination of family and how it is reconstructed as a means of survival, one can begin to grasp the implications of policies.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, constructions of kinship and alternative communities highlight ways in which Mexican culture is preserved and evolving. I now challenge you as the reader to see ways in which the past informs the present. Many policies or actions made

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<sup>8</sup> Although I will go into this more later, it is important to understand the importance of Mexican culture and its emphasis on la familia. When la familia cannot be constructed in a traditional sense (nuclear family) other forms of community and thus family are necessary. Reconstructing la familia is then part of the preservation of culture, which I mark later. Mexicans and Latinos as a group have been noted for their strong sense of preservation of culture despite having immigrated generations ago. In the literature that I have read, Mexicans and Latinos, as a group have been marked for their strong preservation of culture despite having been in the U.S. for centuries. Mexican and Latino culture places an emphasis on the family and reconstructing the family is survival by means of preserving identity.

in the past still effect the present. Take for example the militarization of the border. I will delve further into this later but as a result of increased border surveillance, immigrants have had to turn to alternative measure like coyotes<sup>9</sup> in order to cross. Furthermore, at least in the United States and in my experience, my primary education only taught me one side of history. In the next few pages, I ask readers to open their eyes to another version of events and to recognize motives behind actions made by the U.S.

## **Immigration and Labor**

### **The Need and Role of Labor**

During the rapid industrialization of the American Southwest (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> C), there was a need for unskilled and semi-skilled workers.<sup>10</sup> In terms of the history of the U.S., during the 19<sup>th</sup> C, the country was expanding west and looking for more land and territory. It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> C that Native Americans were marched out of their homelands via the Trail of Tears. During this time, the U.S. also won the Mexican-American War and annexed territory from Mexico. There was also the Civil War and the abolishment of formalized slavery. As such, Mexicans were readily accepted in the U.S. due to the need. Furthermore the U.S. formalized and admitted 29 states to the U.S.. During the 20<sup>th</sup> C, the U.S. fought many wars and so needed persons for its labor and expansion. It was during these centuries that the U.S. expanded West, displaced numerous groups of people, and territories like Puerto Rico. Here I am not saying that

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<sup>9</sup> Coyotes are people who help to smuggle people across the border. They are also called polleros. Often times a person migrating will pay them a portion of the fee and then repay the rest as soon as they are able to get a job. Until then, the coyote owns them. The use of coyotes came about through a need to cross the border by immigrants that has become increasingly difficult due to stricter and stricter immigration policies created mainly by the U.S.

<sup>10</sup> Maria García, *The Mexican Americans* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 18.



tensions didn't exist, but merely that the U.S.'s desire for labor made it so that policies were written to encourage Mexicans to come to the U.S.. There is no doubt that tensions existed at the time, but the U.S. government was more willing to overlook these tensions. Furthermore, legislators wrote policies that enabled for facile immigration.<sup>11</sup> “For many growers, immigration was how California would find the large numbers it required to fulfill its destiny as a major site of industrial agriculture”.<sup>12</sup>

Although the rapid industrialization did pull many Mexican migrants to the U.S., there is a more powerful pull—that is, war. Although war in general is a powerful pull in general, one of the more impactful wars for Mexicans in terms of labor was WWII. It was, “with the onset of World War II, booming wartime markets, and the new Bracero Program in the 1940s, Mexican immigrants flowed north...”.<sup>13</sup> Later on, I will discuss the importance of the Bracero Program. At this point though, it is important to note that World War II created a strong pull for labor. Mexicans were a readily able population that the United States could use to fill this need. The effect of WWII in terms of labor was felt even after the Program officially ended. Hamilton states that, “between 1940 and 1980, the Mexican economy grew at a rate of 6 percent a year”.<sup>14</sup> The growth of the economy was largely due to remittances.

The Mexican economy grew despite the economic downturn that occurred in the 1970s and '80s. Some would say the crisis continues today, but that is another topic. The

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<sup>11</sup> García, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: migrant citizens and transnational subjects in the postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 50.

<sup>13</sup> Elliot Young, Samuel Truett, *Continental Crossroads* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004). 19.

<sup>14</sup> Nora Hamilton, *Mexico: Political, Social, and Economic Revolution* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 76.

economy suffered greatly despite efforts made by the IMF (International Monetary Fund). However, the problem was that the efforts made by the IMF “were not sufficient to relieve the international constraints Mexico confronted or to aid its economic recovery”.<sup>15</sup> The economic perils that Mexico faced during this time can be seen as one of many SIGNIFICANT push factors. Groody writes of some push factors. In his book he states, “virtually all immigrants leave their country because of an urgent need, whether social, political, economic, or religious”.<sup>16</sup> During the time of WWII, many Mexicans immigrated due to the economic perils facing their country. The United States capitalized on Mexico’s economic state and surplus of labor and created the Bracero Program. The Program was designed not to help the Mexican economy, but to take advantage of Mexicans desperate for labor due to the privatization of sectors.

Furthermore, The Latino population can be seen as falling into three main industries: production/transportation, construction/maintenance, and services. In general, Mexicans tend to work in the first two industries. The relegation of Latinos, in particular Mexicans is due to the resulting “impact of U.S. immigration policy on Mexican migration reflects a perspective in which Mexican migrants have been historically regarded as cheap, disposable labor force, reflected in both labor recruitment and deportations”.

A fact that further hindered the Mexican economy, was the privatization of sectors. The privatization resulted in a surplus of labor on the Mexican side while the U.S. needed labor. A perfect situation was created for the U.S. to capitalize on and rather

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<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, 113.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 15.

unfortunate for Mexicans who were out of work. Although the goal of privatization was to “reduce corruption, waste and inefficiency...and to reduce the drain on the government budget...”.<sup>17</sup> It seemed like a good idea at the time, yet, “the effect was often to transform public monopolies into private monopolies or oligopolies”.<sup>18</sup> The idea was that privatization would allow for efficiency and diminish the strain on the Mexican government. So privatization was for the Mexican government, however they didn’t foresee the creation of monopolies.

The government believed that small businesses would step in. However, large corporations some international stepped in to control certain sectors. The overall effect of privatization in many ways then backfired. Not only did privatization result in the aforementioned monopolies, but also created unfavorable working conditions. As part of privatization, there was the process of restructuring. As tenant “central to the restructuring process is the ‘flexibilization’ of labor: the ability of companies to hire and fire workers as deemed necessary, to exclude certain workers from unionization, to shift to part-time workers”<sup>19</sup> to name a few things. Left with no other way to support their families, workers are either forced to work in these conditions or to cross the border.

Crossing the border is not without its perils, yet for many it is the best or only option. At this point in time, “Mexico and her eighty million citizens are completely dependent on the U.S. market”.<sup>20</sup> Even once one makes it across the border, there are still

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<sup>17</sup> Hamilton, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Hamilton, 117.

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, 120.

<sup>20</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera, The new Mestiza* (San Francisco, California: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 32.

obstacles to face. Many immigrants leave behind family. However,<sup>21</sup>“remittances serve to compensate for a lack in presence and to demonstrate continued dedication to family, allowing a real sense of contribution and fulfillment in being able to provide in any amount”.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, “the ability to earn a livable wage helps justify the multiple sacrifices of leaving family behind, living in a constant state of alienation and fear of deportation”.<sup>23</sup> Work or labor then serves as way rationalize the emotional and physical struggles that many immigrants face. It is “the ability to earn a livable wage helps justify the multiple sacrifices of leaving family behind, living in a constant state of alienation and fear of deportation”.<sup>24</sup> The question then is, how did immigrants, in this case Mexican immigrants, lives and conditions back home come to the point where their only choice is to work under these conditions? Although, I cannot say for certain the conditions, it seems that looking at immigration laws and the border is a helpful starting place.<sup>25</sup>

### **Exploring Immigration Laws**

To start, it is essential to comprehend how U.S and Mexico relations began. Formal relations, if you could call them that, began with The Mexican American War (1846-1848). The war ended in 1848, with the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe

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<sup>21</sup> This statement is based off of two researchers who did a study on day laborers. See footnote 16 for more information.

<sup>22</sup> Aída Hurtado, Edward Fergus, Pedro Noguera, *Understanding the Disenfranchisement of Latino men and boys: Invisible no More* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2012), 87.

<sup>23</sup> Hurtado, Fergus, and Noguera, 87.

<sup>24</sup> Hurtado, Fergus, and Noguera, 86.

<sup>25</sup> The statements in this paragraph come from a study done by Abel Valenzuela Jr and Maria C. Olivares Pasillas. Their deductions came from in depth interviews and scholarly sources. They highlight other studies done by Organista and Kubo (2005). The statements are thus a combination of the interviews they did, which are further supported by other scholars.

Hidalgo. The Treaty gave the U.S Texas, Alta California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and parts of Wyoming and Colorado. As evident an incredible amount of land was annexed from Mexico. The Treaty was written to appear as if both parties would equally benefit. It stipulated that current residents had the choice to either stay in annexed territory or to go back to Mexico. Of note here is that if one decided to stay and made no decision about becoming a citizen, in one years time, one automatically became a citizen.

In 1885, the Land Act of 1885 was implemented. It required documentation of land ownership and paperwork with fees to be filed by the court. All legal material was written in English, a language that many Mexicans had yet to learn. At the same time, the U.S. government was pushing its citizens to “settle the west”. These citizens became squatters on Mexican’s land, but were often give the right to settle (read steal) the land from Mexicans. Another issue with the Land Act was that it required documentation, and many Mexicans didn’t have papers to establish ownership. Even before the Land Act, there was rampant corruption. Gonzalez writes, “a scant six years after Texas independence, thirteen Anglos gobbled up 1.3 million acres in ‘legal’ sales from 358 landowners”.<sup>26</sup> Given what was already happening without government support, one begins to comprehend how Mexicans became dependent on the U.S. and the reason for the countries current economic state.

Recall that during this time, the U.S. was trying to expand its borders. As such policies were selectively enforced and land was ceased illegally from Mexicans. However, they were not afforded the same privileges as “original U.S. citizens”. As such laws were only enforced when it benefitted the U.S.’s interest. So the signing of the

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<sup>26</sup> Gonzalez Narratives, 100.

Treaty and the Mexican-American war was about LAND. Of course now that the U.S. was expanding and had a “hostile neighbor” who might want to reclaim their land, there needed to be a way to enforce the new borders.

### **Policing, Militarization, and Politicization of the Border**

A starting point for the policing, militarization, and politicization of the border, is the border patrol. Prior to 1924, when the border patrol was officially established, the border was permeable. However during the 1920s, the United States witnessed the emergence of xenophobia.<sup>27</sup> Even before the U.S. became openly xenophobic, it began to pay attention to what was happening at the border because of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). The Revolution “...caused U.S. immigration and health officials to become uncomfortably aware of the openness of the border”.<sup>28</sup> From this point on the border would be a place of contest. In order to insure that “the nation” was protected, the Border Patrol was established; “the Border Patrol was an apparatus deployed in and for state formation and through which the limits of nationhood were demarcated and disputed”.<sup>29</sup>

The Border Patrol and those in power serve as way to insure that “unwanted” persons are not allowed to be part of the nation. To the U.S, the only legitimate inhabitants are those in power, the whites, and those who align themselves with whites”.<sup>30</sup> The border is a site of contest, where ideas on who and who isn’t a citizen and even a person are decided. In fact, “...the border has served for years as a locus for the

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<sup>27</sup> Young and Truett, 303.

<sup>28</sup> Young and Truett, 303.

<sup>29</sup> Young and Truett, 311.

<sup>30</sup> Anzaldúa, 26.

reinforcement of boundaries marking the body politic, whether expressed in national, racial, or gendered terms”.<sup>31</sup>

When the Border Patrol was officially established, one of the first Patrol inspectors, Pete Torres was being teased for the fact that he looked and he may have been Mexican. However, Torres, “...shot right at his (the accusers) feet. [Torres stated,] I am not a Mexican. I am Spanish-American”.<sup>32</sup> At stake here is whether Torres is exactly like the people that he is prohibiting from crossing the border. To be Mexican, then is less; to be Spanish-American puts him in a position of power. The shot was a warning shot and served as a way to affirm his position as unrelated to Mexico. Contestations are prevalent on the border, however there are times when these contestations become more apparent.

The contestation of the border becomes especially apparent during times of times of economic hardship. They are then blamed for the current state of the economy.<sup>33</sup> Take for example, what happened when the U.S. economy first entered the recession. Although from an economist standpoint the recession was only from 2007-2009, the effects are still felt today. During this time and even now, the debate on immigration has been a “hot topic”. I can recall hearing in the news and other media sources how “immigrants were stealing our (U.S. citizens) jobs”. However, no one wants to do the jobs that immigrants do for a multitude of reasons. Reasons that are not limited to low pay rates, job instability, employer harassment, physical conditions of jobs, etc. It is during these times of economic hardship or war that immigrants are attacked and scapegoated for bringing about the situation.

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<sup>31</sup> Young and Truett, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Hernández, 44.

<sup>33</sup> David Maciel, Maria Herrera-Sobek, *Culture Across Borders: Mexican Immigration & Popular Culture* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 67.

The Border Patrol, then by capturing and deporting immigrants, acts to ensure that the nation is protected. The nation is protected because the Border Patrol along with ranchers, “ensure that migrants would come and go with the seasons and not have the opportunity to better themselves”.<sup>34</sup> Through ensuring that migrants don’t have the opportunity to better themselves, the nation can be protected. The nation is protected by ensuring that everyone does their part and stays in their current position. Essentially, the Border Patrol and other laws and agencies ensure that the cycle of oppression continues.

The Border Patrol, “from the outset, although technically charged with only enforcing civil laws, the mandate of the Border Patrol was extensive and quasi-military: patrolmen were armed agents of the state, commissioned with guarding the nation as a whole from undesired persons and things”.<sup>35</sup> The Border Patrol was initially based off of the Texas Ranger model. In many ways, the Border Patrol and Texas Rangers have been given absolute power.

Take for example the corrido de Gregorio Cortez. He was a Mexican rancher in Karnes County, Texas. His brother Ramon resisted arrest for a crime he didn’t commit and was shot by one of the sheriffs present. Cortez shot the sheriff. He goes on the run and evades capture for ten days. During which time, the Rangers and Sheriffs gathered men to find him. When they could not find Cortez, “they sought revenge by proxy, arresting, brutalizing, and murdering an unknown number of Mexicans”.<sup>36</sup> Since they (The Border Patrol and Texas Rangers) could not get to Cortez personally, they took out on innocent people. When Cortez was finally acquitted of all charges, he had killed quite

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<sup>34</sup> Kelly Hernandez, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2010), 44.

<sup>35</sup> Young and Truett, 306.

<sup>36</sup> Hernández, 20.



a few sheriffs at this point, he was found guilty for “stealing” a horse. Cortez was being persecuted for defending his right to protect himself. It was the exercising of this right that created an issue for him and others that helped him. Cortez was released from prison early but was given a slow acting poison by one of the guards. The Texas Rangers wanted revenge for Cortez having killed so many Rangers and sheriffs. Cortez died within the year. However, his corrido stands today as a reminder of a person who stood up for his and his people’s rights.

Another example that highlights the difference between the law and lived reality is the Bracero Program. As will shortly be seen certain safeguards that were supposed to be in place had no standing and in some cases were not backed by law.

### **The Bracero Program**

This next section examines the implementation of a labor program that was a written agreement between the U.S. and Mexico. Through the examination of this program, The Bracero Program, one can see the discrepancy between laws and their implementation. Furthermore, the Program highlights the way in which the U.S. rights, has and continues to write policy that seems equitable, but is clearly one sided upon closer examination.

The Bracero Program was first implemented in 1942 as a way to deal with the labor shortage created by WWII. Initially, the Program was only supposed to run for three years, however it continued until 1964. It was during this time that over 200K immigrants migrated to the U.S. to work.<sup>37</sup> The Program has been broken down into three official phases: 1942-47 (WWII), 1948-51 (interim), and 1951-64 (Korean War and

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<sup>37</sup> Garcia, 31.

Beyond).<sup>38</sup> Each phase had different stipulations written in. The Program was primarily open to men who “...would work in the agricultural fields and then be sent home, however many of them brought their families and settled in the U.S..<sup>39</sup> Officially, they were not allowed to bring over their families. Given that Braceros did bring their families over, there is a high probability that women<sup>40</sup> and children also worked in the fields. The idea was that the men would just come to work and send remittances. For the purposes of this exploration of Mexican masculinities, it is essential to note the gendering of labor—and its masculinization. Men are seen as the only ones who migrated and worked.<sup>41</sup>

Recall the role of the Border Patrol, who were there to ensure that Mexican immigrants would not be able to better themselves. The actual lived experiences of Braceros then contest this point. Their experiences also question the implementation of “the bilateral agreement guaranteed that those chosen would meet physical standards for farmwork, live in sanitary housing, have access to medical care, have paid round-trip transportation, and paid prevailing wage for the crop they picked”.<sup>42</sup> The treatment of Braceros which will now be examined, demonstrates the disconnect between policy and how it was enforced. There were no official agencies that worked to ensure that Braceros were treated fairly.

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<sup>38</sup> Cohen, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Cohen, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Although this is incredibly limiting, when I refer to women, at least in this chapter, women refers to Mexican women. This is limiting because it erases many different and specific groups of Mexican women. However scholarship from the sources that I have read generalizes Mexican women into one group. Furthermore when scholarship does mention Indigenous women, it generalizes all indigenous groups. It’s problematic but also difficult to find exactly which women scholars are referring to.

<sup>41</sup> Later I will briefly mention Mexican women’s role. The beginning of chapter two problematizes this and demonstrates that Mexican women were also migrating and working.

<sup>42</sup> Maciel and Herrera-Sobek, 22.

Mexicans had to apply to be a Bracero, which was also part of some of the stipulations written into the agreement signed by the U.S. and Mexico. The idea of the selection process was to ensure that only fit men were brought over to the U.S. to work. Here, the term fit means, strong and healthy. To be selected to be a Bracero was a great source of pride for many men. In order to be selected, Mexican men had to go through a rigorous selection process. Men were picked based on their appearance.

Men who looked strong, had rough hands and wore “common clothing” were more likely to get selected than say a man whose hands were smooth. Thus there is a distinction between men. A common sentiment is that a man is only a man so long as he can provide for his family. Due to what was happening in Mexico during this time, it was really hard to find work and provide for one’s family. Essentially if one didn’t look “manly” then they couldn’t provide for their families, which only further emasculates them.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the selection process, Braceros were treated horrendously. Even once they passed the selection process, Braceros were often treated as sub-human. One author writes about the Program as “reminiscent of slavery” and Braceros as “being referred to by number and not by name”.<sup>44</sup> From reading about the Program and treatment of Braceros, I am not surprised by her comparison to slavery, but don’t completely agree. Often times Braceros were not paid for their work and lived in conditions where there was no heat, clean water or other stipulations that were written into the agreement.<sup>45</sup> From examination of the lived experiences of Braceros, it seems like the Program was the

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<sup>43</sup> See subsequent chapters for a more in depth construction of masculinities and what it means “to be a man”

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, 100.

<sup>45</sup> Cohen, 100.

somewhat similar to slavery but no way near on the same level. The men weren't being sold and were somewhat free to go where they wanted. Perhaps a better comparison might be that it was indentured servitude or like sharecropping. Apparently, "officials were unaware that U.S. labor laws did not cover agricultural workers".<sup>46</sup> For the lack of a better word this is hypocrisy.

The U.S. knew and always knows exactly what it was doing. Historically the U.S. has and continues to write policy that is in its interest. Take the fact that prior to the Program, under a stipulation in 1917 Immigration Act, Mexican immigrants were not allowed to enter the country. However, "President Franklin Roosevelt waived these restrictive measures in order to admit Mexican workers for temporary employment in agriculture" due to the United States need for labor".<sup>47</sup> So the U.S. vetoed a stipulation it had written in order to supply its need for labor. The Program was seen by Mexico "...as evidence of the country's newly acquired status as an almost equal U.S. hemispheric partner, my analysis suggests that this analysis was largely fictive".<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, Mexican immigrants and their families paid the price of this illusion. Recalling the history of Mexico's colonization, it becomes apparent that from the beginning of this Program, the scales were already tipped in favor of the U.S..

As a result of this illusion, "Braceros" need to negotiate between the lure and reward for the modern, on the one hand, and the demand for backwardness, on the other was the major contradiction underwriting the program and the actions of major players involved... Repeated instances of corruption and humiliation chipped away at men's

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<sup>46</sup> Cohen, 26.

<sup>47</sup> Kim, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Cohen, 112.

willingness to invest in the state's self-portrayal<sup>49</sup> and sign on to its vision of what the program would bring them, their families, and the nation".<sup>50</sup> Braceros were forced into a third space where they "became simultaneously national, alien, transnational and modern"<sup>51</sup> A third space where, their simultaneous identities could co-exist. They were men, yet at the same time were forced to live in conditions and often treated as less than human. They had to balance the need to provide for their families with being men. Braceros also had to navigate being Mexican, and only allowed in the U.S. to provide labor; if they weren't providing this labor they would be classified as aliens.<sup>52</sup>

Once the Program officially ended, "many employers encouraged men to come back".<sup>53</sup> In response to this, the U.S. government implemented The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), also known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act. Among other things, it, "(i) made employers criminally responsible for hiring illegal immigrants", (ii) introduced the I-9 form to ensure that all employees presented documentation of their eligibility to work in the United States, and (iii) allowed certain illegal immigrants to apply for legal status if they met certain requirements".<sup>54</sup>

The Simpson-Mazzoli Act was clever in its wording of requirements. Since the Act only provided for immigrants who continuously lived in the United States from 1982,

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<sup>49</sup> The Mexican government saw the Braceros as vessels through which patriotism and progress could be seen. Recall the history of Mexico and what was happening at the time. Mexico was trying to figure out its identity and aspired to represent itself as equal to the United States. The lengthy selection process, if one passed it, showed prestige and thus aided in representing Mexico as an emerging nation. (Cohen 89-112).

<sup>50</sup> Cohen 110.

<sup>51</sup> Cohen, 7.

<sup>52</sup> I take issue with the use of term aliens or illegal aliens. The terminology serves to dehumanize people and makes it seem that people can be illegal. It isn't illegal to be a human being!

<sup>53</sup> Cohen, 30.

<sup>54</sup> Hing, 156.

the Act, in affect, prohibited the families from joining, their wives/mothers and husband/fathers, but mostly their joining the husbands/fathers. (SAW program: “Their families were deliberately excluded from legalization under the theory that rural Mexican men wanted to commute to seasonal U.S. farm jobs from homes in Mexico, as had earlier green- card commuters”.<sup>55</sup> So the U.S. appears outwardly benevolent by offering status, yet its selection of who can apply is largely biased. This meant that families either stayed broken up or that the men would have to figure out on their own how to get their families into the United States. Women were also working in the fields and helping their husbands so some families may have already been in the U.S.. However it appears that many men worked and then later brought over their families when they had enough money to do so.

#### **North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**

Continuing the U.S.’s quest for cheap labor, it along with Canada and Mexico drafted a document, in 1994, that would to gradually eliminate tariffs and other barriers to trade between the three countries over a period of 15 years, in effect creating a single market”.<sup>56</sup> Of note here is that the U.S. and Canada already had a trade agreement before they entered the agreement with Mexico. Furthermore, the document did not incorporate measures to compensate Mexico through a social policy or development despite blatant inequalities between the three countries.<sup>57</sup> Taking a look at the economic history of Mexico, disparities become pronounced.

During the “1980s and early 1990s due to reforms, there was a growing polarization of society. Between 1984 and 1994 the income of the wealthiest 10 percent

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<sup>55</sup> Latapí, Martin 66.

<sup>56</sup> Hamilton, 123.

<sup>57</sup> Hamilton, 124.

of the population increased while the relative income of the remaining 90 percent declined, and that of the lowest 20 percent declined absolutely as well as relatively”.<sup>58</sup> The reforms were implemented as a response to the economic depression in Mexico and other Latin American countries during the 1970s and ‘80s. The political unrest in Mexico prior to and during this time, and the following decades resulted in the devaluation of the peso (currency of Mexico). In 1994, “the political instability (as well as the vulnerability of the peso) resulted in massive capital flight as both foreign and Mexican investors shifted their funds abroad”.<sup>59</sup> As a result of capital flight, “Inflation increased from 7.1 percent to 52 percent between 1994 and 1995. An estimated one million jobs were lost in 1995. Those workers who retained their jobs saw their wages [drop]”.<sup>60</sup>

Around this same time, NAFTA was being drafted and was signed during a time of vulnerability for Mexico. The ramifications for Mexico entering into this agreement are and will most likely continue to be felt. Unfortunately one of these ramifications is, of Mexico’s economic dependence is that its exports as well as other sources of foreign income, and consequently its overall growth, tend to fluctuate with the economic health of the United States”.<sup>61</sup> The effects on various Indigenous communities, a group often overlooked or forgotten, have also been substantial. In fact, Indigenous people are often disproportionately affected by deals that Mexico has made. Even before the consolidation of the neoliberal state project [in Mexico] and especially after the implementation of NAFTA, which meant that indigenous rights were selectively coopted...”. Indigenous

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<sup>58</sup> Hamilton, 130.

<sup>59</sup> Hamilton, 133.

<sup>60</sup> Hamilton, 134.

<sup>61</sup> Hamilton, 259.

people have struggled to acquire rights.<sup>62</sup> Like Indigenous people are often overlooked when assessing the impact of a particular policy, women are also overlooked for their role as laborers.

### **Engendering Labor**

Men were not the only one immigrating, yet are often the ones who are talked about despite the feminization of migration. It is “a worldwide trend that began in the 1960s and continues the present day. Latin America and other Caribbean [country(ies)] have a higher proportion of female to male migration than other regions of the world with slightly more than half of the migrants from [these locations] being female”.<sup>63</sup> It is further perplexing that women immigrants are not talked about given that women as a group “are the most faithful remitters and send home a larger portion of their earnings than men do only feeds the trend toward female migration”.<sup>64</sup> Something is obviously distorted in terms of actual realities here given the aforementioned trends, yet their voices still go silenced.

In terms of migration to the U.S., often Mexican women would immigrate with their husbands or by themselves in order to help support their families. Even if they (women) didn’t do the same work as their husbands, they were still there in the United States doing labor. Many times they would work as domestics. Conservative policies had made it so “male migrants have increasingly opted to bring their spouses and families to live in the United States...”.<sup>65</sup> If the women didn’t stay at home once they had migrated

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<sup>62</sup> Alvarez et Al., 307

<sup>63</sup> Alvarez et Al., 228.

<sup>64</sup> Alvarez et Al., 229.

<sup>65</sup> Alvarez et Al., 175.



to the U.S. with their husbands, or even if they migrates solo, they often worked in the domestic sphere.

In general, domestic labor is not considered “real labor” as it’s seen as “women’s work”. As a result of domestic labor not being seen as legitimate, those working in it are not granted the “protections and guarantees of U.S. labor law but as an informal labor force operating in the shadows of the service sector”.<sup>66</sup> Despite no formal laws written to protect domestic workers or offer incentives like visas, in the U.S., “the norms and policies that do exist have created a uniform and widespread use of undocumented labor in domestic service”.<sup>67</sup> Essentially then, the U.S. has written policy and instilled norms of what is labor so that it can continue to exploit the work of women immigrants. Alvarez goes on to write how migrant women fulfill other jobs considered to be women’s work.

Many migrant Mexican women crossing borders to fill the care deficit in the United States and other receiving countries are living in contradictions of transnational motherhood, illegal documentation status, invisibility, lack of regulation in the realm of domestic labor, and lack of representation and voice. These disempowering trends are rooted in a fundamental devaluation of domestic work (so-called women’s work)...”.<sup>68</sup> Basically, migrant women come in and fulfill the role of caregiver or mother so that those women who would otherwise have that duty can go to work or school to better themselves. This cycle of oppression works quite well for those who can afford to pay for “women’s work”. Alvarez et. Al. also comments on this. In order to “hire maids, nannies,

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<sup>66</sup> Alvarez et Al., 231.

<sup>67</sup> Alvarez et Al., 226.

<sup>68</sup> Alvarez et Al., 235.

house cleaners, and caregivers to perform domestic service in their homes, one must first have enough disposable income”.<sup>69</sup>

This is all quite disturbing, but oppression functions on multiple levels. One can almost think of oppression as having layers. For immigrant women they are oppressed both because they are women and because they are immigrants. For indigenous women they have both these levels of oppression, but are also oppressed for their indigeneity. In fact, “indigenous women also experience gender subordination throughout their migration trajectory from within the indigenous community”.<sup>70</sup> Indigenous women must learn to navigate this triple oppression. Alvarez et. Al states “For indigenous women, the duty to be an active health citizen in the United States often clashes with the duty to be a good wife and mother as defined by social and cultural norms in Oaxaca. Although these standards vary by community of origin and ethnicity, generally a decent woman does not occupy the public sphere, and if she does it is only on the way to take care of business.”<sup>71</sup>

### **Kinship**

There are multiple ways that one can focus in on constructions of family and kinship ties. In this section, I examine the way migration has forced the reconceptualization of family and community. I also examine the preservation of Mexican culture as it seems to be tied to notions of family and community. One of the ways to examine family is through its ties to the nation. In this section the nation is referring to Mexico and the U.S. as it generally has been used thus far.

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<sup>69</sup> Alvarez et Al., 225.

<sup>70</sup> Alvarez et Al., 176.

<sup>71</sup> Alvarez et Al., 179.

## Family

The family can be seen “as a cultural institution that is carried over” from wherever a person is from, in this case Mexico.<sup>72</sup> Looking back briefly on the Bracero Program, the institution of family was incredibly important that they defied policy that prohibited them from bringing their families. The family is not just an institution, but also the institution. Essentially the family perpetuates values from the institution (read Mexican state) while the institution takes values from the family.<sup>73</sup> Rodriguez writes, “nationalism becomes la familia. Nationalism comes first out of the family”.<sup>74</sup> This cycle comes from the idea that a nuclear family makes the perfect form of government.<sup>75</sup> So the family functions as a mini government where the father rules and the mother and children implement his will, at least in a perfect form of government, think patriarchy.<sup>76</sup> The family perpetuates the nations standards and views while simultaneously the nation is putting those ideas there in the first place. In this cycle, the family, which is composed of citizens, carries out the will of the government and reinforces values. As a result, nations and thus their societies place a high level of importance on family.

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<sup>72</sup> Garcia, 22.

<sup>73</sup> The family is an institution that is promoted by the institution (read Mexican State). However in turn the family also influences and constructs the institution. Basically although it seems that the family influences the institution, the institution is actually the one that says what values it wants perpetuated and has the family instill and reinforce these values. At the same time though, the family does influence the institution. Both the family and larger institution influence one another but each appears to only influence and not be influenced.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Rodríguez, *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009), 31

<sup>75</sup> Rodríguez, 22.

<sup>76</sup> Later on in this section, the connection between patriarchy and religion will be examined.

Although "...Mexican society places a high value on maintain strong family ties," the construction of family has been slightly altered to reflect lived experiences of immigrants.<sup>77</sup> Often, "strong family loyalties extend beyond the immediate nuclear family and include other relatives and kinship networks".<sup>78</sup> Immigrants challenge the nation and its construction of the family as nuclear. "For transmigrant communities, family is configured, defined, and scattered within a transnational space and, significantly, separated by an international boundary and severed because of the policies of and relations between nation-states".<sup>79</sup> This next sub-section explores how families and kinship ties are being reconstructed in these communities to fit the narrative of those living in transmigrant communities.<sup>80</sup>

### **New and Alternative Notions of Kinship**

Ideas of kinship and family are always being reconstructed out of necessity. Recall the importance of family in Mexican society. What happens when that family or community is thousand of miles a way? Alternative forms of kinship and family are constructed. Immigrants are forced to rethink kinship formations simply because their relationship with their families is transnational. As such, "kinship formations are not and have never been static", instead they are continually reformed and redefined.<sup>81</sup> For

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<sup>77</sup> García, 67.

<sup>78</sup> García, 68.

<sup>79</sup> Deborah Boehm, *Intimate Migrations: Gender, Family and Illegality Among Transnational Mexicans* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2012), 33

<sup>80</sup> I'm not saying that all transmigrant communities or that everyone in Mexican Society places an emphasis of family and kinship networks. There are factors like class, race, and religion that also influence what is given value. Mexico is a diverse country composed of 31 states. Due to Mexico's history, there is a great diversity of classes, races, and religions so it is limiting to say Mexican society or to generalize. Unfortunately scholarship often doesn't differentiate between groups of people and instead generalizes.

<sup>81</sup> Boehm, 34.

example, "...when Mexican immigrants refer to their 'families,' they are usually referring both to their immediate nuclear family and their extended family members, who may or may not live under the same roof".<sup>82</sup> Thus, "Kinship ties are inextricably intertwined with transnational movement and family and marriage more often than not guide migration. Transnational kinship and transnational families are a reality for migrants...".<sup>83</sup> The welfare of the family, the community, and the tribe is more important than the welfare of the individual. The individual exists first ad kin—as sister, as father, as padrino—and last as self" (Anzaldúa 40).

### **Constructing New Communities and the Preservation of Culture**

Often times immigrants will migrate to a place where they either have family ties or other networks. The enclaves<sup>84</sup> or communities that they create are a combination of both their country of origin and the country that they have immigrated to.<sup>85</sup> Scholarship suggests that they are able to maintain a strong sense of Mexican nationalism<sup>86</sup>, despite residing in the U.S. for many years.<sup>87</sup> One author writes about the role of the community and neighborhood in which one resides. He writes, "the barrio generated the Raza concept of La Familia which engulfed not only the immediate blood family but also the

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<sup>82</sup> García, 102.

<sup>83</sup> Boehm, 32.

<sup>84</sup> The term enclave comes from Alma Garcia's book, *The Mexican Americans*. It examines the history of Mexico, U.S.-Mexico relations, immigration, identity, and the lives of immigrants. It is heavily theoretical and historically based.

<sup>85</sup> García, 81

<sup>86</sup> Mexican nationalism and La Raza: La Raza as used is in reference to "the manifesto *La Familia de La Raza* by José Armas marked the increased acceptance of the interlocking representations of la familia and la raza....Armas explains: *La Familia de La Raza* was supposed to contribute toward our building and organizing efforts."(26-27). As such the text and the statement about la raza is about the political necessity of forming family.

Family is part of the nation.

<sup>87</sup> García, 87.

Raza community<sup>88</sup> as family”.<sup>89</sup> Here Rodríguez conflates the creation of community and notions of family. Family is redefined in order to foster community and in redefining family community is fostered.

Essentially, it’s a cycle in the same way that family and the nation function.<sup>90</sup> In terms of fostering the formation of community, women play an important part. Women are the ones who are generally relegated to the home and responsible for raising children. Although, “Mexican men often play an important role in initiating migration<sup>91</sup>, women play an important role in solidifying settlement”.<sup>92</sup> Another factor important to the creation of community is Catholicism. For many Mexican immigrants, the church takes on a dual purpose. Although it is a place of worship, it also becomes a place of comfort and continuity for the community.<sup>93</sup> Catholicism is central to Mexican culture, which may be why many Mexicans who have immigrated turn to it as a place of support. The retention of this part of their (Mexicans) culture has been well documented.

A survey in completed in 1993 writes to this fact. The study group examined was the children of Mexican immigrants. From the responses of the children, the researchers were able to deduce that children of Mexican immigrants have a “strong propensity to

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<sup>88</sup> La familia as stated earlier is born out of political necessity. “The manifiesto conjugates la raza and la familia with familiar; relative terms of nationalist sentiment. They are: machismo, carnalismo, nation, compadres, and land”(27). It’s about the insistence of cultural values. However the manifiesto is very skewed towards males.

<sup>89</sup> Rodríguez, 26.

<sup>90</sup> In this reference here, I am referring to nations in general. Nations are highly dependent on the family unit to foster its values. Through the fostering of these values, the family defines the nation.

<sup>91</sup> Even though some women did migrate on their own (Maciel-Herrera Sobek 84), historically women’s bodies have been heavily controlled. Due to the church and other patriarchal institutions, at least in the U.S. and Mexico women’s bodies have been controlled. This isn’t to say that all women’s bodies were controlled, just that it’s a trend.

<sup>92</sup> Maciel and Herrera-Sobek, 84.

<sup>93</sup> García, 24.

reject assimilation and to display an enduring ethnic identity”.<sup>94</sup> A strong contributing factor the preservation of culture is language, at least for Mexican immigrants who have children in the U.S.. In fact, “language is clearly a critical factor in retaining the Mexican culture in the United States and maintaining close ties to Mexico”.<sup>95</sup>

Although Mexican immigrants want their children to speak English, there is “a widespread sentiment among Mexicans living in the United States that they want their children to be bilingual, capable of fluency in both Spanish and English”.<sup>96</sup> Thus for many children of immigrants, their “sense of ethnic identity is one that cuts across two cultures”.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, “Mexican immigrants, both legal and undocumented, have been instrumental in the preservation of Mexican culture, values, traditions, and the Spanish language in the United in general, and within the Chicano community in particular”.<sup>98</sup> This preservation of culture can be read as a survival strategy. García writes, Their Mexican culture provided them with a strong sense of community—an important survival strategy as they lived, worked, and raised their children in their new country”.<sup>99</sup> Of note however is who is making culture; “culture is made by those in power—men. Males make the rules and laws; women transmit them”.<sup>100</sup> La mestiza offers other ways of thinking about culture. “The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to an Indian in Mexican culture, to

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<sup>94</sup> Maciel and Herrera-Sobek, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Alfredo Mirandé, *Jalos, USA: Transnational Community and Identity* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 165.

<sup>96</sup> García, 90.

<sup>97</sup> García, 156.

<sup>98</sup> Maciel and Herrera-Sobek, 6.

<sup>99</sup> García, 21.

<sup>100</sup> Anzaldúa, 38.

be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality”.<sup>101</sup>

In the next chapter the importance of thinking in pluralities is incredibly important. However before delving into Chapter two, it’s important to understand what was expressed in this chapter as it informs Chapter two. This chapter was divided into two different sections. As was seen, the U.S. is strongly driven by labor and thus capitalism. The Border Patrol, NAFTA, and The Bracero Program were discussed in order to examine past and current states of immigration and labor. They were examined together as they intersect to demonstrate the U.S.’s need for labor but only at certain times. At all other times, when there isn’t a need for labor, the U.S. ensures that the border is strongly enforced by the Border Patrol. NAFTA was a way to ensure that trade between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico could happen with high profit yields.

The U.S. is especially adept of taking advantage of disadvantage countries like Mexico and people in general. NAFTA was implemented by Mexico when it was facing a severe economic crisis. The Bracero Program was implemented when there was a labor shortage in the U.S. but a surplus of labor in Mexico. The Border Patrol was created around forty years after the Bracero Program, once the U.S. no longer needed foreign workers to fill jobs. However policy can be reversed like it was with the Bracero Program. Recall that before the Program, Mexicans were forbidden from immigrating or entering the U.S., but an exception was made because of a labor shortage.

The second section looked at kinship and how other forms of family are created as a means of survival. Family and community must be reconceived as for many Mexican

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<sup>101</sup> Anzaldúa, 101.



immigrants their families were on both sides of the border. Family is incredibly important as an institution and is a way that culture and identity can and was preserved. As an institution it is incredibly important for it's ability to traverse the border and remain strongly instilled despite years or even centuries of living in the United States.

The border has and continues to be an interesting space and place to examine. Coming back to Gloria Anzaldúa's conception of the border as existing in pluralities. In the Chapter two, the importance of pluralities when conceptualizing masculinity, macho, and machismo is central. Like the border, each term deserves it's own analysis and can be thought of from various points of reference.

## Mexican Masculinities

*To be a Hispanic<sup>102</sup> man was to hide one's emotions, to swallow our pain.*

*- Ray González<sup>103</sup>*

In this chapter I explore what masculinity is and the importance of thinking about masculinity as existing in pluralities. The other concepts, macho, and machismo, are of equal importance in this chapter. Like masculinity there is no one way one is macho, or enacts machismo. The chapter that follows begins to explore this idea as seen from a Mexican-American perspective. Although this chapter is not an extensive analysis of the aforementioned terms, it does serve to foreground theory and praxis. It is through the interview process and through the words of four men who identify as Mexican American, praxis will be seen. It is through theory that one learns, like the border, that these terms are fluid and mean different things to different people. As such, I have chosen to briefly discuss the border as a gendered space along with theories about the border. The border is often thought of as a singular place, when in fact it is a space.

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<sup>102</sup> “Alcoff notes that the term Hispanic is favored by the middle classes, that it gets more Anglo approval, and that it is the choice of those who oppose bilingual education”(395). Hispanic also is in reference to Spanish rule in the Americas and as such many people wish not to identify as Spanish. However some people prefer Hispanic to Latino as Latino sounds too much like Ladino (Indian). The author briefly discussed that the term Chicano has been used as a negative term, marking lower class.” I disagree with this analysis especially given recent and past political movements where Chicano is seen as a sense of pride”(Alcoff 395-407). “The term Latino is often applied to people irrespective of their ethnicity. They may be mestizo, Portuguese or non-Hispanic, but the term is applied to them. Latino is identified as being from Latin America and the distinction between terms appears to have started after the Monroe Doctrine(1823). In the 1970s, the United States Federal offices decided on the term Hispanic to identify people of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central/South America or other Spanish culture regardless of race or origin. The article goes through terms that are often used to describe persons who have origins in Latin America and the Caribbean”. (Hayes-Bautista and Chapa 61-68).

<sup>103</sup> Ray González, *Muy Macho* (New York, New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 153.

The border is often thought of as just a “line in the sand”. So yes it is place. As in the physical demarcation of a boundary as enforced by the border patrol and other quasi-military agencies. It marks inequality and the point in which one is no longer a citizen but where one becomes a transgressor<sup>104</sup>. However it is much more than that. It is a space because it is fluid, people travel across it. People make their homes on both sides of the border. It’s a space where both U.S. and Mexican culture come together and mix.

Although later on I do elaborate a bit on this concept through Gloria Anzaldúa’s book, *Borderlands*, there is one quote that helps to introduce this concept of borders and boundaries. At one point Anzaldúa writes, “the only legitimate inhabitants are those in power, the whites and those who align themselves with whites”.<sup>105</sup> So unless one is white or subject themselves to oppression that they then perpetuate, they are marked as non-legitimate inhabitants or as transgressors. However, this duality is limiting, as it doesn’t allow for one to grasp the complexity of the border and identity.<sup>106</sup> In terms of the border, Anzaldúa writes,

“The U.S.-Mexican border es una herida abierta where the third world grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country, a

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<sup>104</sup> I don’t think that any human can be a transgressor and if anything U.S. citizens are the transgressors but that’s just my opinion, which doesn’t matter too much. It doesn’t matter because the U.S. will forever see Mexicans as transgressors, which helps make them other and allows them to construct immigrants, particularly Mexican immigrants as “threats to national security”. Whatever that means. Leo Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 2008). Particularly in relation to Latinos, they are seen as “part of an invading force from south of the border that is bent on reconquering land that was formerly theirs...” (3).

<sup>105</sup> Anzaldúa, 25.

<sup>106</sup> Identity is explored in chapter two in relation to masculinities, macho, and machismo.

border culture”.<sup>107</sup>

The border is a place where two spaces mix and form a third space or in this case country. The two places merge to create a third space that is more reflective of actual lived experiences. The grating could be thought of as the tension that exists at the border and the struggle that goes on there. The demarcation of borders and policing of borders is fairly recent. However, it is also important to realize that this third space can also be oppressive. As Mike Davis notes,

“the interface between affluent Anglo majorities and growing blue-collar Latino populations is regulated by what can only be typed a ‘third border.’ Whereas the second border nominally reinforces the international border, the third border polices daily intercourse between two citizen communities: its outrageousness is redoubled by the hypocrisy and can’t used to justify its existence. Invisible to most Anglos, it slaps Latinos across the face”.<sup>108</sup>

Here, Davis marks the complexity of the border and creation of “third spaces”. The border as imagined as a third space is often seen as empowering, but he highlights that it can also lead to relegating of specific groups of people—Latinos into a space that can be policed by Anglos. There are other instances of misconceptions about the border.

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<sup>107</sup> Anzaldúa, 25.

<sup>108</sup> Mike Davis and Michael Sprinker, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. Big City* (New York, New York: VERSO, 2000), 71.

## The Border as a Gendered Space

It is necessary to understand a few misconceptions about the border. One that the border is a space not a place. A place is a physical location whereas as space is entails life and fluidity. **Another misconception, in part due to the legacy of the Bracero Program, is that Mexican men were and are the only ones migrating. In later years, women were the ones migrating in higher numbers than men. As such, the aforementioned belief is highly unfounded, and points to the power of stereotypes.** The border is an interesting place to explore. At the extremities of the nation, border zones are often sexually charged arenas of both gender confusion and clarity, where definitions and enactments of femininity and masculinity can be fluid like mercury or as hard as steel. The complexity of the border is demonstrated by this quote:

“Simultaneously, the border has also represented a flashpoint for dread and a sense of desire of female sexuality and sybaritic excess...borders can also enable the plasticity of sexual identities and serve as conduits for the elaboration of transgendered modes of crossing and performativity”<sup>109</sup>

Defined by its status as a threshold, the U.S.-Mexico border has long served as a stage for the articulation of hypermasculinity.<sup>110</sup>

The border is hypermasculine for a variety of reasons. Some of which include that it's heavily militarized. Historically in the U.S., the military was and still is incredibly masculine. Although today, the U.S. military does allow women to be in it, they are only

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<sup>109</sup> Hamilton, 252.

<sup>110</sup> Young and Truett, 301. Hypermasculinity has many definitions, but at the core, just breaking down the term etymologically, it's the exaggeration of male stereotypical behavior. Behaviors like strength, aggression, and sexuality. It should also be noted that the terminology comes from science.

allowed in certain branches. The U.S. military is hypermasculine. It permits a culture of violence<sup>111</sup>. Furthermore due to what the U.S. military does, it's seen as protecting U.S. citizens (read women and children) and fighting for "our freedom". There is also the fact that coyotes are generally men. There are some female coyotes, but for the most part, they are men.

The border can be conceptualized as a space of contestation where definitions and views are constantly in flux. The border as will later be discussed by Anzaldúa necessitates different roles of individuals that may or may not align with their "gendered role". Even though borders are fluid and alive<sup>112</sup>, that has not stopped either the U.S. or Mexican government from trying to make them static.

### **Formalization of Borders**

In the late 1930s under the Cárdenas and Roosevelt administrations, "...the borderlands between nations—perennially fluid and porous to movements from one side to other—were finally starting to harden into the clearly marked boundaries that appeared on most national maps".<sup>113</sup> Although the border had existed prior to this, since the Treaty

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<sup>111</sup> Violence is often associated with masculinity. However it's more of a construction by the media. This doesn't mean violence and masculinity aren't related only that the connection is "inorganically" constructed.

<sup>112</sup> Just because a border ends doesn't mean life suddenly ceases. There is no mark in the sand or dirt that is natural. People don't suddenly stop living or moving just because there is a border. Essentially, the border is a new zone created through colonial annexation and nation building. Nation building requires land and protection of those lands. Historically, many different Indigenous communities have crossed this space. In order to protect the annexed land, the border has been constructed as a national line that is static. The line is a demarcation zone of insider/outsider, of citizens and transgressors, of who belongs and who doesn't.

<sup>113</sup> Young and Truett 19.

of Guadalupe Hidalgo, xenophobia<sup>114</sup> in the U.S. necessitated this formalization. This statement demonstrates how the border is fluid and always will be despite each government's attempt to define "us from them" through a boundary.

The desire for boundaries officially<sup>115</sup> started in the 19<sup>th</sup> C and "were mapped around emerging nation-states that were modernity's dreams for a coherent, politically bounded horizontal community. "On the ground, the reality was a lot muddier than the vision imagined by cartographers in Mexico City or Washington, D.C., yet the idea took hold...many people lived in a world that slopped, ghostlike, in and out of the national narratives we tell about them".<sup>116</sup> Borders are constructed to define and distinguish one place say a country from another. The mindset is that at the border on side there is one country and on the other there is another country; there is no mixing. The mindset is about the STATE, as in the U.S. state, demarcating "us vs. them" through constructing citizenship and "others".<sup>117</sup> The mindset allows people to distinguish "us from them" and to construct ideas about the nation. Despite the state's desire and power to militarize and "defend" this national border, it has remained porous. It has remained as such because people have flowed across this space for millennia; currently the militarized border is ALL about curtailing this movement. However people continue to defy these efforts and will continue to defy these efforts. Life doesn't stop because of a line put in place by

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<sup>114</sup> Example of this xenophobia can be found in the various immigration laws that the U.S. has and continues to write. Take the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Johnson-Reed Act (1924), or quotas being lowered for certain countries.

<sup>115</sup> The U.S. had been conscious about marking borders, prior to officially doing so as the nation expanded west in its search for land. Although boundaries aren't new in the sense that people have always defined territory, the marking of borders in relation to nation states is somewhat so.

<sup>116</sup> Young and Truett, 327.

<sup>117</sup> Others, those who are not afforded the privilege of citizenship for whatever reason the U.S. has decided.

officials. People were living there before that line was drawn and continue to live in particular place even when a line is drawn.<sup>118</sup>

Although there was and is a disconnect between policy and its implementation, the desire to have “one nation” was essential for the emerging nation.<sup>119</sup> In fact, “the supposedly fixed national border, between a so-called advanced country and one deemed synonymous with the past in the programs rhetoric and goals, functioned as a fictive and moving boundary that braceros experienced, probed, and repeatedly challenged”.<sup>120</sup> Braceros challenged the narrative by traveling back and forth between Mexico and the United States. As was discussed in the previous chapter they often brought and maintained their own culture. Many immigrants and their children still retain the Spanish language or institutions such as the Church.<sup>121</sup>

### **Borderlands and Alternative Constructions of the Border**

Borders are very much alive. They “create political, social, and cultural distinctions, but simultaneously imply the existence of (new) networks and systems of interaction across them”.<sup>122</sup> Essentially there are existing networks at the border, but new systems are created due to the mixing of people and culture from either side. The border

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<sup>118</sup> The border or even borderlands as a “space thrives on open-ended frameworks and narratives” (Truett, Young 328). Essentially the very nature of borders necessitates fluidity that is reflective of the people and cultures living in the now fractured landscape. That is to say borders are drawn irregardless of community ties and are purely political.

<sup>119</sup> The U.S. emerged from the original 13 colonies and colonized other people’s lands. Without marking boundaries, the U.S. could not begin to form a national identity.

<sup>120</sup> Cohen, 144.

<sup>121</sup> The Church refers to the Catholic Church. Although not all Mexicans are Catholic, Catholicism has historically been part of the Mexican State. Also although Mexican immigrants may not identify as Catholic later on, there is a tendency to keep the value system form Catholicism.

<sup>122</sup> Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, “Toward A Comparative History of Borderlands,” *Journal of World History* 8:2 (Fall 1997): 211-242.



is then a paradox because it allows for two seemingly opposed ideas, the old and the new, to simultaneously exist. Furthermore, "...the border between two countries is a sharp line, an impenetrable barrier. But from the perspective of the border, borderlands are broad scenes of intense interactions in which people from both sides work out everyday accommodations based on face-to-face relationships".<sup>123</sup> This point is addressing my previous idea about the importance between place and space. The border is a physical location, but for the people who interact around and across the border it is a place. The relationships that are formed here highlight that through the interactions one has, a new space, the borderlands, is created. The borderlands have parts of the new and the old.

Baud and Van Schendel go onto to further breakdown constructions of the border and propose four different models of borderlands.

One, "...alienated borderlands in which routine cross-border interchange is practically non-existent. Two, ...coexistent borderlands in which a minimum of cross border contact exists, despite unfriendly relations between the two states. Three, "...interdependent borderlands in which the societies on both sides of the border are linked symbiotically, leading to a considerable flow of economic and human resources across the border. Four, integrated borderlands where practically all barriers to trade and human movement is eliminated".<sup>124</sup>

So just like masculinity, macho, machismo, and marianismo, terms that will be shortly discussed there isn't just one construction of the border. Here the authors are trying to illustrate the complexity of borders. There are multiple ways one can imagine the border.

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<sup>123</sup> Baud and Van Schendel, 216.

<sup>124</sup> Baud and Vanschendel, 220.

Baud and Van Schendel seem to point to the importance of recognizing the conditions that may create a certain border. Although it's a bit essentialist to classify borders as being in categories, it does help to begin to have a base understanding of borders. This mode of thinking will be helpful later when thinking about the aforementioned terms. This mode of thinking allows one to see how interactions and particular situations work together to create a particular category or definition.

The border is an interesting place to study the importance of interactions. Although in recent years, border studies has emerged as a field of study, albeit small, it has taken many years for the border to be studied. One of the people most often cited around border studies is Gloria Anzaldúa.<sup>125</sup> It may not seem that her analysis is necessary to understanding masculinity and identity, but her work and others is actually critical. Her work demonstrates identity politics, being an outsider-within, and the importance of thinking in pluralities. She also disrupts dominant narratives.

### **Anzaldúa<sup>126</sup> Interjections in the Borderlands**

Anzaldúa writes, “a border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition”.<sup>127</sup> Borders are fluid, unnatural, and constantly being reconstructed. They are not limited to geographic borders, but can and are in some ways merely sites of conflict. Take for example, the way in which “we

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<sup>125</sup> Throughout my research one of the most cited authors in terms of border studies was Gloria Anzaldúa.

<sup>126</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa is a famous author and theorist of alternative constructions of the Border. Her book *Borderlands/ La Frontera* is a foundation for many authors and persons writing and studying about the border.

<sup>127</sup> Anzaldúa, 25.

distinguish between *mexicanos del otro lado* and *mexicanos de este lado*.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore by constructing the border as narrow and steep, Anzaldúa demonstrates the complexity of the border. The border then is harsh and the resulting borderland is a result of the struggle that occurs at the border. The struggle is to ensure that a sense of nationality is preserved through keeping “others”<sup>129</sup> out. “We,” the U.S. want “our” citizens to be a certain way. A certain way, meaning that the U.S. only wants certain groups of people to be citizens and part of its nation. One way citizenship is established is through *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli*.<sup>130</sup>

As the border is seen as a space it doesn't account for the human aspect. The rupture that occurs at each border leaves behind aspects of each culture, which help to construct the borderlands. Anzaldúa contests notions of citizenship and belonging when she writes “deep down in our hearts we believe that being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul—not one of mind, not one of citizenship”.<sup>131</sup> Borderlands are a third space that is created out of the necessity of survival. From being from neither here or there so a third space is created in order to accommodate the necessity of having multiple identities. Lastly, Anzaldúa speaks to the idea of citizenship. Her idea that belonging has nothing or at least little to do with being a citizen challenges the idea that citizenship equates to belonging to a nation. Meaning one

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<sup>128</sup> Translation: Mexicans from the other side and Mexicans from this side.

<sup>129</sup> “others” refers to those that the U.S. sees as not fitting with its goals or identity.

<sup>130</sup> *Jus sanguinis* is citizenship through blood (parents) whereas *jus soli* is citizenship through birthright. There are other ways of establishing citizenship, but these two definitions highlight how one can have “automatic” citizenship but can get this citizenship in different ways. Furthermore, in order to be President of the U.S., one must be of *jus soli* citizenship. This point highlights the subtle nuance of “automatic” citizenship.

<sup>131</sup> Anzaldúa, 84.

can be a U.S. citizen but identify still identify as Mexican. Borders and the identities that form in this region “are complex, because as a region, it is influenced by so many factors: culture, communication, ethnicity, trade, history and economics”.<sup>132</sup> The way the factors interact with one another is part of what makes identity difficult to define.

Identity is one of those complex terms that is incredibly difficult to define. The border discussions and the modes of thinking previously<sup>133</sup> explored will be particularly beneficial in conceptualizing theories on masculinity. They help to ground one in pluralities and the importance of experiences and conditions as they influence the constructions of a particular term or concept.<sup>134</sup>

### **Theorizing Masculinities**

What it means to be masculine is also particularly challenging to define. However, there are a few theories that shed some light on the matter. The theories explored here help to establish why masculinity is actually masculinities and the importance of understanding that each theory has something to add. Sometimes theories contest one another, but the contestation only serves to demonstrate the various levels of masculinity.

Although there are many different levels on which masculinity functions, Noguera et, al. suggests that masculine ideologies operate on three different levels. In

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<sup>132</sup> William Zartman, *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth in Motion*, (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), 108.

<sup>133</sup> Here I'm speaking about the way that I have talked about the border, particularly in relation to Baud and Van Schendel and Anzaldúa. Thinking about the border in pluralities allows one to be in the mindset that there are multiple ways of conceptualizing something like masculinity.

<sup>134</sup> For more information on Border and Identity and the way that the two intersect see, William Zartman, *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth in Motion*, (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).

their book they outline these levels as: cultural, inter-personal, and intra-psyche. Culture can be defined as where “men work and live”, inter-personal as “men’s perceptions and belief systems regarding their sexual and social interactions with other men and women,” and intra-physic as “men’s private world of wishes and desires, which are experienced as originating in the deepest sense of self”.<sup>135</sup> These different levels merge both the public and private spheres. Spheres, which presumably are separate, yet as Noguera et, al. notes are intertwined. Although Noguera et, al. gives a solidly theoretical point of view on the term masculine and what masculinity is, it is important to examine more ideas on masculinity. These multiple viewpoints allow one to see the complexity of masculinity and the importance of plural masculinities.

Matthew Gutmann’s study, *Changing Men and Masculinities*, allows for such examination. He suggests that there are four different conceptions of masculinity. One, masculinity, “it’s any thing men, think, say or do”<sup>136</sup>. Basically saying that if men are involved it’s masculine. Under this logic, being a man makes one masculine. This is similar to Noguera et, al’s analysis of culture. Two, masculinity is “distinguishing self from other men”.<sup>137</sup> Here the idea of competition might come in, where men are try to prove themselves as “more” than another man. This may be related to the inter-personal level that was previously mentioned. Noguera et, al. writes about competition, stating that, “societies where competition is central, individual self-perception and valuation are constantly informed by how they measure up to their peers and to social standards.”<sup>138</sup> Examining competition from this perspective, one can see how competition allows for the

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<sup>135</sup> Hurtado, Fegrus, and Noguera. 69.

<sup>136</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 3.

<sup>137</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 3.

<sup>138</sup> Hurtado, Fegrus, and Noguera, 90.

both the reaffirmation and recovery of masculinity. The recovery of masculinity will be discussed later in the chapter.

However, it is important to redirect the focus back to the other two conceptions of masculinity. Three, masculinity is “a quality that certain men have”.<sup>139</sup> Masculinity then is an essential characteristic that can be possessed, gained or lost. This point complicates what it means to be a man. Under this logic, one can be a man, but not masculine. Later in the chapter this logic will be examined for its relation to homosexuality. Four, and perhaps the most interesting is the role of women. Although women are often overlooked for their role in constructing masculinity, you can’t define masculinity without looking at the role they play. It is important to explore this connection because masculinity is ALWAYS about femininity; you can’t have manhood without womanhood as they are defined in relation to one another.

Gutmann<sup>140</sup> for example notes on that same page the following: “The dominant male expressions of these hegemonic masculinities—for instance, homophobia, machismo, misogyny—are not simply individual expressions of interpersonal relations in families and households, but also pertain to the very foundations of gender inequalities within these societies and internationally”.<sup>141</sup> Now having established some theories on masculinity, one can delve into the defining features of masculinity.

The first concept to understand is that not only are masculinities contradictory, they are also fluid. One of the ways to see this change is looking at the distribution of household duties. In recent years, “men are assuming greater responsibility for household

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<sup>139</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 3.

<sup>140</sup> *Changing*.

<sup>141</sup> Gutmann, *Changing* 3.

duties was because of necessity”.<sup>142</sup> So it’s not so much that they, the men, are changing, but the environment in which they live is changing and so they too must change. The constant of change is reflected in this next statement, “Masculinity is not an essential or static quality but a historical manifestation, a social construction and cultural creation... [there are] multiple masculinities”.<sup>143</sup>

This statement highlights the need to examine gender, race, ethnicity, class, and other factors that influence and are influenced by various constructions--intersectionality. Depending on ones class, race, sexuality, gender, etc. constructions of masculinities differ based on how these categories come together. Take for example the dominant or nationalist construction of what it means to be a man. Although there are multiple masculinities, a theme that reappears is the responsibility of “financially supporting ones family and work in general”.<sup>144</sup>

At this point it is important to come back to Gutmann<sup>145</sup> analysis of the role of women and gender roles. Another author Mirandé<sup>146</sup> points to the idea of “masculinity as one hegemonic configuration of gender practices that legitimize men’s dominant and women’s subordinate position”.<sup>147</sup> These different definitions and defining features of masculinity, point to the necessity of thinking about masculinity in pluralities.

It would be essentialist to compress the masculinities into one singular masculinity. In the next few sections, I have taken the time to discuss the terms macho,

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<sup>142</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 17.

<sup>143</sup> Gutmann, *Changing* 37.

<sup>144</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 15.

<sup>145</sup> *Changing*.

<sup>146</sup> *Jalos*.

<sup>147</sup> Mirandé, *Jalos* 17.

machismo, and to a brief extent marianismo<sup>148</sup>. To say that macho and machismo are the same is similarly essentialist.

### **Origins of Masculinities, Macho, and Machismo**

Having an idea about the distinction between masculinity and macho/machismo, it is now important to examine macho, machismo, and marianismo. Despite the terms overlap, they are distinct terms that like masculinity and macho/machismo cannot be substituted for one another. One way to examine their differences is to look at the origin of the terms. There are few ideas on the origins of each of the terms. One idea is that machismo was a response to the Conquistadors. The premise being that Mexican men felt powerless against the Conquistador's "ensuing plunder, pillage, and rape".<sup>149</sup> Another idea also relating to the Conquistadors, is "the cult of masculinity was introduced by them."<sup>150</sup> A third idea, relates to the Mexican Revolution. Both macho and machismo can be linked to the Mexican Revolution when the term *muy hombre* was used for both men and women".<sup>151</sup> Here these terms cross gender lines demonstrating that the terms weren't always solely associated with men. Gutmann used this idea in his theory about machismo as something that "men possess". A fourth and final idea, is that machismo stems from imperialism and colonialism. Under this point, as Tapia expresses, machismo is an act of overt power over Latinas and less macho or effeminate men, but it is power coming from

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<sup>148</sup> The term marianismo is only briefly discussed as scholarship on the topic has been incredibly difficult to find. The lack of scholarship may point to gender roles and the way in which certain roles like humility, financially taking care of the family, honor, etc. are generally associated with males and not females.

<sup>149</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 36.

<sup>150</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres*, 45.

<sup>151</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 233.



powerlessness”.<sup>152</sup> Although this is certainly not an exhaustive list of the origins of the aforementioned terms, it is a starting point and serves the scope of this thesis. Interestingly, the theme of powerlessness reappears in conceptualizations of machismo.

### **Differentiating Macho and Machismo**

Before going further it is important to establish the difference between macho and machismo. Macho can be understood as acting like the verb to be; one is macho, whereas machismo seems to be culturally related and describes the act of being macho. So then one is macho, as in an essential trait that one possess, whereas machismo is the enactment of macho in everyday life. Machismo is essentially, “masculinist,” if one were to directly translate it. It’s like taking macho and adding the suffix “ism” to it. Although each term macho and machismo will be explored separately, it is necessary to remember that they are interconnected. Later in the chapter, the concept of marianismo will be examined.

### **¿Que es Macho?**

Like masculinity, the term macho also has various definitions. González writes, “to be macho is to be male”.<sup>153</sup> Despite this assertion, it’s important to remember that maleness is a learned behavior, it’s conditioned acting out of sex roles. Here macho conflates with the definition of what it means to be male. To be macho is to take care of the family, to be manly, and to have a sense of honor.<sup>154</sup> González adds to the aforementioned, stating “For us, macho doesn’t mean the bully, the jock, the knucklehead. He is a warrior, protector, defender, and lover. He is artist, hero, father, and elder. No where does this imply or indicate a relation of superiority or strength over the

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<sup>152</sup> Rodríguez, 51.

<sup>153</sup> González, 58.

<sup>154</sup> González, 66.

only being that can define, limit, and even set him free: women”.<sup>155</sup>This statement complicates definitions on what it means to be macho on multiple levels.

In Anglo culture, being macho is often seen as only having negative connotations, yet this definition is contests this ideology. To be macho is to take care of ones family. Furthermore this definition, demonstrates how women have an active role in constructing ideas on what it means to be macho. In stating that women “define, limit, and even set him free”, González is pointing out one of the ways that being macho is contradictory. To be macho is contradictory because definitions often seem to cancel each other out. However it is within these contradictions, that definitions of what it means to be macho are formed. Theses contradictions co-construct one another and highlight the importance of recognizing pluralities and differences. Differences exist across generations, but ideas of honor and providing for ones family are maintained.<sup>156</sup> A few defining characteristics of masculinity will be examined as seen in Alfredo Mirandé’s book, *Hombres y Machos*.

### **Aspects of Macho**

According to Mirandé, “Un hombre que es macho is not hypermasculine or aggressive, and he does not disrespect or denigrate women. Machos, according to the positive view adhere to a code of ethics that stresses humility, honor, respect of one-self and others, and courage”.<sup>157</sup>This next paragraph breaks what it means to be macho into negative, positive, and neutral conceptions of what it means to be macho. Some negative aspects are: “synthetic/exaggerated masculinities, which highlights insecurity, male dominance and authoritarianism, violence and aggressiveness, and self centeredness and

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<sup>155</sup> González, 201.

<sup>156</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings*, 221.

<sup>157</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 67.

Egoísmo”.<sup>158</sup> All of these terms are more or less self-explanatory except the third point on violence and aggression. Here there is also the idea that man puts himself first and that the man frequents cantinas where he spends his paycheck. This point is closely related to the fourth for obvious reasons.

Despite the focus on negative aspects there are also positive aspects to macho. Some of these traits include, “assertiveness and standing up for rights, responsibility and selflessness, a general Code of Ethics, and lastly sincerity and respect”.<sup>159</sup> The last two points benefit from explanation. The Code of Ethics equates to having responsibility, humility, and pride. The last point means that one is man of their word, respects self and others.

Finally, there are neutral aspects of ‘macho’. It is in this area that one can see the overlap and differences between positive and negative perceptions of macho. These neutral conceptions also point to the way in which there are multiple definition of ‘macho’. For some men, to be macho, “meant not taking anything from others, respecting and demanding respect, conforming to gender stereotypes”.<sup>160</sup>

Macho isn’t one monolithic definition and means different things to different people. The statement implies that men should do everything on their own and never accept help from others. It is about the individual. A man who is macho under this line of thought is one who will take respect forcefully if needed. He conforms to stereotypes

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<sup>158</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 69.

<sup>159</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 72.

<sup>160</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 75.

where the man works, is the authority and the woman stays in the house and does everything for him.<sup>161</sup>

### **¿Que es Machismo?**

Having discussed the term ‘macho’, the focus will shift towards the examination of machismo. Machismo, like the term ‘macho’ is often constructed from an Anglo point of view. This point of view portrays machismo in solely a negative view. This point of view “incorrectly portrays Latino men as sexist and violent. They [Anglo’s] then use this term to justify repressive measures against Latino males”.<sup>162</sup> As González points out, the danger is in the stereotype, as the stereotype of Latino males as sexist and aggressive dictates policy. Furthermore, Mirandé writes that, “under current usage the Mexican macho oppresses and coerces women, whereas his Anglo counterpart appears to attract and seduce them”.<sup>163</sup> Macho and machismo have been appropriated by Anglos so that the terms are only seen as positive when referring to Anglos. As a result of the Anglo viewpoint being widely accepted and seen as the definition of macho and machismo, these terms have become shorthand for negative male characteristics”.<sup>164</sup> The problem is that “machismo is often only seen according to an Anglo viewpoint,” which is highly problematic as it doesn’t allow for alternative or plural viewpoints to be entertained.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Although I don’t necessarily agree with this and the four men I interviewed generally also had a problem with this construction of macho, it is important to acknowledge that this construction does exist. This construction is also necessary in an odd way in that one can’t have the positive aspects of macho without having the negative aspects to place it in relation to.

<sup>162</sup> González, 87.

<sup>163</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 66.

<sup>164</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 26.

<sup>165</sup> Rodríguez, 44.

Machismo, as from a non-Anglo viewpoint will be discussed in the next paragraph<sup>166</sup>. According to Mirandé, “Machismo as a trait of manliness, in which the man constantly tries to express and constantly look for signs in others that his manliness is recognized”.<sup>167</sup> The connection can be made that completion has a role in constructing notions of manliness. Affirmation is also important in this definition. A man must both see himself and be seen by others as a man. Gutmann goes on to argue that there are “two classes of machismo: the first, authentic one is characterized by courage, generosity, and stoicism; the second, which is basically false, consists of appearances—cowardice hiding behind empty boasts”.<sup>168</sup> Looking back to the previous paragraph, is showed how Anglo’s have constructed machismo. Gutmann points out that this construction is largely false. Machismo, from the point of view of Anglos, has been constructed in order to control.

Another concept related to machismo, is the construction of fatherhood. When examining, machismo it is important to remember that, “machismo is widely regarded in Mexico as constituting part of the national patrimony”.<sup>169</sup> Under this idea, maleness and national identity are inextricably linked. This connection will be explored further in another sub-section. To be a father is be “financially responsible, role model, to nurture

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<sup>166</sup> To reiterate, the terms macho and machismo taken from an Anglo perspective are only seen as negative. Conceptions of macho and machismo have been appropriated to serve Anglo interests and the idea that “Latinos must be controlled”. As such many conceptions of what it means to be macho or what machismo is come from incredibly racist places. For more information on this see Chavez, Leo R. *The Latino Threat: Construction Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2008. Print.

<sup>167</sup> Mirandé, *Jalos* 67.

<sup>168</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 223.

<sup>169</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 27.

their children”.<sup>170</sup> There are many factors that go into constructing fatherhood, two of which are ethnicity and social class. Gutmann in his book, *the Meanings*, documents various people and their reactions to a man holding a baby. Those of lower socioeconomic class see no problem with it; it was simply this man was just taking care of his family. The baby was one of his neighbors. However those of middle to upper class saw it as emasculating<sup>171</sup>. In *Hombres y Machos*, Mirandé outlines strengths and weaknesses in a father. Perceived strengths are that he is a “good provider, he is a good listener, is involved in children’s lives, and that he is loving”.<sup>172</sup> Weaknesses are more or less the opposite except for one point. A weakness is that “he doesn’t have a weakness”.<sup>173</sup> I’m unsure about exactly what this means and Mirandé wasn’t exactly clear on this point. It might mean that the father is cold, strict, and just overall unavailable emotionally. In order to help mitigate the confusion on what machismo is and isn’t, I have found some quotes that generalize overall definitions of what it can be.

### Aspects of Machismo

Some trends that can be deduced about masculinity, macho, machismo, and marianismo will be discussed will now be discussed. After which, a detailed discussion of marianismo will be examined. One trend is that “... a key component of a macho’s machismo is his relationship to female bodies”.<sup>174</sup> Mirandé outlines some of the worst or

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<sup>170</sup> Hood, 12.

<sup>171</sup> The view reflects the privilege that is inherent in class. Although the baby was his neighbors, the man saw no issue with watching and taking care of his neighbor’s baby while she was busy. People from middle to upper class backgrounds may be able to afford having a baby sitter or to stay at home and have the wife take care of the child(ren).

<sup>172</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 113.

<sup>173</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 113.

<sup>174</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 237.

lowest things a man can do. Some of these include: physically harm/ abuse someone, use others, lie, brag, or lack self-respect, and not supporting or abandoning ones family.<sup>175</sup> It's interesting that these are some of the worst things a man can do, yet this is how Anglos have portrayed machismo. Some definitions that have been deduced about machismo are as follows: machismo as fixated on a need to est. power relation among men; "in short, machismo is an essentialist trait embodied by all Chicanos despite sexual differences".<sup>176</sup><sup>177</sup> A nice lead in to marianismo is the idea that machismo, is" a complex and is not limited to men, meaning a women can have machismo".<sup>178</sup>

As mentioned previously, machismo and macho are linked to identity. It informs constructions of family and the nation. For instance Gutmann states, "macho involves performance that is closely linked to national identity".<sup>179</sup>The same author goes on to discuss the relationship between masculinity and cultural nationalism.<sup>180</sup>The family then informs and is informed by masculinity and thus the nation. Another author, Rodríguez, discusses the relationship between nationalism and family. He writes, "Nationalism becomes la familia. Nationalism comes first out of the family".<sup>181</sup>

### **The Influence of Heteronormativity**

This final section looks at non-heteronormativity and how it is discussed or not discussed in Latino communities. In many sources, a "Code of Silence" around homosexuality and non-heteronormative expressions of gender was discussed. There are

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<sup>175</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 57.

<sup>176</sup> Hurtado, Fegrus, and Noguera, 84.

<sup>177</sup> Rodríguez, 147.

<sup>178</sup> González 36,38.

<sup>179</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 229.

<sup>180</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 240.

<sup>181</sup> Rodríguez, 31.

a few factors that contribute to this code of silence. González, tells the story of Puig who, “like most gays in the Hispanic world, Puig was trapped between his social preference and he prejudices of larger society”.<sup>182</sup> This dilemma of not being able to express oneself openly is due to prejudices that exist plagued Puig and continue to plague homosexual men. Guzmán writes, “families do not tolerate having the fact of homosexuality revealed; they will ‘accept’ a homosexual relationship within the family circle as long as it is not revealed publicly”.<sup>183</sup> Families will tolerate homosexuality as long as it remains in the private sphere. It is important to note before continuing that a code of silence does not equate to homophobia.<sup>184</sup>

There is however an effort made to not appear gay as “to be gay is to be a freak, mentally ill”.<sup>185</sup> Boys around the age of 16-17 begin to distance themselves from their close friends because they don’t want to be seen as gay.<sup>186</sup> It’s a “martial sin to not act like a man, to assume the authority of [your male] gender”.<sup>187</sup> If one is overly masculine they are seen as homosexual.<sup>188</sup> Of note here, is that two different individuals have stated this. “For prostitutes (male) and their gay clients, definitions of homosexuality are determined by why one has sex with other men and only secondarily by how one has sex”.<sup>189</sup> The fact that many of the prostitutes have wives and children is an interesting idea to consider. Perhaps this is one of the ways that non-openly gay men can cover up their

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<sup>182</sup> Ray González, 159.

<sup>183</sup> Manolo Gúzman, *Gay Hegemony/ Latino Homosexualities* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2006). 83.

<sup>184</sup> Gúzman, 88-92.

<sup>185</sup> González, 154.

<sup>186</sup> Hurtado, Fegrus, and Noguera, 364.

<sup>187</sup> González, 29.

<sup>188</sup> González, 149, 164.

<sup>189</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 128.



sexuality. These men are providing for their family and prostitution just happens to be the means by which they are providing.

Let us address the difficult question of homophobia. Gutmann writes, “Homophobia is a code of boyish insults, whereas sexual experimentation by young men with young men and by young women with young women is increasingly seen as legitimate”.<sup>190</sup> Homosexuality is seen as off putting, because it doesn’t involve procreation.<sup>191</sup> There are other factors that contribute to homophobia. Homophobia and homosexuality are particularly complex because of emphasis in Latino community on family and religion.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, “...debates suggest that the traditional values of the Latino family, as a rule, represent a barrier to the development of a gay identity for Latino men”.<sup>193</sup> However factors like class make a difference in mitigating the effects of homophobia is significant...<sup>194</sup> If a man “decides” to move to the US, they may be able to express themselves openly. In the US, “New economic arrangements mean that some men find that they are empowered to come out...”.<sup>195</sup> Cantú goes on to discuss that the “Mexican/Latin-American system is based on a configuration of gender/sex/power that is articulated on an active/passive axis...it highlights sexual aim—the act one want to perform with the person toward who sexual activity is directed”.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Gutmann, *The Meanings* 145.

<sup>191</sup> Rodríguez, 145.

<sup>192</sup> Gúzman, 84,85.

<sup>193</sup> Gúzamn, 83.

<sup>194</sup> Lionel Cantú, *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2009), 137.

<sup>195</sup> Cantú, 141.

<sup>196</sup> Cantú, 151.

Homosexuality<sup>197</sup> complicates what it means to be a man. This is evident by the “growing sense that manhood in Mexico has to be measured by more than masculinity, machismo, or a man’s sexual attraction to women”.<sup>198</sup> So in some ways, masculinity and what it means to be a man is being reclaimed. As such, “Being masculine is seen as allowing homosexual men a way to retain status as regular men”.<sup>199</sup>

### **What does it all mean?**

All of this theory is great, but theory doesn’t necessarily translate to real life. Theory and real life are related but not the same. Theory has the capacity to help understand a particular topic, in this case masculinity, but it should never be taken as truth<sup>200</sup>. Lived experiences are closer to truths. It is important to note that one person’s truth maybe only their truth or can also be someone else’s truth.

The theory is what led me to start thinking about what sorts of questions I might formulate and also potential places where there is disconnect. It helps me to formulate questions because it provides me with structure from which to build on. Furthermore, because there is history behind many of the terms it allows me start thinking about how the history impacts the future. Take for example the opening quote; it uses the term Hispanic. Some people don’t like to use the term because of the politics behind that. If I didn’t know the history and some theories around identity I might be like, the terms

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<sup>197</sup> For more information on homosexuality and how it influences identity for Latinos, please see Lionel Cantu’s, book, mentioned in footnote 93. There is an incredibly rich history here, but queerness is not the focus of this paper.

<sup>198</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 353.

<sup>199</sup> Gutman, *Changing* 354.

<sup>200</sup> Truth as it is used here refers to how one views or defines a topic like say masculinity, machismo, or macho.

Hispanic, Latina/o and Chicana/o are interchangeable. Theory can be seen as a tool to understand real life.

Now that I have grounded myself in theory it's time to turn to the lived experiences of the four men I interviewed. I am interested in how they construct terms like masculinity, macho, and machismo to name a few. I hope to find out where they come up with these definitions and what they think about them. Do they agree with them? Why or why not? Are there certain factors that all four men agree on? What might be the reason for agreement or disagreement? Theory and history helps me further understand what they are saying.<sup>201</sup> Essentially I'm interested in why or how they each define something and how the combining of theory and lived experiences taken together can allow one to better understand a topic as diverse and complicated as what it means "to be a man".

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<sup>201</sup> Theory and oral histories must never be valued over one another as they each offer something different.

## **Origins: What Informs Each Man's Construction of Masculinity**

In this chapter, I examine constructions of family, home, religion, work, labor, jobs, gender roles, and parenting. Each of these themes provides insights that are helpful for the final chapter. The themes allow one to understand potential places that each man may pull from when constructions what he considers “to be a man.” The last chapter examines each man's construction of what it means to be a man, masculinity, machismo, macho, homosexuality and homophobia, and a few excerpts from Alfredo Mirande's book. Yet the question remains, how did I even find people who were willing to speak to me and what questions did I ask?

I had first tried with Piya, my advisor, to reach the Latino community but attempts were unsuccessful and so I was left the dilemma of how do I gain access to this population. My step-dad is Mexican American and so is involved in many organizations around the Latino Community. So I contacted him and he either put me in direct contact with or had his contacts put me in contact with people they knew who might be interested in speaking with me and participating in my thesis. From these contacts, I interviewed: Luis, Miguel, Enrique, and Javier<sup>202</sup>. Through e-mail and other modes of communication I arranged a pre-interview with each of the men to address any questions they may have had and to tell them a bit about my interest in the project.<sup>203</sup> At the end of the pre-interview, we set up a time to speak. For some of the interviews it was through video chat but some were also conducted over the phone.

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<sup>202</sup> Each of the men had the option of choosing their pseudonym but they didn't have a preference so I chose a pseudonym for them. They had the option to chose a different pseudonym if they didn't like the one I chose, but they were all alright with the one that I chose.

<sup>203</sup> Due to time constraints, I didn't conduct a separate pre-interview with Luis.

The questions I asked were centered around: family/home, School/Friends, Labor/Jobs, Masculinity, and excerpts from Alfredo Mirandé's book *Hombres y Machos*. I asked questions like: Where or what is home? What was home life like? What did you see the role of you mother or father as? Where did you go to school? What is labor or work to you? What does it mean to be a man? I also read six excerpts from *Hombres y Machos* and asked for their opinions on the excerpts. Two of the excerpts are: "The man is the most influential parent in the family" and "Men should never cry or show their feeling".<sup>204</sup> Based on their responses, I began to form themes and to construct the chapter.

As I read through their transcripts, there were certain themes that began to emerge. Many of the themes that emerged were reflective of the questions I asked.<sup>205</sup> Based on themes, I then grouped each of their statements under categories. For the most part I have summarized what they said in this chapter. However in a few instances, I have used direct quotes.<sup>206</sup> This chapter is an exploration of how these men construct what it means to be a man and the discussion that follows should not be taken as a generalization for all post-undergraduate Mexican American men. The goal of this chapter is to foreground you as the reader into whom each man is. This isn't to say that after reading this chapter you will know exactly whom each man is just that you will have some sense of where they might be forming their constructions of what it means "to be a man." Through the examination of their statements and summaries, you should be able to get a

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<sup>204</sup> For the full list of questions I asked please see the appendix and transcripts. Although every question wasn't asked, as some were repetitive, all four men were asked "the same question" it just might have been phrased differently. The six excerpts however were read verbatim.

<sup>205</sup> See appendix B for full list of questions. Not all questions were asked but the questions that I asked each man were more or less the same.

<sup>206</sup> The use of direct quotes is more in Chapter four as this chapter is about getting to know each man.

glimpse of this. Although you may be able to make connections here to chapter two, connections are more readily made to chapter four.

So who exactly are these men?<sup>207</sup> They were briefly introduced in the introduction as group, but I will briefly reiterate who they are. They are all Post-Undergraduate Mexican American men between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-seven. Two out of the four have spent some time (at least eight years) in Mexico. All of them went to college in California and two out of the four were in fraternities for the majority of their college experience. They are from predominantly working class families and all helped their families when they could, but there was always an emphasis on school first. At least three out of the four had a grandfather who was part of the Bracero Program. The four men: Miguel, Enrique, Javier, and Luis each took between one to two hours to speak to me about each of their lives.<sup>208</sup>

### **Home, Family, and Religion (Spirituality)**

Although all four men (Miguel, Enrique, Luis, and Javier) came from different backgrounds, there were some general themes that reappeared. Although on the surface, the summaries that I give may seem unimportant, they are actually critical to understanding how each of the four men construct their definitions and what it means “to be a man.” For many of the men, all of the themes: home, family, and religion were intertwined. Despite all four of the men wanting to work for their community or doing something that aids their community, they don’t really see what they are doing as work. However, aiding the community would fit in their definition of what it means to be a

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<sup>207</sup> I have chosen to generalize their background as a group in order to keep individual identities anonymous while at the same time allowing for an understanding of who these men are.

<sup>208</sup> The first section up until “To be a Man” is a summary of selected quotes by the men.

man. This rub is important as it demonstrates the complexities of identities, a them that will appear later when I start discussing what it means “to be a man.” As such this chapter is meant to ground, you, the reader, in who these men are and to begin to understand the way that each of these men have formed conceptions of masculinity and what it means “to be a man”.

### *Home*

Home is one of those topics or concepts that on the outside seems simple right. The word home is tossed around, but rarely is defined. Like home is.... Here is the dilemma, when it comes to define home there are so many different conceptualizations of it. To name a few, home can be a place, a person, a thing, a smell, etc. Home can be any one of these or it can be a combination of the aforementioned ideas of what home is. When I asked the men what or where home is, their varied answers reflected the complexity of a seemingly simple term.

For Luis, home exists in two places. It is where he lives right now, his community, and also where he grew up.<sup>209</sup> Although he definitely sees himself living in the community where he works, at the same time because of his skin color, background, and having family back in Mexico, he still has ties to Mexico. He stated that I might not be there, but I, “it's still... it's still part of who I am, and I would definitely stay it's still part of my home”.<sup>210</sup> Even though Luis no longer lives in Mexico<sup>211</sup>, but it's still his home. Furthermore, Luis sees home as being connected to family and those people that

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<sup>209</sup> Luis. Personal Interview. 17 March 2015. Also where Luis grew up and where he lives are two different places.

<sup>210</sup> Luis.

<sup>211</sup> Luis was born here, but then they returned to Mexico, where he lived until he was around nine.

one cares about. Home isn't limited to a physical place, it's also about memories and experiences shared. He also starts to comment on race and his background as influencing what he considers to be home. Since he has family who live in two different places, home isn't pinpointed to one singular location. Luis stated,

“I see myself living here in San Jose and maybe one day creating a family here, but at the same time, you know, because of the color of my skin, because of my background, because of my family Mexico and Jalisco is still - still my home, it's my second home, and I still have family, I still have roots, uh, over there, and I'm still, you know, very - very proud of them and I'm still, uh... very in touch with them even though I'm, you know, over - I would say, what, two-three thousand miles away from there. I might not be there, but I, it's still... it's still part of who I am, and I would definitely stay it's still part of my home”.<sup>212</sup>

For Enrique, home is related closely to where he went to school and the community that he was able to connect with. Where he went to school there was a Latino Center. Through the center he gained confidence and so is really thankful for having that “home base” away from where he grew up. So home is place of belonging, where one feels comfortable and is allowed to grow. The community that Enrique associates with home is not the place where he was raised, but he did spend a lot of time around the area when he was younger playing baseball. Attending school where he did seemed natural and was a sentiment expressed among many of the other men I interviewed.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Luis.

<sup>213</sup> Enrique. Personal Interview. 8 March 2015 & 11 March 2015. Education is explored in another section.



Like Enrique, Miguel sees home as closely related to school. Miguel sees his home as related to school and the family that he has created there through his fraternity. Similar to Luis, home is about experiences shared together and who is there for you when times are rough. Miguel was part of a fraternity during his time in college. At the fraternity he experienced many experiences, which helped to form his sense of family as being tied to his brothers. For Miguel, home is anywhere his brothers are.<sup>214</sup>

Javier sees home a bit differently than the rest of the men. Home is still his parent's place even though he has lived where he lives now for at least six months. Although he didn't really elaborate on this point, it's just interesting as the other three men didn't see home so strongly tied to their parents. However his difference is defining home may point to the importance of experiences in shaping how one constructs "home".<sup>215</sup>

In summation, home isn't one particular place. It can cut across borders as Luis comments and it doesn't necessarily have to be a place. For Enrique and Miguel home was more about memories and experiences shared by people you care about. Home is about belonging and feeling connected to other people you care about and care about you. For Javier, home was and is still his parent's house. Home is a fluid term, capable of holding many meanings just as the term family does.

### ***Family***

Although family and home certainly are technically separate terms, there is definite overlap. This isn't to say where there is family there is home and vice versa, but that there is a connection. Even though the four men did not explicitly state their views

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<sup>214</sup> Miguel. Personal Interview. 21 February 2015.

<sup>215</sup> Javier. Personal Interview. 14 March 2015.

on family, they all hinted at alternative constructions of family. Family dynamics and roles are also explored as much of whom one becomes as an adult are influenced by ones parents or other mentor figures.<sup>216</sup>

Luis sees family as through blood, but family members are also people who will be there for you in times of need.<sup>217</sup> For Luis, although family certainly means family through blood, he has extended his conception of family based on what he believes family is. Blood is seen as being thicker than water, but there are certain factors like trust and reliability that make a person a non-blood family member.

“Family is obviously through blood...but also, I would say, any friend or- or- or any person that’s come in contact with that..um..that-that means something more to you than just you know, an acquaintance...somebody that you care about”<sup>218</sup>

His dad was working so that the family could reunite. He lived with his mom and siblings until he was around nine years old. As such, his mother and uncles were the ones who took care of him until his family moved back to the United States. Luis spent much of his early childhood around his extended family. It wasn’t till later in life that the whole family was reunited but he also mentioned that it was difficult to leave his extended family and really didn’t know his father. His father visited, but was not able to be with the family full time as he was working.

Javier points to the centrality and importance of family in his life. He doesn’t live close to his family so I asked whether he was still close to his family. He commented that

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<sup>216</sup> Later when I start to discuss masculinity, in particularly what it means “to be a man” the importance of taking care of ones family is emphasized.

<sup>217</sup> Luis.

<sup>218</sup> Luis.

“family is the main component ever”<sup>219</sup> and that he still calls his mom everyday so that she knows he’s ok. Later he commented that,

“So as the older child I think, I, I, always had this vision of taking care of the family and you know uh being immigrants, like it was always go to college, make it big, make sure mom and dad are ok at the end of it all”.<sup>220</sup>

Javier feels a sense of duty to take care of his parents and a family when he has one. Although he mentions the importance of education and progress, his last statement highlights how the importance of family above all. Family to him is of utmost importance. His heavy emphasis on the importance of family may point to why he sees home as his parent’s house instead of where he lives now.

Family for both Luis and Javier is incredibly important and in some sense implies an obligation. Family is there for you when you need them and you are there for them. It is fluid and is composed of people you care about and who care about you. As such family isn’t just blood but also can be friends. Furthermore family can encompass both the immediate family and extended family.

### ***Religion***

For Luis, Enrique and Javier they and their families moved more towards spirituality. Although they still consider themselves at least on some level to be religious, they tend to identify more with spirituality. Meaning that they still consider themselves at least “somewhat religious” but identify more with the spirituality aspect of it. They see and have taken the morality part of it because of their educational background. As a result of their education they have kind of turned away from religion because of what they have

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<sup>219</sup> Javier

<sup>220</sup> Javier.

learned. However education doesn't always mean that one will turn away from religion. Miguel was the only one who has really turned back on organized religion.<sup>221</sup>

Religion for Miguel was always a key factor in his life. From religion he took the importance of being humble and selfless. Although he sees these as great assets, through his experience in college, he questions religion a bit more. Religion has served as a way for him to reconnect with his dad and the person that he sees himself as.<sup>222</sup>

The other three men and their families were fairly religious growing up. They'd go to church with their respective families and celebrate holidays. Holiday like Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and the Day of the Virgin are still important but don't hold the same significance as they did when they were younger. Some of the men hinted at life meaning the need to work, as hindering their parent's abilities to attend church on certain days. However some families leaned more towards spirituality because they like the moral aspects that the Church instills but may not necessarily agree with other aspects.

### **Gender Roles and Parenting**

Mothers are seen as nurturers whereas fathers are seen as the enforcers, but dynamics are not always gender stereotypical.<sup>223</sup> However, not everyone grows up in a traditional family where there is a mom, a dad, and two kids.<sup>224</sup> As such, the roles may be switched and even being in a "traditional family" there are no guarantees that each parent

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<sup>221</sup> All four men and their immediate families were or are Catholic. Also any reference to The Church refers to the Catholic Church.

<sup>222</sup> During college, Miguel thought that he lost himself a bit and sees religion as a way to reconnect who he was and who he wants to be,

<sup>223</sup> Stereotypically at least as I have read in literature for this thesis, Mexican women are seen as being the nurturers and men as the enforcers.

<sup>224</sup> This family I just described is seen as the typical heteronormative family at least in the United States.

will conform to their assigned gender role. Through examining the summaries of what Enrique, Luis, Miguel, and Javier had to say about their respective parents, one begins to see the “traditional family” as false. Meaning the “traditional family” doesn’t exist but simultaneously is something that families are measured against. All four men provide insight into gender roles and how they may inform their ideas on what “it means to be a man”. Each of their views on what it means to be a good mom or dad provide insight later on to how they construct and continue to construct what masculinity is and what it means “to be a man”. Furthermore, each man’s experience growing up reflects who he sees as having “taught him to be a man”.<sup>225</sup>

### ***Mom and Dad***

For Luis, it was his mom who taught him and his brothers “how to be boys and what they should and shouldn’t do”.<sup>226</sup> Javier also grew up with a strong mother role. Javier sees his dad as the “one who held down the fort and rarely ever got angry”; his mother on the other hand was described as more of the enforcer who got mad over stuff like “breaking a glass”.<sup>227</sup> Enrique had quite a bit to say on parenting and gender roles.

Enrique mentioned that on first thought he wants to think that being good parents is about love and the importance of loving your partner. However,

“the first thing that comes to mind is like – my dad working, and we think like - you make - you make sure your family has everything they need, so

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<sup>225</sup> In this section it is particularly important to notice who each man sees as teaching them “to be a man” because when I asked who “taught you to be a man” responses often changed to be more aligned with the male gender and no longer connected to say their mothers or sister if they had a sister.

<sup>226</sup> Luis

<sup>227</sup> Javier.

you make enough money so that - and you work hard enough so that they have everything they need”.<sup>228</sup>

So it's the man's role to provide and make sure that the family has everything they need. Anything before that is just an after thought. Enrique really struggles with this as he wants it to be about love but he also realizes that reality exists. He sees his dad as loving through doing. Enrique's dad showed love by providing for the family and knew that he was loved because his dad provided what he needed and more. For his family, both his mother and father work and worked to provide for the family. He conflates the image of a mother pursuing her goals and dreams with the reality that for many families this isn't possible. For many families, it is about providing first and foremost. This dominant narrative that he speaks of is only a privilege to the few who can afford to pay someone to take care of their children. In order to be able to pay for childcare, one must first have a great job with benefits that allows for the procurement of extra cash. This privilege is not afforded to many yet is the dominant narrative.

***“The man is the most influential parent in the family”<sup>229</sup>***

All four of the men disagreed with this statement. They each saw their parents as being influential and saw the importance of parenting to be seen as a partnership. Some

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<sup>228</sup> Enrique

<sup>229</sup> Mirandé, *Hombres* 86. At the end of the interview, I read six different statements from Mirandé's book. They helped to serve as a guideline and helped me to start thinking about themes and how I wanted to organize the chapter. After I had established themes, I then put Mirandé's statements under themes that related to the statements. The statements although somewhat repetitive in relation to what each man had previously articulated were helpful in that they were direct. The directness of the statements allows for more direct responses that are more controlled. More controlled in the sense that there isn't too much interpretation to the statements, which allows for a greater grasp on what each man thought about either gender roles or what it “means to be a man.”

of the men even saw their moms as being more influential just because she's the one who spent the most time with them.

Luis when I asked this question, his first sentence was "No, I disagree with that one."<sup>230</sup> This sentiment is reflective of his experience growing up. Luis, his mom, and brothers didn't live full time with their dad/husband until he was around age nine. As such he sees his mother as having a greater impact and the one who parented. He does see his uncles and dad having an impact on who he is, but in terms of influence, he sees his mother as being more impactful. This point is interesting because when asked about who "taught him to be a man" he says his dad and uncles<sup>231</sup>. So maybe being raised more by one parent doesn't equate to influence. Although there is a tension, it doesn't mean that his statements are opposing but only goes to highlight the complexity of identity and roles that parents share. Meaning that parenting isn't about either or, there is overlap and that overlap comes out in statements like the aforementioned.

For Miguel, he touches back on a sentiment that it's important to lead by example before delving into parental influence. He sees parenting as a partnership where each person has a role. He clearly admires both his parents and sees them as providing different needs; although he seems to lead towards admiring his mom. Both his parents worked, and his mom still works Miguel saw the importance of parents leading by example and not being hypocritical. Like you can't tell your son or daughter not to do something and then go ahead and do that very thing yourself. Respect was also central for him.

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<sup>230</sup> Luis.

<sup>231</sup> This will be discussed more later in the chapter in the section "To be a Man"

Enrique also found his mom to be influential. He highlights the influence of the person who spends the most time with the kids. In his case, he sees the mother as being more influential as she generally is the one to spend time with the kids.

All of their views on the assertion appear to be a bit paradoxical. Since on the one hand, they see their mothers as having strongly influenced them, yet later comment that they see their fathers or other male figures like uncles as having been the ones to influence what they think it is to be a man. That said, constructions of identity and gender roles are never static, nor do they fit in one box. The paradox may not be a paradox though, just a point of overlap. The overlap highlights the complexity of who one is and a culmination of various life experiences.

### **Defining Labor, Work, and Jobs**

Labor, Work, and Jobs. All three of these terms are often interchanged, yet as each of the four men point out they each have a certain significance. Some of the men's definitions may appear to contradict one another. These contradictions only serve to highlight the complexity of the aforementioned terms. Their definitions appear to be largely influenced by their childhood experiences and or what their parents did or do in order to support themselves and their families.<sup>232</sup> Distinctions between the terms centered around money exchange and the necessity or lack of choice involved. For example, one works because they need to pay bills or whatever; while one does labor as in a labor of love—it's something one wants or is even happy to do. One way that was helpful in understanding each of their definitions of the aforementioned terms was through the

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<sup>232</sup> I refrain from using the terms labor, work, or jobs here, because each of the men's definitions of the terms vary so widely.



examination of if they had chores, which they all did, and what they classified chores as. This seemed to open up dialogue through which they defined each of the terms.

### *Chores*

In reference to chores, Luis commented on both labor and work. He differentiates work as something you get paid for. However, he saw chores as work because he wasn't forced to help his mom around the house. Luis obviously wasn't getting paid to help his mom, but saw it as a duty or responsibility that he needed to fulfill. Whereas with labor it's something that you have to do because there is no other alternative and it involves hard physical labor.

However, for Javier he saw labor and not work as doing something for money. They both agree on the idea that labor is something you do just because and that there isn't any enjoyment in it. Despite having somewhat opposing definitions of labor and work, they both differentiate the two based on money exchange. For Javier, chores were something he did to help out his parents and saw chores as work.

I asked Enrique what he thought of labor and he related it both to chores and labor. Enrique sees chores as involving little to know work compared to say a day to day job, "where you're, you know - physically, like, slaving over something. 'Cause you need to feed the family".<sup>233</sup> Since he commented about chores versus a day to job, I asked Enrique if he associated labor as being paid. He replied yeah.

So chores are something one does to help out the family and fulfill a family an obligation. There is no money exchange; it's just something one does. Chores are different than say labor or work. Labor or work for at least these three men, depending on

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<sup>233</sup> Enrique.

their definition involves an exchange of money and a way to provide for the family. Labor or work is grueling and although chores may be physical it doesn't compare to say working in fields or comparable work.

### ***Am I Really Doing Work?***

All four of the men struggled with the idea that what they did as a job was work or labor. A few of them commented that since the work that they are each doing is physical it can only be a job and isn't labor or work. This distinction may point to the way in which a job is something you do, a place where you do something that involves mental "work or labor".

For Javier, his experience growing up and working in agriculture through picking peaches, walnuts, plums, or other areas around agriculture has deeply impacted what he considers work. It appears because there is a lack of physicality or perceived intensity that working an office isn't considered work. For him, working in the office is something he does, it's his job, but isn't work. It seems a bit perplexing, at first, but having knowledge of how he grew up it makes sense. Working in agriculture is hard and physical work whereas working in an office is more mental work. For Javier the big distinction is intensity, which seems to correlate to physicality.

"I still can't even get my head around that what I'm doing right as work now, just because of the way I grew up, right".<sup>234</sup>

However Miguel sees work as inclusive of mental work.<sup>235</sup> In Miguel's definition of labor as long as there is a goal involved it is labor. The goal doesn't matter so much as

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<sup>234</sup> Javier.

<sup>235</sup> I'm not saying here that one definition is "better" than the other, only that there is a marked difference between their definitions.

that fact that one is working towards achieving something no matter how small. Like Javier and Luis he differentiates the two terms, labor and job through money exchange. All three men don't have the same definition for all three terms, but money exchange is central.

### **Fraternitas**

Although both Miguel and Luis were part of fraternities, their experiences were quite different. Miguel's experience with a Latino fraternity on campus was and is particularly impactful to his understanding of what it means to be a man. For Luis, being in a fraternity though impactful doesn't seem to have deeply impacted what it means to be a man or how he constructs masculinity.

Since Miguel lived with his mom, sister, and brother after his parents separated, he felt like he never really had someone teach him what it meant to be a man from a male perspective. He initially joined the fraternity because he didn't really have any male best friends prior to college and some of his friends were graduating. He stated that,

I never really had like male best friends... how was I supposed to know how to be a man if girls were trying to teach me how to be a man? Like-- I never had a man try to teach me how to be a man. So it wasn't until I joined this fraternity that, um, I started feeling a lot more comfortable, a lot more confident, I started gaining a lot of the characteristics that I always felt that were lacking in me. So, yeah, it was through here that, uh, I met the manliest men, you know, like we're like, you know, we're a Latino fraternity, but even then we're like - even in the spectrum of Latino men, and machismo, like, the fraternity that I joined was probably to the

extreme, no emotion whatsoever, and I - might be kinda - a little weird, but that's what, uh - intriguing about it, that's - that's where I wanna be! Um, and I was like, wow, this is really what I wanna be. Like, this is how I envisioned myself growing, but I didn't know how to do it, and then now, you know, my - my this fraternity comes, and it's like, oh all right, this is how you could be in three months, and I'm like, no way! It's too good to be true! But it actually turned out to be that way”<sup>236</sup>.

So being in the fraternity clearly has and continues to affect him. He is still deeply involved in the fraternity and sees himself as starting to become the “man he wanted to be”. Being involved in a fraternity was and at least for Miguel, continues to be incredibly impactful.

However there are other ways that each man’s views on concepts like: family, home, religion, work, labor, jobs, gender roles, and parenting. In terms of home, it’s not necessarily limited to one place, but is also about experiences and memories shared. It is a complex term that is capable of holding many meanings. Family is often connected with constructions of home. For Luis and Javier, there was a sense of duty involved with family. As in one must provide for one’s family. Like home, family was conceptualized in a variety of ways. Family wasn’t just limited to blood, but was also about the people that you care about and who care about you. In terms of religion, religion was and is important to all four men, but sentiments on religion have changed over the years. For everyone but Miguel, they have adopted more the more spiritual aspects of religion as opposed to purely the institution of religion. The importance of this trio comes up in the

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<sup>236</sup> Miguel.

final chapter. In particular the sense of duty and necessity of being there for ones family as a man. Patriarchy is often connected with the family and the Church and is important when conceptualizing masculinity<sup>237</sup>.

In the second subsection, there was the discussion of gender roles and parenting. This section examined home life and the people that each man saw as impacting them. I used an excerpt from Mirandé's book about parenting to begin to understand gender roles as each man constructed them. This subsection was brief but offered insights into whom each man saw as influencing them and thus their identity.

The third sub-section looked at work, labor, and jobs. Although each man defined work, labor, and jobs differently, the terms were often differentiated through whether it was something one was getting paid for or if they were doing it out of necessity. However, they all seemed to struggle with the idea that anything other than physical labor is work or even labor. For the most part they saw what they were doing, mostly "desk jobs" as jobs, not labor or work. Physicality seemed to be important in immolating manliness. As the next chapter focuses on Masculinities, this last section should ease you into thinking about masculinities and terms associated with it. Furthermore, you should be able to see some parallels between how each man grew up and how he constructs masculinity and terms associated with masculinity.

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<sup>237</sup> Masculinities, machismo, and macho is the focus of the last chapter.

## **Constructing Masculinities, Manhood, Macho, and Machismo: Society Versus Lived Experiences**

This last chapter is focused on how each of the men defines: what it “means to be a man, ”what terms like masculinity, macho, and machismo mean, and homosexuality/homophobia. It is a continuation of the previous chapter in that the information that you learned about each man is incredibly important. The previous chapter allowed for a better understanding of what informs: Luis, Enrique, Miguel, and Javier’s experiences. You should be able to see connections between how each man grew up and how those experiences have informed what they see as “being a man”.

Although I came up with my own questions, I also used six excerpts from *Hombres y Machos*. Through this combination of questions and excerpts, each man’s view on the aforementioned terms becomes apparent. The excerpts are placed under subcategories that are reflective of their essential theme. This will become apparent as you read each quote and are able to grasp the essence of the excerpt. I start with, “to be a man,” other definitions related to masculinities, and the role that homosexuality/homophobia has in constructing these definitions of masculinities. The chapter ends with differentiating macho and machismo.

Each section has an introduction, followed by sub-sections with its own introduction, which is followed by raw quotes with little to no analysis.<sup>238</sup> Each sub-section concludes with a brief analysis, as the majority of the analysis will come at the end of the entire section. Throughout the chapter, there are quotes that I have bolded as they emphasize what each man is saying about a particular topic.

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<sup>238</sup> The quotes are extremely powerful on their own. Commentary is only added when it is necessary so as not to take away from the power of each man’s voice.

## To be a Man

The quotes that follow are in response to the question “ What Does it Mean to be a Man”? The only subsection is based off of an excerpt from *Hombres y Machos*. In what follows, each man comments about what he think it means to be a man. At one point, I asked what each man thought about what it meant to be a “good father” as fatherhood is often connected to constructions of what it means to be a man. This isn’t to say that in order to be a good man that one must be a father or a good father, just that the two are often related and placed in relation to one another.

In reference to Luis’s upbringing, he was born here but then grew up in Mexico until he was around eight or nine. While in Mexico, Luis speaks about how “um,.. they [his uncles] all raised us as if we<sup>239</sup> were their, uh, kids, so not only did I have my brothers to look up to but also my uncles who were there”.<sup>240</sup> For Luis it was his uncles whom he feels showed him how to be a man, at least up until age nine when the whole family moved to where they currently live now. As such, Luis sees that

“there's not one person who taught me. Um... I would say... everybody around me - every male that I'd ever come in contact with has taught me something whether it's something good or something bad. Um, obviously, my dad was - my dad, and, um... my uncles... a lot of - a lot of us was, uh, as a kid, was from my uncles and my dad. As I got older, it was also from my teachers and - and from some of my mentors while I was in high school and in college”.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Luis and his four other brothers.

<sup>240</sup> Luis. He is the fourth child out of five boys.

<sup>241</sup> Luis.

Luis further commented that “to be a Man,” there really isn’t a specific definition.

“I can’t really - **I wouldn't say there's a specific definition.** I would say, at least, you know, to be nurturing, to have respect, to be mature, to be caring, to be, um, responsible, to have, uh, manners, to have, I don't know if you speak Spanish, but what-- What... **what in Spanish, uh, we call it educacion because in English, you know, you say education, and people take it as formal education academic education in Spanish, we say educacion** and... and it has a lot more meaning behind it, because it has manners, you gotta have respect, you gotta be responsible, you had to keep your word, um... but I'm gonna give you the definition which we used at work, which if you're - **if you're responsible young man, you have manners, a joven noble or, a young man who has palabra um, you follow four basic principles, which is you keep your word, you take responsibility for your actions, and that'll not only mean saying - you know, apologizing if you make a mistake, but also owning up to it and not doing it again. And then also, uh... not doing anything to hurt yourself or others. Um, and then, if you're able - here's three - if you're able to keep your word, if you're able to, uh, be responsible or take responsibility for your own actions and not do anything to hurt yourself or others, then you automatically become a positive example to others”**.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Luis.



Furthermore, “it's not a matter of age, how the government puts it to us, if you're eighteen, you're a man. It's more a matter of - of... of... **your character** and who you are as a **person**”.<sup>243</sup>

When I asked Javier, what it means to be a good father, he commented,

“it would be my dad...the big thing is one thing that we, I, I learned at a very young age, is man, man up to your decisions so if ever I do something wrong.”<sup>244</sup>

“Uh, aside from my father, um I think the family as a whole that I was brought up by by my extended family, as well, and uh I notice things across everybody where uh you get together and every one my uncles has been kinda been the father that's like there for the family. They're the kind of guys that go to work every morning, **don't miss a day even if they're sick come home and then make sure there's food on the table**, so that's something, something that really influences me, its something that I want to aspire to as well”.<sup>245</sup>

“So, so understand the whole **actions and consequences**, I think that's a really big piece right there”.<sup>246</sup>

Miguel commented,

“Uh, yeah, just, um... being **loyal to your word**, um... making sure your word, uh, comes from - from a good place, you know, love and respect. Um... I don't like bringing people down”.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Luis.

<sup>244</sup> Javier.

<sup>245</sup> Javier.

<sup>246</sup> Javier.

He further commented,

“that's what a man is - a man does - a **man does what he can, what he can to make other people feel better and lead by example**, so you know, if you need help, um... well, that's - that's something that I haven't been able to do yet, but that's something I'm working on, um, and that's my next - the next level for me. To defend my manhood, is to... not be scared of asking for help, or... Sometimes I - I do let, um, the bad times get to me, and like... just wanna go asleep and put the blanket over my head and don't talk to me or like... Sometimes I wanna come out, you know, and talk to people, but I haven't been able to... to finalize that yet, but it's a work in progress”.<sup>248</sup>

For Luis, Javier, and Miguel, not only their dads, but also uncles and other relatives or people they came in contact later in life heavily influenced their constructions of what it means “to be a man”. There is no one definition or way that one can be a man, but of course there are certain characteristics that are valued. There was a strong emphasis on taking responsibility for you actions to be a man of your word shared across all three men’s constructions. It is also important to have manners, to lead by example and to ask for help when you need it. The latter isn’t always possible, which means that you, yourself must put in the effort to be a better man.

*“A real man has complete respect and authority in the family.”*

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<sup>247</sup> Miguel.

<sup>248</sup> Miguel.

This quote and any other quotes that come from *Hombres y Machos* were used to set a baseline and to facilitate discussion. The responses to this question ranged greatly. Each man's response seems to be reflective of the way that they were raised and the experiences that they had when growing up.

Luis stated,

“I think that statement is in a way, it's kinda **contradictory** - because if a man **could have full respect**, uh... from those around him... however, that doesn't necessarily grant him, uh... full, uh... what do you call it? Authority. Uh... because... at the same time, um... you know, if he's married or whatnot, um... then... uh, he has somebody else that he has to share that responsibility to that, um, authority with... um... so in a way, yes, and in a way, you know... no... he **doesn't** have full **authority**”.<sup>249</sup>

Javier had a different response and agreed overall with the statement.

“I **agree** right, like I said uh if my mom got mad it was just something I expected, but when your dad gets mad, you know he's there and that's that's it that's the end of the conversation dude, you messed up. So I think that's something where he held this authority over us that no matter how insignificant it might be at the time, if he's mad about then you you got to own up you but to yes”.<sup>250</sup>

Miguel, like Luis wasn't so sure about the authority part. Miguel commented,

“Hmm... I like the **respect part, I dunno about the authority**. I think it's shared authority. I think authority has to be shared with the woman or, you

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<sup>249</sup> Luis.

<sup>250</sup> Javier.

know, the other partner. I think - two figures have to have equal - equal power for the children to - to grow up with like a neutral - neutral gender perception, I guess”.<sup>251</sup>

Enrique responded to the statement by reflecting on his experience growing up. He agrees overall with the statement, but also hints at questioning his answer.

“So I think of it like logically like a family should be like a circle, and you talk like in a circle and everybody shares, but my first thought is like... for our family, we would sit together, and our dad would be in his big chair, and that kinda stops there. And like he nods, or doesn't nod, um... but... yes, I... I... I guess I - I... I agree and I'd love to think reflectively, like, the broadest definition of like respect and control, um... reflectively, it's just like, the buck stops with **the man, he has a final call** like that's what that quote brings up for me”.<sup>252</sup>

“Um, probably my - my dad. Um... Uh, I think of a lot of like - our family, the way that they pushed the uncles to be, or cousins, was very like traditional, some of them weren't more - like, more Mexican, but live longer in Mexico, XXXX... they're traditional about giving their sons, like... that their sons will never - their son is just - they... to be a man is to work, and to not say much. There's a lot of like - what it comes down to. It's a bit oversimplified. I think my parents really helped to that into, to, um... a more meaningful definition, so like, that you could be smart, that

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<sup>251</sup> Miguel.

<sup>252</sup> Enrique.

you could be caring, um... that you can still be like a physical being, while also in touch with like how you feel”.<sup>253</sup>

The men’s responses show the complexity of what it means to be a “real man” and add to their constructions of what it means “to be a man”. Of note is that none of the men completely disagreed with the statement. Miguel and Luis took issue with the authority part, seeing authority as needing to be shared. Interestingly, they also commented in a more abstract way, not referring directly to their own upbringing. Then for Javier and Enrique, they agreed with the statement, citing their upbringing as why they thought a certain way. Furthermore their responses also highlight the difference between what it means “to be a man” vs. a “real man”.<sup>254</sup>

### **Masculinit(y/ies)**

Masculinity is one of those terms that is incredibly complex. There is no one definition because real life necessitates the existence of masculinities. In this section, I asked the men what they thought about masculinity and if they think it can exist in pluralities. Their answers indicate that yes masculinity is more like masculinities. There are some themes that reappear, but that will be analyzed at the end of the section. The one subsection looks at the relationship between homosexuality/homophobia and constructions of masculinity. Gays are often placed as the opposite of masculine,

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<sup>253</sup> Enrique.

<sup>254</sup> I’m not saying that their responses are the truth for everyone, but their truths. In chapter two there was a focus on theory. The sentiments expressed by the men are reflective of sentiments expressed in *Hombres y Machos*.

however this is not true and is merely a stereotype perpetuated so that masculine can exist<sup>255</sup>. A few of the men touched on this point that gays can be masculine.<sup>256</sup>

Luis stated,

“Masculinity? I... **I hear that word in... uh... it means, you know... Hm.** Masculinity. It means... I see it, as a lot of other people see it or describe it in our culture or in our society, which is, um... uh... what it... **what it takes to be a man.** But what I also see is all the negative stuff that comes behind it, because when we think of - a lot of times, when we think of masculinity, um... we also think of, you know, machismo and we think of... off... who's the strongest guy in the room, or who could knock who out... or who is the baddest guy, you know, and... um... and, unfortunately, that's the way our society sees it, but that's not necessarily the true meaning of... masculinity or what it means to - to be a young man”.<sup>257</sup>

Miguel also had a positive connotation of what masculinity. He commented,

“Mm... I don't have a... like, my connotation of it is actually very **positive**, because masculinity, it's, uh, I mean, you just gotta, you **gotta be brave** and you gotta... put yourself in a position where you can **help others**. For me, that's what it is, you gotta **be responsible** with your work, um... but to me, also, it means knowing when to step back and, um... not trying to control everything that, um, I mean, if you gotta be **respectful**... you can't

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<sup>255</sup> One cannot be masculine or seen as “the manliest man” without having something to measure against.

<sup>256</sup> For more information read, Richard T. Rodriguez, “Serial Kinship: Representing La Familia in Early Chicano Publications” *Atzlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. (Spring 2002).

<sup>257</sup> Luis.

assume you're the - you know - you're god's gift to everything. You just gotta be really aware, uh, my thing is you just gotta be comfortable with yourself and what you represent. I have a lot - a lot of time to think about this, because you know, growing up, um, an undergrad, and being in a frat house and a fraternity, you gotta see - all right, so what's masculinity? And everybody's identity is so fluid and diverse so like, what's the best - the best term, just as long as you're comfortable with what you're doing, you're - you're respectful. If I could trust you, then you're masculine to me, like I don't - I don't care, I don't care if you have a boyfriend, I don't care if... but **as long as I could respect you and I know you're trustworthy and you put in hard work, you know your masculine to me**".<sup>258</sup>

"Mm... I think **masculinity looks different, um, in each person**. But... uh... there are traits that... um... I don't know. Like - you don't have to meet them - but they're similar traits, you know, like I mentioned before of, uh, being trustworthy and being brave and, um... being somebody that others could - could come, uh, look up to if you're strong enough to be that person, uh... um... solve problems or things like that. Um... yeah, but other people have different - it could look different in others..."<sup>259</sup>

In his response Enrique highlighted the importance of conflating masculinity with femininity.

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<sup>258</sup> Miguel.

<sup>259</sup> Miguel.

“So, it's funny, I think of that more as like, what people - the... **abstract** notion that people talk about, like, in **college**, like... Or in a club. That's where it's... um... you know, what is it? Uh... Like, what is - always... oftentimes, uh... in **relation to the feminine** or defining, uh, feminine... because I rarely see standalone, any conversation about masculinity prompted by dudes, like... in - or, from what I see. They'll be couched in relation to partnership with the feminine - femininity.... Um... I would almost just tie it to like... Yeah, I mean, I think so. Um, some people would say like, we just keep getting softer. Like, boys and men are like less and less... um... so some people would say that like this is a functional time, that - but what I would say, really, is that it's more tied to like how close somebody is to Latin America or Mexico”.<sup>260</sup>

To Enrique, Miguel, and Luis, masculinity has a multitude of connotations. Enrique saw the term in a more abstract sense and in relation to academia. He also placed it in relation to femininity; an important point. As in order to be masculine there must also be something or someone who is not masculine—feminine. For Miguel and Luis they had somewhat similar constructions of what it masculine means or what masculinity is. For them masculinity is fluid and different in each person and that's part of the reason there is say “one definition” of masculinity or what it means to be masculine. A theme that reappeared was the importance of responsibility and helping others when you

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<sup>260</sup> Enrique.



can. Miguel stated that as long as “I can trust you, then you’re masculine”.<sup>261</sup> So trust is definitely central and being masculine isn’t necessarily tied to one’s sexuality.

### *Queerness and Constructions of Masculinity*

As stated previously being queer is often placed as the antithesis of masculinity. One may be perceived as a gay because they aren’t acting their societal assigned category of gender. However in order for them to be “acting” differently than their gender role, there must first be a category of that gender role. Yet, the very characteristics that go into defining assigned gender roles are only defined as such because they are the opposite of what it means to be a man or a woman. It’s a cycle and in order for masculinity to exist, something must oppose it. In order for a difference to be created, there must be a definition or way of acting that is read as not masculine. However, here lies the complexity because the very thing that makes one say masculine only makes one masculine because it is placed up against say femininity. So that if femininity didn’t exist then masculinity wouldn’t exist. So the very thing, like say queerness, that is placed as the antithesis is actually part of the thesis of what masculinity is. In what follows, each of the four men comment on homosexuality/homophobia and it’s role in constructing masculinity.

Luis begins by stating,

“Um...I mean...**homosexuals are still masculine in their own way.** Um... it's just that we, a lot of times, we as men look down upon them because, um... because we think they're less than us because of their sexual

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<sup>261</sup> Miguel.

orientation, but that in reality doesn't necessarily have to do with it, because there's a lot of homosexuals that are - that are very masculine, um, you know, in terms of how they - how they interact, how they represent themselves, um... and, uh... and... do that, **they're very masculine, but because they're homosexuals, you know, people think, you know, less of them** and whatnot...I don't think it makes them any less of a man, um... you know, or... for being that way. It's just a lot of - a lot of... **society** or a lot of men are very, I don't know... prideful. Very, um... I don't know what the right word would be, but we - we like to, you know, look at those... at **those things, see them as flaws, and...and take away their masculinity because of it**".<sup>262</sup>

Javier states,

"Uh, it's a weird stance, I mean, I some of them don't try to fit in at all they'll be very effeminate and they'll be very, very openly gay I suppose, it's very **possible to be macho as a gay person** I suppose cause like I said, you just have to have **someone you care about**".<sup>263</sup>

"Yes, I mean personally in my life I haven't had to deal with it a lot of that [homosexuals/homosexuality],...But uh, uh, I did see I did see like actually my friend's father like he uh is like the kind of guy who doesn't give hugs out or anything or so if you ever came up and like shook his hand and gave him a hug as a hello. His father would just stare at you so

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<sup>262</sup> Luis.

<sup>263</sup> Javier. Lionel Cantú commented on this and how being masculine is about actions. This was in chapter two.

there was this, this was this sense of homophobia at least from that area. And you could tell, that he's like you guys aren't supposed to hug like it's like a pound and you walk away".<sup>264</sup>

Miguel saw particular instances living in the fraternity and growing up where the tension between homosexuality and masculinity showed itself. Due to his experiences he was able to provide a plethora of insight into the matter.

"I remember, um, like... sometimes, uh, we had events at the house, and whatever, and I remember one time, I... I just cuddled with one of my brothers, like I just fell asleep on top of him, and to me it was just natural, like that's my brother, like... I don't - I don't... I didn't feel weird about it. And the guys, uh, they saw it and then they were just like what's going on? But they didn't - obviously they weren't disrespectful to me but they were just kinda like - like giving us weird looks and like blah blah blah, but then again, that's just how they are, and I think we started helping them, um, question their own moralities".<sup>265</sup>

"Uh, I think a lot of it - it came from my sister so... she - she questioned my beliefs, I didn't believe in gay marriage when I was in high school, I was very religious, and I was like, oh it has to be a man and a woman, and then, you know, a lot of my - my ideas came from watching - watching Fox News, you know, stuff like that. I was very like, okay, this is how things are, blah blah blah, but she challenged me all the time and, um, but

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<sup>264</sup> Javier.

<sup>265</sup> Miguel.

I think that was very important, because she taught me how to think outside the box, and... not to take, uh... you know, everything as facts”.<sup>266</sup>

Where does homophobia come from? “Um, it was... they were very... uh, they were really - **really machista, they were really like hip-hop, like even at the time, Dr. Dre, and Snoop Dog, you know, they... their lyrics are very misogynistic, very homophobic, and I think they just picked it up from the culture, but definitely family has something to do with it, um, in Mexico,** like, uh, it's very, very hard for - for one to - to comprehend the concept of being - being gay, like,... Yeah, I think so. Um, I think so. It's... like... if my friend was - was homosexual and whatever, like... if I had a problem... um, and he - he carried himself that way, like, you know, I'm always here for you, like, you gotta talk, I got you, whatever, that to me is already very **masculine, like... if I can talk to you about - about whatever.** It could be - it could be a family issue, I could be talking about girls, and you're still willing to listen to me, then that's love, that's love, that's very masculine of you. Um, I wouldn't say that but you know, that's something that fits into it. Um, if they're - if they're down to help anybody who's in need, you know, who wants to... I don't know, we have a project back home where we have a project - everyone of us in the fraternity who wants to take it on--I wanna be the leader... you're - you're being, uh... you're showing initiative, you're being

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<sup>266</sup> Miguel.

assertive, like, that to me is masculine, very masculine. And if you come into something and you do it, like, you're a man of your word. Um, yeah, um, I see no problem with that".<sup>267</sup>

"And right now, one of my roommates, he's queer, and that was something - when I came in, I saw that it was very homophobic, and that's a thing that bothered me, because I wasn't like that. But, um, like, I see how even the fraternity slowly starts changing its, uh, its mentality, and now like we try to be more open to people from, uh, other ethnicities, other cultures, other... um... labels, whatever, that we are not traditionally known to cater, so I like - I like how it's, um, how it's shaping up now, and I like how I have - a prominent voice in the fraternity to allow these changes to happen smoothly without alienating anybody".<sup>268</sup>

Enrique commented,

"So, uh, the kind of thought that I have - so, in our hometown, we didn't have like a lot of others, it was just like... farmworker Mexican, or farmowner whites, so when we went to college, both my brother and I, we kinda like didn't know how to be prejudiced against who, like, so we just kinda like... fuck it, you know, excuse my French, but we'll just try to get along with everybody. Um, but it took us a long time to like... and we're still working on this, to be comfortable with gay people".<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Miguel.

<sup>268</sup> Miguel.

<sup>269</sup> Enrique.

There is certainly an abundance of information that has come from each of the four men's comments and it is a certainly a lot to process. Luckily, a few themes have emerged, which aid in processing everything they said. One central point to take away is that homosexuality in no way equates to not being masculine. This dynamic is set up by societies need to define and have categories. However people don't fit nicely into categories.

As a result those who are unable to perform their assigned role are labeled as the opposite. In this case they are labeled as either feminine or as homosexuals. This is preposterous, but it is the dominant narrative. It doesn't mean that, the dominant narrative is correct, but that it exists and needs to be changed. When one doesn't "fit", as Luis commented, a person's masculinity will be taken away. Again back to the intro without one you can't have the other. Homosexuals are very masculine and macho but this is taken away in order to define "other" men as masculine. Javier saw this with his friend's dad and Miguel saw this when he fell asleep on top of one of his brothers and afterwards he was "questioned about his sexuality," not directly but still.

### **Tenets of being a Man**

In this section, the themes of competition, performance, violence, and emotion are discussed. Throughout each of the four men's interviews, I asked how they saw the aforementioned themes playing into what it means to be a man or constructions of masculinity. I based these themes off of scholarly research and experiences that I have had just growing up or in classes. The last section, emotion offered a great deal of insight

and I also used two of Mirandé's excerpts to facilitate discussion of the topic. The other three subsections are meant to lead the reader up to this final section.

### ***Competition***

Competition is everywhere and a part of everyday life whether we notice it or not. Competition is a way to prove oneself and assert yourself over others. Miguel and Enrique were the two who really commented on this section. This isn't to say that Luis and Miguel don't see competition as important, just that they may not have commented specifically on the matter or that there may be overlap and so their comments were placed in a different section.

Miguel stated,

“Competition, yes, yes, competition is very important. Um... I don't know why. I don't know if it's, um... **embedded** or whatever, like... that you wanna be the alpha male or whatever, survival, but, um... Competition's... it's, uh... crazy like, uh... even if it's friendly, um, you - you learn a lot more - we enjoy it, I grew up... uh... what motivated me most when I was doing my - when I was growing up academically, was competing with my sister... Everything was competition”.<sup>270</sup>

“...for sports - I think that's why we love **sports** so much, 'cause it's a good, perfect environment. It's a “safe environment, but everybody tries to outdo each other, um, and that's - that's one, like, socially acceptable place for you to be like that, because otherwise... you know civility or whatever,

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<sup>270</sup> Miguel.

society - civil society, you're civil, you're taught that you gotta work with others and teamwork and all this stuff, but in the soccer field, or you're playing basketball, like, nah, man, it's me, my time".<sup>271</sup>

"I wanna be better than everybody else. But I think it's, um, like I said before, as long as you're aware what you're doing... it's... I think it's okay, um, as long as you're aware that it's just competition, and, um... you don't - don't hurt other peoples' feelings, things like that".<sup>272</sup>

Enrique said,

"I see it in very much a part of masculinity. Where it's... **I'm number one, or I'm the biggest one in the room, I'm the biggest guy in the room**".<sup>273</sup>

"It's just funny that the one on the **white collar side** - I see it play out so much when it's **divorced from anything physical**. Very much like I have a bigger bank account, or my car's nicer, or... I treat my women colleagues in a more messed up way. It's very weird things, whereas for me, um... and it's most base level. Like... machismo is like a very physical thing, like you labor to have what you need and like you use your physical body to like to serve and protect, almost, your family".<sup>274</sup>

"Eh, so it's kinda funny, in I feel **like, here... you can't really be a "man" here where we're at in -----, or like, where it's brain work, if**

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<sup>271</sup> Miguel.

<sup>272</sup> Miguel.

<sup>273</sup> Enrique.

<sup>274</sup> Enrique.



**you will.** Uh, so it's been very hard in many ways for my brother and I to adapt. Um, you know. It's, uh... yeah. Yeah, so I... so a lot of what we think of as a man is very, like, **physically strong**, um... unfortunately, very, like, **stoic**. Um... like loving by doing, I guess. Um... For Latinos, oftentimes, the men are like very romantic, but like, over the top romantic, which is kind of funny. And a little bit at odds with, like, the stoicness, but, um... and I, you know, you try to grow up, and you try to see, like, what's real. Like, you try to grow past things that you thought as a kid, but still, to me, like, a man is a very much physically, like, like physically, I dunno... strong, but not just in a muscle sense, but just in a strong presence".<sup>275</sup>

For Miguel and Enrique, competition is just a part of daily life and constructions of masculinity. As Miguel put it, it's embedded. Competition is always overt as Enrique comments. It comes in many shapes and forms. It is seen in sports, material things, or who is the most stoic. All of which point to competition being about who is the "manliest man" or the number one. The point of stoicness is addressed more in the section on emotion.

### ***Violence***

Violence. It's part of everyday life and over the past few years it has become normalized. Being violent is seen as manly in society even though it's not necessarily true. The necessity to be violent as commented by Luis, Enrique, and Javier is largely a construction of media.

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<sup>275</sup> Enrique.

In relation to completion and violence, Luis states,

“I... it **doesn't** necessarily **have to be**, but I believe that in the way our **society is set up**, and the way our society has now come to view masculinity, **yes**, it has a lot to do with your physical, um, you know... appearance or the way others perceive you. Um... and - and again, the biggest, baddest person is - is... you know, the best at something, or the number one, or whatnot”.<sup>276</sup>

Enrique commented on the way that violence is there but is more overt. Like say in the previous section where he commented about completion. His statement is somewhat reflective of where he works. Where Enrique works, violence isn't explicit, but maybe as he stated more covert.

“Violence is so far removed from the day-to-day discourse, or like, the realm of possibility”.<sup>277</sup>

For Javier,

Violence as “I mean **as I was raised no**, But in **social contexts yes** you know, you watch a movie and the hero is always this guy dodging bullets and you know fighting fifty guys off at the same time and uh then in the area we grew up I was in a few fights as kids and uh definitely made me feel like a man like I totally got a black eye, but you know you should see the other guy type of thing”.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Luis.

<sup>277</sup> Enrique.

<sup>278</sup> Javier.

Although violence is placed as a tenet of what makes a man a man, for Javier, Enrique, and Luis, this isn't necessarily true. Instead, violence is a product of the media and it's relating violence and masculinity together. There appears to be a strong disconnect between each man's lived experience and what society constructs as tenets of masculinity.

### ***Performance***

Masculinity is often seen as a performance. As in one performs their assigned gender role. Gender is often seen as innate, however we are all conditioned to perform a certain gender role. Just think back to the toys you had when you were younger or what you were allowed to do or not to do.<sup>279</sup> Through these experiences as a child one is conditioned to act a certain way. Javier and Enrique commented on this point of performativity.

Javier said,

“I mean I think so, when you want to look like the the biggest man in the house, you'll you'll put on this front and then you'll step up and then at the same time its what's expected.”<sup>280</sup>

Enrique commented,

“I think it's like... I guess, **if you can perform stoic, which you do** - I guess you can - so... so then, **yes**, I would say that a lot of people just kind of like bite the bullet um, and just are stoic, like... yeah, that's part of, um, I guess a performance of... of that. But, then it's also, like... yeah, there's

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<sup>279</sup> For more information on gender performativity, refer to either Judith Butler's "Gender Trouble" or to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*.

<sup>280</sup> Javier.

just - there's no release of emotion or pain, or if there is, it's very much like catharsis, so like, you drink a shit ton, on your two year old's birthday, you sleep outside".<sup>281</sup>

“So I would say **the way that machismo deals with - with gay people is like - especially gay men - is that they just have to be over the top. That they're so gay that there's no question that they're not a man...** but yeah, if you're gay, as long as you're like over-the-top Liberace gay, then that's cool, but you can't... yeah, so like, you can be XXXX of what a man is. Um... which is pretty messed up, just 'cause of then how that affects, like, gay Latinos and how they're expected to act to be safe or like be accepted in the community, is like... I dunno. I see how messed up that becomes.”<sup>282</sup>

It's incredibly important to be able to perform. It's important in the sense that if one doesn't perform, one is labeled as “other” as feminine. I'm not saying that one should perform a certain way but merely stating what happens when one doesn't perform. One can perform masculinity, but when one doesn't they must also perform that other role in a certain way as Enrique commented.

### ***Emotional Expressions***

Emotion in terms of constructions of masculinity is seen as taboo. This construction is incredibly detrimental to men as they often feel that they can't be emotional or show emotion for fear of being labeled as feminine. This section has two

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<sup>281</sup> Enrique.

<sup>282</sup> Enrique.

excerpts from *Hombres y Machos* which point to the norm that men should be able to withstand pain and not show emotion even if in the same situation it might be appropriate for a woman to show her emotion. Overcoming this stereotype is no easy feat, yet it is possible. In the commentary that follows the men demonstrate the power of this stereotype and the need for change.

For Javier,

“Uh, I mean the way I saw some of my friends growing up, it was supposed be like taking the emotion out and just be the guy. In front of it all, but like I said, my definition is you you have to **care about someone**. So you have to **feel** like an emotion strong enough **to kinda be the person that that’s going to be there**”.<sup>283</sup>

“So I think in my own view, I guess yes, emotion is very much acceptable. You got to be passionate it about you do for work”.<sup>284</sup>

Miguel states,

“Uh, I think it just changed. Uh... **I used to think emotion was weakness**, and I would always like, be, emotionally hurt people in relationships or whatever, I don't...”.<sup>285</sup>

“And then I started feeling that again, and I'm like, why? How can I go back? And then, uh... somebody told me, you know, emotion - sometimes

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<sup>283</sup> Javier.

<sup>284</sup> Javier.

<sup>285</sup> Miguel.

the best thing is to show emotion, that sometimes that's the manliest thing - and... and... you know,... uh... learning to accept it and learning, as a man, like, accepting that I make some mistakes, and there are consequences, and I have to be... if I have to be in pain for a while, fine, but - to not revert to your old tactics, and... and risk being hurtful again, like... Cause that's not gonna get you anywhere".<sup>286</sup>

Emotion as previously stated is just something you're not supposed to show as a male. However, as Javier and Miguel commented, it is essential to show emotion. If you don't show emotion you may risk hurting those around you or get hurt yourself. Showing emotion is necessary as you can't care about someone unless you have emotion.

***"Men should never cry or show their feeling."***<sup>287</sup>

This quote plays well into dominant sentiments about what or who a man should be. Luis, Javier, and Enrique commented on the importance of showing their feelings and that it is alright to cry.

Luis stated,

**"That's a lie.** I don't agree with that one. I mean, I... yes, that is what we see in society - that's how most men are brought up and raised... and taught to believe. But no I don't agree with that. That's - **that's a stereotype that we really need to break,** and as a man, we really need to be comfortable to share our feelings, and who we are, and share that we're a human being just like everybody else. Um, and, uh... and uh... um... not

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<sup>286</sup> Miguel

<sup>287</sup> Mirandé *Hombres*, 86.

being able to do that, uh... sets us back. Um, so, yeah... we're human. (laughs) We're gonna need - we're gonna need to shed a couple tears here and there, show our emotions”.<sup>288</sup>

Javier saw it as,

“**At appropriate times**, I mean like I said, right, every now and then, you have to put on that mask and your kids dying you gotta put on a straight face, you gotta handle the situation and then you I just I can't say I ever saw my father truly cry”.<sup>289</sup>

“Um... I don't know about the crying part...[My dad] He didn't cry - I think the first time I saw him cry was when his mom died, and it was like, late at night when he thought we were sleeping, I heard him crying. I didn't even see him cry.

Enrique commented about an experience with his friends and brother. They went and saw a movie, McFarland. Enrique said, “but yeah I cried, and I was a little bit embarrassed”.<sup>290</sup> It's interesting to look at the double standard here. Women are seen as being over emotional and in the 1950s were put on drugs because they were hysterical.<sup>291</sup> However if men show emotion they are seen as being weak or not being man enough. I don't agree with it, but it's the stereotypes. Stereotypes are incredibly powerful. Enrique saw it as “funny that

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<sup>288</sup> Luis.

<sup>289</sup> Javier.

<sup>290</sup> Enrique.

<sup>291</sup> Hysterical coming from the word hysteria, which relates to the uterus, think hysterectomy.

two of our friends were very different, saw tears very differently at first, but at the end of the day, all the guys were tearing up a little bit”.<sup>292</sup> This last point is incredibly important. All four men who saw the movie were affected by it, yet from Enrique’s telling of it, he was the only one comfortable with expressing it and being like you know what yeah I cried. He still felt embarrassed but I feel that his embarrassment is a product of transgressing the stereotype and daring to be like yeah I showed emotion, period.

For Luis and Javier, crying is important and showing emotion is necessary, but it’s extremely difficult to do because of the stereotype that men can’t or aren’t supposed to show emotion.

***“A sign of a real man is his ability to withstand pain.”***

This quote is similar to the previous statement but also offers up the ability to talk about physical pain. Men and boys are often seen as needing to be stoic. That showing any sort of sign of pain is weakness. Boys at least in my experience have and are brought up not to show any signs of pain. In showing signs of pain one is showing emotion. Thus, to show signs of pain is to be labeled as emasculine, as female. A man must be in control of his emotions via how he shows either physical or emotional pain or else he will be labeled as weak and thus as female. However as Javier and others stated men aren’t the only ones who can withstand pain.

Luis commented,

A sign of a real man is his ability to withstand pain... Hm. A sign of a man is his ability to withstand pain... Um... I would say... well I’d change that...

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<sup>292</sup> Enrique.



I would say... uh, a **sign of a real man is his ability to make sacrifices**. Um... but obviously, that's... um... the reason why I would change it is because of the man you have to make sacrifices for those around you, um, as well as for yourself, um, so... So I - I don't necessarily agree with that quote, because you don't have to withstand pain, you don't have to suffer in order to be a man... I would say it's what you do with that pain, um... that makes you a real man, because a lot of us suffer pain and we didn't decide to take that pain out on somebody else. And that doesn't make you a man, whereas... **if you, um... you know, take that pain and you turn it into a something positive - or if you turn it into a teaching for somebody else, then you're a real man.**<sup>293</sup>

Javier stated,

“I think **emotional pain** is one of those things where it’s **alright** so if you can **conduct yourself well** enough in a situation like that then, yeah, you can definitely withstand a lot. But I mean I’ve seen my mom do some pretty work some pretty long days come back aching and hold out longer than most people ever did and she’s a woman so...”<sup>294</sup>

Miguel responded,

“I wanna say yeah, but again it's subjective. How do you stand pain? Uh, I don't think crying means you're not standing pain. **I think crying could be a way of dealing with pain** At the same time I feel that other people stand pain by going to a bar and drinking a bottle of tequila. But how does that

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<sup>293</sup> Luis.

<sup>294</sup> Javier.

really help you? I mean withstanding pain, I feel like you just gotta be comfortable with it and like acknowledging it at the same time uh, the way you withstand it is if you keep going on with your life were you just kind of like give up on everything. Like you're beating pain even though it's still there like it doesn't mean you're numb to it. **It just means that you're able to function through it**".<sup>295</sup>

"...as males, in my family, we were never - we were never taught how to share emotion. We weren't really prepared emotionally, we were kinda just left to figure out, um, on our own... so that's what we're trying to do, trying to be better role models and, um, give our little sister that kind of emotional support and, uh, yeah.... I never cried in front of her like that. I like keeping this, I'm the oldest male, like, I don't cry in front of you, you know. I don't show emotions".<sup>296</sup>

Enrique said,

Yep. **I guess.** Um... Again, getting back to like laboring and providing, when so much of work for a lot of people is just so physical, it's like, you get up when you don't want to, you show up no matter what. Um... Yeah, when our uncle did that, when he went through chemo and beat cancer without telling his kid, and was still showing up to work, you just kinda think like... **It's just like - that's what a man does.** And you know, logically, it's like, well, it's really dumb!... But I know it to be not be true,

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<sup>295</sup> Miguel.

<sup>296</sup> Miguel.

like, that's so disruptive, but yeah, and narrow, but still, uh... still something I'm working through".<sup>297</sup>

The responses to this question definitely ranged. Enrique agreed with it but at the same time saw it as super messed up. Miguel, Luis, and Javier saw it as depending on what one defines as a pain. Luis thought it should be more about a man's ability to make sacrifices and how he handles his pain. Miguel commented on different ways to deal with pain. Javier also questioned the statement as he saw his mom withstand a lot of pain.

### ***Can one fail to be a Man?***

Although showing emotion is one of the ways that one can "fail to be a man" there are other ways that one can "fail". Failure can be seen in a variety of ways. However as the four men interpreted it, one can't really fail so much as lack certain characteristics that would "make someone a man". This leaves room for improvement, which is also reflective of the way in which one's identity is fluid.

Luis reflected,

**"... I wouldn't say there's ways in which we fail to be a man, I would just say there's - there's ways - well, there's areas in which we need a lot of improvement in...because just because you do or don't do something doesn't make you a failure, it's just, you know what, maybe I - I didn't have somebody that taught me that, therefore I don't know if I teach it to somebody or they never learned it. Um... so I wouldn't call a man a failure, I would just say, uh, you know, he... he maybe didn't learn it or**

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<sup>297</sup> Enrique.

maybe he's just not comfortable, or maybe he wasn't taught it, he was never shown it, therefore he doesn't know how to approach it and how to make it comfortable or safe for him to express himself in that - in that way, with those around him".<sup>298</sup>

Javier commented,

"Yeah, being the kind of guy that just beats around the bush that's like I said the whole **actions and consequences**".<sup>299</sup>

So maybe it's not about failing, but about lacking certain characteristics as Luis commented. Characteristics may be lacking just because a man hasn't been taught something or doesn't know that there are alternative discourses or way of doing things. Then it's about societies failure to teach which I think is very true. What the media shows and societal stereotypes are often so different than the actual experience of real men. However this is what "real men" are measured against. "Failing" has more to do with actions than the essential character of a man.

***One of the worst things a man can do is to disgrace or dishonor his family."***

This statement looks at the role of honor in relation to what makes one a man. The responses really questioned what it means to "dishonor or disgrace" one's family. As such, a sub subsection looks at honor.

Luis commented,

"I - I agree with that. Um... um... I mean, uh... uh... You, uh... you need to - you need to... have respect not only for yourself, but for you family, those around you, and, um... if you disrespect your family, um... **if you**

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<sup>298</sup> Luis.

<sup>299</sup> Javier.

**disrespect yourself or those around you, then you're disrespecting your family**, because you have their name, you know, you carry their - their name, you carry their... their blood, their... their, uh... I don't know, their culture. You carry everything. They are... within you, and if you're disrespecting yourself or those around you, then you're disrespecting them as well”.<sup>300</sup>

Javier stated, “I mean I don’t I guess it comes down to a person and what disgracing and dishonor is...”.<sup>301</sup>

Miguel said,

“Yes... I think - I think that's very important and... um... but I think it's - it kinda got it diluted because, a lot of the times, like... that's something that, uh, is taught from a early age, but a lot of the people ingrain those promises and we... got our parents or our uncles and like, they make something - mistakes - what you consider disgrace, I could - I could see how people would be like, oh, you're homosexual, you're disgracing your family, but like, what about you? You're drunk and you beat your wife every other day. And that disgraces the family, too. **So, who's disgracing who - so yeah, like - I agree about disgracing your family, but what - what's that, um... what does that entail**”?<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Luis.

<sup>301</sup> Javier.

<sup>302</sup> Miguel.

Enrique responded,

“Again, like, it’s a schism, so the first thought is like, yes, you fucked up, and you like... lie. Or... yeah. Or cheat. Or... suck at your job. Like you're very much dishonoring your family and like extended family, but I think on the other side, I just think like... **honor and reputation are so limiting**”.<sup>303</sup>

Enrique, Miguel, and Luis commented that it’s more about how you define honor or what it means to disgrace “your family”. For Enrique, he feels that honor and reputation are limiting but he also realizes the importance of family. A man shouldn’t bring dishonor onto himself because he isn’t just dishonoring or disgracing himself but also his family.

### ***Honor vs. Respect***

When talking with Luis and Javier about the statement on dishonor and disgrace, the topic of honor vs. respect was brought up. Honor and respect though related signify different things as Luis commented.

Luis said,

“Um... it depends, because... respect, you know, **you can give people respect and you can, um, respect for somebody**, um... that... you know, for somebody - or for their actions, whereas... you could also respect somebody because of... because it's - it's, uh... um... because of your... um... I don't know, family says, but there's people that respect others because of fear... um... or - and - or honor... **honor it's something**

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<sup>303</sup> Enrique.

**positive**, something that - that, uh, you earn. Something that you earn, not because you forced it upon others, but because they wished to give it to you”.<sup>304</sup>

I asked Javier about the role of honor in relation to the term macho. He responded,

“Yes! I think it’s not about who can pick up the heaviest weights at the gym, it’s not about you know who can do these great strong feats it’s more about the guy that can that can you know show up. For those he cares about, if your someone that you know has no one around you that you care about, then you can t be macho because there’s no way to present yourself in a way that would make you macho to me right”.<sup>305</sup>

Respect is something you earn whereas honor is somewhat of an essential quality. Respect can either be given through fear and is about their actions. Honor is about being given something and is positive. It’s about showing up.

### **Machistas**

Although I had not originally thought of this terms to be included in my thesis. The term “machista” was brought up so much that I found it essential to include a short subsection on it. There were various responses on what a machista is, however the trend is that it has a negative connotation. Although it popped up in many of the men’s responses, it was more prevalent in Miguel’s interview as I specifically asked him what the term meant to him.

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<sup>304</sup> Luis.

<sup>305</sup> Javier

Miguel stated,

“Um, machista - from what I understand it's, uh, **like the male is, you know, the head of the household, the head of the family**, um... you just gotta be really... what is it... um... having a lot of girlfriends and you gotta be - I guess it's a term of... of... self - not self-validation, but self importance, and like, young men, gotta be the best, like... and then anything that questions or challenges the - uh, that concept of males being the best and not... meeting the requirements of being a male, like, automatically they get attacked. Um, so, you know, child... a lot of times, um... uh, machista dads don't show affection to their kids, because that's not - that's not a male trait, affection's not a male trait, you gotta be tough, that's how they grow up, and that's how they love you, if you hit 'em when they do a mistake or - or if you call them names, they'll the woman the same thing, you can't show her love, um, and then, uh... the... not even - not to mention, you know, the - to gay people. Like they get mistreated so bad, um, and yeah, so **machista... men are, uh... uh... they're very - they put a lot of self-importance and they think they're, um, they're greater than other people. That's how I would describe it**”.<sup>306</sup>

“Um... I think it's just that, you know, that, uh... **self-importance**, and you wanna be better than everybody else. Um... that could be arrogance, um... um... self-importance. I dunno, it's just - I'm not - I'm not the type of

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<sup>306</sup> Miguel.



person who - who believes that anybody should feel above everybody else, I think everybody's equal and everybody should always feel that way... so, if you're a machista, that automatically puts you at a higher position over others because you think women are subservient to you, and you think women are supposed to be your servants or whatever. Nah, like, you gotta respect everybody, not just 'cause they're women - we also gotta respect the person who's not outspoken like if he doesn't talk, doesn't mean you gotta go make fun of him or, you know, if he doesn't have the - the best jordans, like, you're not gonna go laugh at him because he's poorer than you. Machista's just arrogant and be better than them by your number one".<sup>307</sup>

“Yeah, um, when we came in, there was - the guys before us, they were all, like, they were all... very machista, very into the... into the hip-hop scene, which is not bad, because I'm in it, too, but they were all, um, you know... Like they weren't... they were very - they looked like strong individuals. However, when we saw how they interacted with the people at parties or whatever, there were some things that bothered me in particular, but I know it bothered some of my - my fellow, um, my brothers. People in my class. They were very, um... misogynistic, I think that's the word-- Um, so, you know, they were disrespectful to women. Um... who didn't wanna talk to them. Well then, forget you then, um... and

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<sup>307</sup> Miguel.

then if there was a queer folk in the house, they would be so disrespectful to them, and that's not cool, so when we came in, you know, we were... uh, we were second years, actually, so we came in, um, we were very comfortable, like - nobody in the fraternity - in our line was, uh, identified as queer - well actually, now they do - but at the - at the time nobody did. Uh, so we were all very - but were still comfortable with each other".<sup>308</sup>

Miguel highlighted that a machista is really concerned with self-importance. They see themselves as better than everyone else, especially women. They tend to be misogynistic and don't show affection towards their children or wife<sup>309</sup>. As such being a machista, at least from Miguel's perspective is incredibly negative. When the other three men mentioned the term, it also seemed to be incredibly negative. Miguel points to hip-hop and capitalism as potential origins.<sup>310</sup>

### **Machismo**

Like masculinity, the term machismo has a multitude of definitions. And like masculinity it deserves to be examined critically. In the responses that follow, Enrique, Javier, and Luis comments highlight the complexity of defining machismo.

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<sup>308</sup> Miguel.

<sup>309</sup> This is interesting because emotion is one of those things that is seen as not being a man but here not having emotion is seen as negative here. It's just something to think about.

<sup>310</sup> Since this is only Miguel's perspective, it is important not to take this as truth. Someone else might see being a machista as positive or disagree with what Miguel said. Recall from Chapter discussions about machismo. Saying one is a machista is similar to saying one is a "machoist".

Enrique stated,

“Um... but for machismo, I do think about like defending - physically defending your family or physically defending, um... I don't know, your honor”.<sup>311</sup>

“So, uh, that's interesting to see like how fucked up machismo - so much that the more like politically conscious or just conscious Latinos, how they - they are. It's so bad - machismo's so bad, and for very traditional families, they'll avoid the whole, like, male-female role interaction because there's so much that they have to work through that's messed up, that machismo brought on”.<sup>312</sup>

“Um... so, you had, **the way I think of machismo is like physical, so I think of, like, people.** So I think about like uncles of mine who are, again, just very **stoic, they work hard** - like one uncle had cancer, and he didn't tell his kid, he just beat it. He showed up to work everyday, uh... and he did never complain, he didn't even tell his kid, he didn't want his kid - like a super XXXX, he didn't want his kid to know, and like, freak out. So... that's like one way I think about it. **Another is just like... I dunno. You - the guy works and just sits on the couch** and... his wife takes his socks off, and feeds him and like kinda does whatever he wants, 'cause he makes

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<sup>311</sup> Enrique.

<sup>312</sup> Enrique.

the money. Um, I think the more... an even more negative side of that is like, especially like, for machismo folks, the women, like, can't go to school and not expected to work - or allowed to work, because it's like, if the man isn't doing enough, he's not making enough money, the only reason that a woman would work is 'cause the man isn't making enough money".<sup>313</sup>

“And then for **machismo**, I just think of caricatures, when non Latinos think of machismo, I think like, um... they like... romanticize like the labor or they romanticize like over-the-top romantic...”.<sup>314</sup>

“Um... Um... for machismo... I guess, like, machismo it limits all females, and, um... like really needs to be, I dunno, be raised, I think... the positive side of it is like you'll see guys as, 'oh, that woman they love so much, that's why they work so hard, that's why they're over-the-top romantic. But while you'll also not let the woman work, and so my thought is like, you can love your family and you can be over-the-top romantic, but the machismo part... the negative of that, which is women shouldn't - can't - we won't allow to... do much. That's limiting. **It's - it's just so limiting that it should be erased. You can still have the positives without - and call them something else**”.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Enrique.

<sup>314</sup> Enrique.

<sup>315</sup> Enrique.

Javier responded,

“or [hast to] do something uh like it is machismo, its just with I guess, with that emphasis on the ‘o’ at the end, it sounds it makes me think oh we got a tough guy”.<sup>316</sup>

Luis said,

“Machismo means, uh... **it has two meanings**. It has one meaning, which is what **culture** says, what a macho is, or a machismo is, which is, uh... somebody, you know, who puts their women - a man who puts himself as a greater person than a female. Um, you know, who... who... who... believes in - in... and, uh... treats women as less than him, or - or, you know... thinks that a female has a place in which she needs to be in, which is to cater to the man at home or whatever it might be. Um, you know, everything that society says about a machista. But at the same time, with the program that I work for, um, we we’re trying to redefine that word, because, um... you know, just because you say you're a macho, doesn't, you know, people automatically label or - or think of you in a different way, think of you as, you know, somebody, you know. They - they see society's definition of it. Um, and through our program, **we're trying to redefine it**, and you know, say - yeah, maybe - if I call myself a macho, um... you might look at me that way, but you know what, I'm gonna show you that I'm different. **I could still consider myself a - a macho and not**

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<sup>316</sup> Javier.

**treat women different and not disrespect women and not think that they're better than me - because it's not about being the biggest or the baddest, or whatnot, it's about the character that's inside of you”.**<sup>317</sup>

The three responses are all over place, which only goes to show the complexity of trying to define machismo. The range in responses demonstrates the need for multiple definitions of this term. There were various points that came across. One, that machismo is related to honor in the sense of say defending “your” family. There is also the idea that it’s both good and bad. It’s bad when it’s about putting down women and asserting yourself over others—kind of in line with being a machista. However it can also be good like taking care of people and putting others first, making sure your family has what they need. There is also what culture and society says it is vs. what it actually is as commented by Luis. It’s often about being stoic as Enrique commented. It can be incredibly limiting but at its best is extremely positive.

### **Macho**

When I asked about machismo, the men often commented about the term macho. The term macho is distinct but simultaneously related to machismo.<sup>318</sup> Often the term is constructed in a negative light as I mentioned in Chapter two. However as I also explained in chapter two and here, the term macho has many positive aspects.

Javier commented,

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<sup>317</sup> Luis.

<sup>318</sup> The next few subsections explore this distinction

“Um, when you say macho, I think of the big guy, I think about this guy who thinks he can just take over the world or something”.<sup>319</sup>

Luis stated,

“so there's an activity that we- that we do at the youth, where we hand them a paper and say, you know, what this - this is what it means to be a macho, you know, **he who has pride, he who has respect, he who is trustworthy, um, has dignity, all these - all these things that we, as males, uh... could have.** Um... and that don't necessarily affect women or put women down or anybody down. Um, for that matter, um... So, I see - I see two definitions. One that is offered by society, and one that, um, that we can - that we can change, that we can, um... I don't know, that we can redefine”.<sup>320</sup>

Miguel responded,

“I think, uh... macho has a - **no, macho doesn't have a negative connotation. I think macho is just... it's hard to explain.** 'Cause, you have machismo, without... um, moralities, it's a bad thing, because as it is - the way it's presented to you, it's a bad thing, but... like - I wouldn't feel uncomfortable somebody's like, 'oh, you know' if somebody from, you know, my family will be like oh you know eres macho. I wouldn't feel uncomfortable, I wouldn't think I'm doing something bad,..”.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Javier.

<sup>320</sup> Luis.

<sup>321</sup> Miguel.

In reference to the term macho, “I would never use that, um, but if somebody used it for me, it would be a little weird, but I would be comfortable with it, um... somebody tells me you're a machista, I'll be like, nah, I'm better than that, but I wouldn't disrespect people... but yeah, yeah... I dunno. I think machista carries a lot of negative traits, and macho can carry it, but doesn't necessarily have to”.<sup>322</sup>

Macho as commented is about “the big guy” but it also doesn’t necessarily have to. As Luis commented there is the definition by society and the definition that needs to be redefined. Luis highlights the importance of having pride, respect, and being a trustworthy individual. Being macho isn’t negative as it is often represented in larger U.S. society, but it can be positive. Again it’s about respect. It’s also really difficult to explain.

### ***Societies Definitions and Constructions of Macho***

As has been commented previously, lived experiences and societies perceptions are often quite different. That isn’t to say that they can’t be the same, just that they the two aren’t the same. This section looks at the impact on society and the way that it informs stereotypes. The comments in this section examine these differences and the result of stereotypes.

Luis commented,

“To me, **society's definition** of a macho is, I mean... what you see - what you see on TV. What you see on the magazine. What you see on novelas what you see on movies. It's... **it's the male figure that is the biggest, the**

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<sup>322</sup> Miguel.



**baddest, the strongest, the one that everybody's afraid of** - the one that, you know, you better not look at him the wrong way because he's gonna do something to you, or the one that mistreats his wife, or, you know, um... that hits his children or... or that, um... you know, puts his wife, uh, you know... in her place or... or her place is, you know, being at home in the kitchen, serving him... and whatnot. That's what society thinks of - of a macho. Um... you know, somebody who's violence. Somebody... it's all these negative stereotypes".<sup>323</sup>

"It's really hard to explain, **because society tells you, um... you know, this is what a machista is**, well, if I were to do something that then society says is an act of machismo, but I had a totally different intention of it, um, then I would automatically **be labeled a machista** because I did that, but maybe you know, the **meaning behind it was different**".<sup>324325</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Luis.

<sup>324</sup> Luis.

<sup>325</sup> "You know, like, for example, or let me give you this example... you know, a lotta - a lotta people say, oh, if you believe that, you know, the... if you're married and you believe your wife needs to be in the kitchen and that's her only place, um, then you're a machista, whereas other people will say, well you know what, let me take you back in history, let me take you back time to maybe Indigenous times or to times uh, you know, back in history, uh, when we were still hunters and gatherers and think of why a female was, uh, was in the kitchen, because... um... because the man had - the task to go hunt, and to go, um... to go provide for them because they were, uh... maybe physically a little stronger or because maybe they - they were better at hunting and gathering, um, and maybe the women were better at, uh, being nurturing with the kids and... and... and doing some of the stuff that needed to be done at home and maybe that's why they believe or maybe that's why that trait or that belief that - that women belong in the kitchen or women should be, I don't know, the nurturers comes from". (Luis)

Luis makes an important point; society's definition of macho does a lot of harm. In the media one is told this is how a man is supposed to act; that it's ok to be misogynistic, to mistreat people, and to demand respect. The media portrays this image but then turns around and says no, that's not being a man. So the media portrays a lot of negative stereotypes about macho. As previously pointed out it can be both positive and negative.

### *Eres Macho*<sup>326</sup>

I asked everyone except for Miguel<sup>327</sup> what they would think if someone said "eres macho" to them. Luis and Javier commented on this.

Luis responded,

"I would ask them to, um... to **elaborate** on that. And - and give me their - the meaning behind, you know, behind their - their phrase, or behind why they think I'm a macho. Um... and obviously, it also depends on their demeanor. You know, if they tell me, you know what, you're a macho, or it - I mean, the way they approach you, and their choice of words obviously gives what they mean... but I would definitely ask for them to elaborate. I wouldn't get offended, I would just be more like why do you think that? And have them explain, whereas other people, it'd be like, what did you just say? I would not be like that. Um... yeah, I - I don't wanna

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<sup>326</sup> You are Macho

<sup>327</sup> I didn't ask Miguel, as he mentioned the term during our interview. He gave me the idea to ask this question in subsequent interviews.

judge somebody, you know, before... I, uh... have a **full understanding of... what it is that they meant**”.<sup>328</sup>

Javier stated,

“I guess it depends on the context right, I guess. That’s why I just you know why are they giving me the heads up. But I do take it as compliment, and first of all I would be like thanks. But uh if its similar to my idea of masculinity is and it’s like, I took care of my mom today, bought her a dress or something and I make sure she she has food or I took them out to dinner at a really nice spot and someone’s like eres macho I’d be like thanks. You know but if it’s, it’s something like I don’t know a fight breaks out and I stand up for my friend and I stand up for my friend right, your there for the people you care about”.<sup>329</sup>

For Luis and Javier, they would be ok with someone saying that given the right context. They would want the person to elaborate on what they meant by that statement. If it related to their idea of what macho is they might take it as a compliment. The main thing is that they’d want to know the reasoning behind it.

### **Differentiating Macho and Machismo**

There is often the tendency to paint macho and machismo as the same term. However each term signifies something different. They are related but are still their own

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<sup>328</sup> Luis.

<sup>329</sup> Javier.

terms with their own unique significance. I asked the men to differentiate the terms as I had already had some theories<sup>330</sup>.

Luis commented,

“Macho and machismo... Hm... Yeah, I... **machismo** is - is more... towards what I just defined as, you know... it's an **action**. It's an action that affects somebody else in a negative way, whereas being a **macho**, uh, it's... it's more of **who you are as a person** and the characteristics that define, um... they're not necessarily negative. There's a lot of positive that comes from it. It's just really depends on how you wanna apply it”.<sup>331</sup>

Miguel stated,

“I hear the word **machismo**, just because I know what it - what it entails, like... uh, like... it starts making me feel a little bit more self-conscious, what do you mean? Like... I don't... I don't wanna identify with everything machismo carries, so, um... yeah, I don't know, I think machismo is just like the **general term**, and it **encompasses a lot of negativity**, whereas I think macho... maybe be an alter... um, a case by cases basis, whatever. Macho... if I'm being macho right now, hopefully I'm not - I don't take on all the negative traits of it. That's weird. Personally, I would never... I would never use that term, just 'cause it's not in my vocabulary, like...”.<sup>332</sup>

Enrique responded,

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<sup>330</sup> These theories were explored in chapter two (Mexican Masculinities). Macho and machismo though essentially the same concept have different subject references.

<sup>331</sup> Luis.

<sup>332</sup> Miguel.

“I think **macho's like an individual**--or, the way I think of it is just like an individual. And then machismo is like... uh, like, uh... conscious and sort of like the state of being - like the whole community-wise. I dunno. Beliefs. That's what I think about it. Like, hey, XXXX is very macho, but the community that we come from, there's a lot of machismo. That's how I kind of separate those”.<sup>333</sup>

Macho and Machismo are distinct terms, though it can be a bit difficult to differentiate the two when it comes down to it. Machismo can be seen as an action, as a state of being and seems to be a bit more general and as having a more negative connotation than say macho. Macho is about who one is a person, it's more about the individual and generally has more of a positive connotation. Essentially it's about “machoism” versus one who is macho or has the quality of being macho.

***"A man should be willing to stand up or take risk for something he believes in, even at the risk of losing his life."***

Luis stated,

“Okay, um... yes. In... but it also depends. It depends, I mean... a man **should be able to take risks**, um, but at the same time, a man should be **smart enough**, uh, to know when to **avoid 'em**, and when they're unnecessary. So, if... if... um... if there is a need to go to that step or a man... needs to step up for his family or for his community, where his life might be in danger... if he chooses to do so, then, I would respect it, by all

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<sup>333</sup> Enrique.

means... um... that - that is his choice... however, there is, um... if there is, uh... the opportunity, um... to... to avoid that, then... uh... then that - that, you know, that should be your option”.<sup>334</sup>

Javier commented,

“Um, I mean if its **something you believe in strongly enough and your life’s in danger**, I mean I wouldn’t see any problem in taking a bullet for one of my parents”.<sup>335</sup>

Miguel responded,

“I **agree with that**. Um, but it **depends**, you know. You don't wanna give up your life 'cause you wanna defend your soccer team - 'cause I know I've seen that too, like I've seen people are willing to fight, but then like that risk for stuff like that, like, that's trivial. Um... I'll put my life up for, I dunno, like... my parents were... I don't know. If something were to happen to them, I would put my life to - to make justice or just like that. Um, uh... **for my family of course**. Um... for any **justice**, you know, in society. I'm not - I'm not willing to like... I wouldn't put myself at risk first in line to go protest and fight the cops and things like that. I wouldn't do that, I think there's other ways of going about it, but like, you know, definitely, uh, I would put myself in the life in the sense that I will dedicate my time to study and learn about it and and talk about it, um... but yeah, the physical - putting your like life on the line, I would do it if

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<sup>334</sup> Luis.

<sup>335</sup> Javier.

the **condition was right. But it can't be a trivial thing, 'cause – you're leaving your family in a bad position so...**”<sup>336</sup>

Enrique said,

“Um... I guess **I just don't see like the need**, I guess. Maybe... again, like white collar versus labor. For white collars, I don't see that really ever having to be a decision”<sup>337</sup>

“Um, I see it more in like as... yeah, like you, I guess, in my context, you say yes and no at things, sometimes... yes, to things you don't want to, to be able to provide, or no to things that you wanted to, 'cause you wanna provide. Um... but in terms of like - like risking your life, I don't think that's... necessarily relevant, in the way it may have been like not that long ago”<sup>338</sup>

For all four men, the “answer” depended on the situation. It shouldn't be the first option but at the same time there are things that you just have to do. If the situation involved family then yeah, but at the same time things shouldn't get to that point. I mean as Enrique and Miguel state, you also have to think about the situation you'll be leaving you family in.

This chapter covered various diverse opinions on masculinities, manhood, and machismo. What is now left it to process it all. Hopefully the bolding and dividing of sections helped in this process. Throughout the chapter there were themes that

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<sup>336</sup> Miguel.

<sup>337</sup> Enrique.

<sup>338</sup> Enrique.

continually reappeared within each subsection despite to my knowledge, each man never having talked to the other men who I interviewed. Luis, Enrique, Miguel, and Javier's testimonies are not to be extrapolated out and applied to all post-undergraduate male Mexican Americans. Their testimonies are however reflective of their lived experiences.

I began the chapter broadly with discussing what it means "to be a man." For the four men, it seemed to come down to who you are as a person. That one has to be responsible for the actions, to have palabra, to be there for others, and to lead by example. A man may have authority and respect but not always. Meaning that views on authority and respect differed.

Having established in overall idea about what it means to be a man, I then moved into the topic of masculinity(ies). Many of the themes that appeared in the "To be a Man" section also reappeared here. Masculinity was seen as relating to whom one was as a man. It was about being brave, helping others, being responsible, and being trustworthy. However it can look differently in each person hence masculinities. One of the central tenets that was expressed by Enrique was it's relation to femininity and its use in academia.

I then moved into queerness as it relates to masculinity. Many of the men commented that society places queers as not masculine when in fact one's sexual orientation isn't so much what makes one masculine. What makes one masculine is whether or not "you" can be there for someone else or have someone to be there for.

From there, I examined Competition, Violence, Performance and Emotional Expressions. Both competition and violence were seen as having importance in society but not so much in "real life". Performance was seen as relating to emotion in that one



can “perform stoic”. Throughout their testimonies, the tension between society’s view on whether men can or should show emotion was especially prevalent. Although there was some disagreement on the matter, there was a general sense that it is alright to show emotion but only in certain situations.

I also examined ways in which one “can fail to be a man”. What was apparent was one can’t per say fail to be a man, more that one may lack certain characteristics for a multitude of reasons. This led to the relation between honor and respect. The two were seen as related but somewhat different. When I discussed this topic the term machista was mentioned. Being a machista is and was seen as having incredibly negative connotations.

After all of this, I moved into the discussion of machismo and macho. There were multiple definitions for each of these terms, ranging from positive to negative aspects. Negative aspects were centered around being misogynistic and placing oneself above others. Positive aspects centered on taking care of ones family, being there for people, being responsible and trustworthy. Respect and responsibility also tied into these definitions. Although literature doesn’t differentiate the two terms too much, the men’s testimonies demonstrated that although overlap exists, the terms are somewhat distinct. In terms of differentiating the two macho was seen as being about the individual whereas machismo is about actions. There was also the conflation of societies constructions versus actual experiences the men had.

## **Reflecting and Making Sense of it All**

There was a plethora of information and concepts presented here. In some ways it is daunting to think about everything that was presented. In these concluding remarks, I have attempted to summarize everything that was presented. Recall that I began with explaining why and how I came about to writing my thesis on post-undergraduate male Mexican Americans. I was interested in interviewing this particular group of men because of my experiences growing up working at a horse ranch and various classes that I had taken at Scripps College. I connected with Luis, Enrique, Javier, and Miguel through my step-dad who is Mexican American. Of course there were and are many politics involved here from my position to interviewer/interviewee dynamics. Although I tried to mitigate power imbalances by having pre-interviews, addressing questions and concerns, the fact remained that there were and are power imbalances at play.

### **Chapter Flows**

The flow of the chapters was designed in an effort to aid you as a reader in understanding who each of the orators are and the history behind who they are. Knowing this history was done in an effort to see where each orators construction of masculinities, machismo, and macho may have come from. The first two chapters, were about setting up the orators stories. The last two chapters were focused on the orators. The duality here was intentional as chapter one was a mirror of chapter three and chapter two was a mirror of chapter four. The first two chapters were about theory and establishing background and context for the terms and discussions that each orator had in the final two chapters.

The first chapter was divided into two different parts, immigration and labor and two, kinship. The role of the chapter was to examine U.S.-Mexico relations. This was

done through the examination of the Border Patrol, NAFTA, and The Bracero Program. The legacy of these programs continues today especially with the Border Patrol and NAFTA. Labor and immigration were grouped together as they often go hand in hand. Recall the link between the Bracero Program and push and pull factors between the U.S. and Mexico. The second section examined kinship and the reconceptualization of community and family. Family and community were themes that appeared in later chapters and were also connected to the first section via communities being re-imagined to accommodate the changing nature of families due to migration.

Chapter two was incredibly theoretical. It was about establishing theories behind masculinities, macho, machismo, and what it means to be a man. The intention was to introduce readers to these concepts and NOT to have them compare them to the orators. Each orator's testimony is unique. The value of having used both oral histories and scholarly sources allows for a more complete understanding of a concept. The theory presented was beneficial in its ability to understand concepts that were discussed in chapter four, but it is also very limiting. The theory is what allowed me to start conceptualizing questions that would allow me to understand masculinities and what it means "to be a man".

In chapter two, the way in which the border is constructed as a male dominated space but that women also cross over and do labor was examined. It was about introducing the reader to alternative constructions of the border and that the terms do exist in pluralities. That the terms in themselves necessitate the presence of multiple definitions. Theories at times were conflicting but where they conflicted is where further examination was needed.

Chapter three marks a transition as the focus is now on testimonies. The chapter was originally one chapter, but as my thesis was based on mirrors and the idea that the past informs the present, I broke it into two chapters. So chapter three was about understanding who the orators were. To accomplish this, I had the orators talk about home, family, religion, labor, jobs, and gender roles. Each of these terms had a multiplicity of definitions and was interpreted differently by each man. I started out with family and home as that is where people generally, but not always begin to form their views. Labor and jobs was one of the last sections as it is connected to masculinities. The testimony given here was about identifying potential locations that each orator may have constructed his thoughts around a certain term or topic.

Finally chapter four discussed each orator's view(s) on masculinity, macho, machismo, and what it means to be a man. This chapter marked a difference in structure as it was mainly composed of block quotes.<sup>339</sup>The use of block quotes was used to demonstrate the power of oral histories. For the most part, the quotes spoke for themselves. However, there were instances where I analyzed quotes and offered brief summaries as there was an abundance of information and concepts presented by each orator. In the chapter there were instances where similar themes reappeared or similar phrasing was used.

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<sup>339</sup> Although the block quotes were incredibly powerful in demonstrating the power of oral histories, I do realize that they add a significant amount of length. However, the length is due to the incredibly rich testimonies given. I have bolded certain points to aid in understanding the main points of each quote as some quotes were and are incredibly lengthy. However the length is necessary to fully grasp what each orator was saying about a particular topic.

An important point here, is that an many of the testimonies, there was an obvious disconnect between theory and lived experiences. Although macho and machismo did have some overlap they were also seen as distinct terms. Macho is more about the individual whereas machismo is about an action it's something one does. Hopefully you as a reader were able to see the connections between chapter three and four. In particular the relationship between labor and what it means "to be a man".

### **Mirrors and the Moving Through Time**

Although the concept of mirrors and the past affecting the future should have been clear, I also realize that they are complex topics. Chapter one and three are mirrors of each other in that they are setting up history. Chapter one was about the history of U.S.-Mexico relations and chapter three was about the "history" of each orator. Chapter two was theory on masculinities and what it means "to be a man" and chapter was about the lived experiences. Now about the past affecting the future. In chapter three, the way that each man grew up deeply impacted what he felt about the aforementioned topics. Take the family. Taking care of ones family and being responsible for one's actions was a theme that reappeared when discussing what it means "to be a man".

### **What was it all about?**

This thesis is and was about understanding how Miguel, Enrique, Javier, and Luis construct each of the terms discussed in this thesis. In particular about how they as post-undergraduate male Mexican Americans construct identity and what it "means to be a man". The method of oral histories was used not only for its power but to offer a different perspective that has been given by theory. I was and am incredibly privileged to have been able to interview the four orators. Each man or orator's testimony demonstrated the

complexity of the aforementioned topics. So it was about adding and offering a different perspective to the dominant narrative.<sup>340</sup>

### **Coming full circle**

I was only able to have contact with Luis, Enrique, Miguel, and Javier because my step-dad is Mexican-American and so knew ways in which I could acquire access to this population of post-undergraduate male Mexican Americans. Through his own connections and a network of other people, the four men's experiences were able to be told. Interviewing and transcribing involved a great amount of work, but this "upfront" work made writing chapter three easier. During the regular interview, I recorded the conversations that I had with each of the men. I conducted pre-interviews before to discuss the consent forms, any questions or concerns they may have had and my interest in the subject. After I completed the interviews, which I recorded, I needed to transcribe them all.

Transcribing like the process of IRB was an adventure in and of itself. An hour of audio file took me around seven hours and seeing as I had around seven hours of audio files, let's just say I spent a long time on that. Thankfully, I was able to complete this over spring break. Now back to IRB.

IRB is a intense process. It involved many redundant questions and seemed like Scripps was being hyper-vigilant. In total I submitted IRB three different times. Since I conducted interviews with a potentially at risk population (immigration/citizenship), I

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<sup>340</sup> Due to the nature of oral histories, they are incredibly difficult to document unless a person is there to document them. Also when I refer to the dominant narrative, I am referring to the idea that oral histories are not consider as acceptable sources at least when compared to scholarly sources. Meaning that scholarly sources are ranked higher and valued more than oral histories.

was able to do an abbreviated form of IRB. However it was a very frustrating process as it is done online, which is great but also makes it really difficult to re-submit after comments are made.

### **Reflections**

As I was going through this last chapter (4) something interesting and incredible happened; even before I referenced the transcripts for who said something, I generally could already tell who said. I don't know why this surprised me so much but is something I've definitely reflected on. I guess I thought since I was going back and forth all the time between transcripts that I might get lost or something. However this ability to tell who is saying what only points to the diversity of responses and how each man offered something different. I also think that having grounded myself in section one that I was better able hear each man's voice. I think it's something really beautiful. Furthermore this point demonstrates the power and importance of oral histories and to never ever generalize. Yes all four men are post-undergraduate Mexican American males and come from somewhat similar backgrounds but that doesn't mean that they can be classified as one monolithic group.

The termination of this thesis marks the end of a journey that though was only put to words a year ago, but has been ongoing. In reality I feel as if I was always meant to write this thesis and in the way that I did. Although I certainly happy to have completed this part of my journey, it is also saddening. At times, yes thesis did make me cry both happy and sad tears but overall it was a wonderful journey. It allowed me the opportunity to conduct oral histories with Luis, Enrique, Miguel, and Javier and to realize the importance of both theory and lived experiences.

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## ***Appendix A: Scripps Institutional Review Board***

### **Lived Practices of Male Mexican American College Student Masculinities: Family, Labor, Immigration, and Culture Zandalee Springs**

#### *Research Questions or Questions Under Investigation:*

How do Family, labor, and immigration intersect to construct Masculinity/(ies) for Male Mexican American College Students? How do these men define themselves? What do their self chosen term (Latino, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican-American) say? How do these men who have allowed me to share their stories construct masculinity? What factors go into constructing these notions? Are they different from their fathers or other male members? What about if they were raised by single-mothers? How might this change their perception of masculinity? What is the role of religion? What is labor/how is it defined? I want to find out how this particular population constructs masculinity as I can read about masculinity but based on scholarship know that oral histories have a different if not more important way of examining a subject matter.

#### *Scholarly Merit:*

From the research I have done, there is a lack of oral histories that have been compiled on masculinity as seen from the view point of Male Mexican American College Students. As such, my research will contribute to the field by providing oral histories and not just more academic sources. Although masculinity and Mexican American's have been studied, there is limited scholarship on Masculinity as seen by Mexican American College Students

#### *Methodology:*

The persons who I will be working with will all be adults, all 18 years of age or older. The persons who choose to work with me will be male, first-generation (they were born in the United States), and ethnically Mexican. They also still must hold US citizenship Male here means identifying as male as is not limited to being biologically male. Male then will be judged by participants reporting as identifying as male.

I will ask them if we can arrange a time to meet and go over the interview questions and conduct the interview. As such participants are asked to discuss their views on the topic of masculinity. Interviews will last no more than an hour. However, if participants agree, I might need to contact them for follow-up questions. Participants will be given the option to chose an alias. If they do chose to use their name, they will have been made aware of risks in doing so in the consent form. The audio files will be destroyed within one week time and all that will be left is a the transcription. On April 24, 2015 the transcription will be destroyed. I will not be asking for any identifying information, nor will I be including it in my thesis. If they chose to use their legal name, I will only be using their first name. They can change this at any point in time.

### *Selection of Participants:*

Participants will be self selected. I will be attending meetings of the justice for immigrants coalition. There I will distribute fliers stating my project and contact information. This self selection is done in an effort to decrease the incredible power that I have as a white educated researcher. I am not interviewing women or other ethnicities other than Mexican-Americans as doing so would make the scope of the project too large. While I realize that women and other ethnicities have equally important knowledge around masculinity, I have chosen an area where I see scholarship lacking. Participants are self-selected in that they are choosing to speak with me. They will be recruited from justice for immigrants coalition meetings through the use of fliers.

### *Informing Participants and Consent:*

That I, Zandalee Springs am doing my Senior Thesis on the construction(s) of masculinity in relation to family, labor, and immigration. I will be looking at the way that these topics come together to construct masculinity through the use of both oral histories and scholarly sources. My thesis is anchored around your experience(s) and as such your participation is central to my research. I'm not interested in what you think I want to hear, but your life as told by you. Among the many issues I'm interested in are the ways in which experiences of family, labor, and immigration intersect to construct masculinity. Because of vulnerabilities around immigration status, I will only speak with you if you are a US citizen. Upon completion, participants will be given a copy of my thesis if they so desire. Before, after, and during the interview participants will and are free to ask questions or discontinue. Participants will be given full disclosure. They will be given a copy of my thesis upon my completion of it. Consent will be given through written documentation. I will first explain to participants what my project is about and then have them read over the consent form. At this point they are welcome to opt out of the research and are free to ask any questions regarding the consent form or the project. Once their questions have been answered and if they have decided to participate in the project, I will have them sign the consent form. They will also be given a copy of the consent form. In the consent form, I have included that I am legally obligated to report if they have been aware of or involved in sexual assault cases to the proper authorities at their school. However, I will not specifically ask about sexual assault.

### *Confidentiality:*

Participants will not be personally identified unless they give consent. Participants real names will not be used. Pseudonyms will be used instead. Throughout the entire process there will be transparency as deception is not necessary for the project and will be avoided at all costs. All content relating to participants will be in a locked folder on my computer, which has a passcode. Participants names will only be identified in the interviews, and thereafter, unless otherwise specified will be referred to by their pseudonym. After thesis is done all audio and other files containing any information about participants will be destroyed. Note that audio files will be destroyed one week from the date oral history is performed.

Participants will engage in an interview with me. A copy of the questionnaire will be made available to them. All interviews will be audio recorded. The best way to ensure complete confidentiality of your responses in this study is to complete the questionnaires and interview as instructed, leaving out any reference to identifiable information that refers 1) to past illegal activity that has not already been settled by the court system and 2) ongoing or imminent harm to any person, especially a child.

However, if for some reason you find the questions distressing and/or need further clarification, or you need to stop for any reason, you retain the right to do so without any negative effect on your relationship with the researchers and with Scripps College. If you decide to provide identifying information about illegal activity or imminent or ongoing harm to yourself or others, please note that the confidentiality of this information may not be fully ensured.

#### *Confidentiality Risks and Assessment of Risk:*

Their stories could get out, which may harm other people. If they mention immigration status (I will not be asking this as one of the criteria is that they are legal US residents) of other people or family members. However, I will make it clear that I don't want to hear about immigration status and would prefer them not to mention this about the people they bring up. They might have said something that would anger or upset friends or family member so there is the possibility of problems evolving from this breach. Some of things they say could harm their image, like if they have views that differ from the community.

Risk depends upon what they share. Risks are not limited to, but may include the following: Their stories could get out, which may harm other people. If they mention immigration status (I will not be asking this as one of the criteria is that they are legal US residents) of other people or family members. I will discourage the mentioning of immigration status by stating that interviewees are not to mention the status of persons that they may bring up. They might have said something that would anger or upset friends or family member so there is the possibility of problems evolving from this breach. Some of things they say could harm their image, like if they have views that differ from the community. They may also say things that are not covered by confidentiality, which would require me to report them to the police. Risk will try to be minimized by having a locked folder on my desktop and making sure that participants are fully aware of the risks involved in their participation. Situations will be handled on a case by case basis, but will be handled in a way to minimize further trauma that may have resulted from breach of information.

#### *Debriefing and Benefits to Participants:*

Interviews will allow for participants to tell their life experiences and be part of a larger project. I have found that within the scholarly field, general there is a lack of focus on masculinity, particularly that of college students. Thus this research will contribute to the lack of knowledge and concentration on masculinity in my major. Participants will also be receiving a copy of my thesis once completed, and if they so desire the process of completion.

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# Application for Institutional Review Board Review

Please submit this form with a Research Summary and supporting materials following the guidelines given below. The investigator should allow sufficient time for review before scheduling the implementation of the project. If the proposal requires the approval of the full committee, it could be a month before a decision is made.

**Principal Investigator:** Zandalee Springs  
**Address Line 1:** 1030 Columbia Avenue #935  
**Address Line 2:** Claremont, CA 91711  
**Telephone:** 650. 722.3505  
**E-Mail:** zandy.springs@gmail.com  
**Department:** Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
**Title of Project:** Lived Practices of Male Mexican American College Student Masculinities: Family, Labor, Immigration, and Culture

The principal investigator assures the IRB that all procedures carried out under the project will be conducted by persons legally and responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the submitted project (change in principal investigator, participant recruitment procedures, research methodology, etc.) will be submitted to the IRB for approval prior to implementation.

The IRB also requires that the principle investigator and faculty sponsor read the Belmont Report and take the Web training course for IRB members provided by the [Office of Human Subjects Research, NIH](#). For OHRP training, [click here](#).

Please indicate your compliance:

I have read the Belmont Report. Attached is a "Completion Certificate" for the IRB Members' training session.

*Please indicate whether or not the following are involved.*

<b>Project uses federal funding:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Patients as participants:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Minors as participants (under 18):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Elderly participants (over 65):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Non-English-speaking participants:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Cognitively impaired participants:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Prisoners or parolees:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Participants in other countries:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Greater than minimal risk* to participants:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Film-, video-, or voice-recording of participants:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Yes/No questionnaires:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

<b>Data banks, archives, or medical records:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Payment for participants:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Interviews:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>The use of drugs or medication:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Taking physical specimens:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Deception:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Principal investigator (signature):</b>	<u>Zandalee Springs</u>	
<b>Date:</b>	<u>30 January 2015</u>	
<b>Faculty Sponsor (print):</b>	<u>Piya Chatterjee</u>	
<b>Faculty Sponsor (sign):</b>	<u>Piya Chatterjee</u>	
<b>Date:</b>	<u>30 January 2015</u>	
<b>Department:</b>	<u>Feminist, Gender, &amp; Sexuality Studies</u>	

### Review Board Action

1. Certified as exempt from review (by Chair)
2. Approved under expedited review (by Chair or other IRB member)
3. Approved by full committee
4. Returned by full committee for additional details, clarifications, or adjustments

**IRB Representative (signature):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



*Institutional Review Board, Scripps College  
Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert, Associate Dean of Faculty, Ex Officio IRB Member  
gedwalds@scrippscollege.edu*

*Michael L. Spezio, IRB Chair  
mspezio@scrippscollege.edu*

*Amy Emmert, IRB Administrative Officer  
aemmert@scrippscollege.edu*

6 February 2015

Zandalee Springs

Dear Zandalee,

The revised protocol describing your project, “Lived Practices of Male Mexican American College Student Masculinities: Family, Labor, Immigration, and Culture”, received 2 Feb, 2015, was reviewed by the IRB under expedited review.

Your project is approved. The approval for your project is effective until one year from the date of your revised protocol upload.

If your project has not been completed by then, you must write to the IRB reporting on the progress of your research and requesting renewal. Be sure to submit your report in time for a renewal to be issued before this one expires. The Scripps IRB does not regularly review any protocols outside of academic terms. In order to have an expiring or new protocol reviewed in time for work to begin in the Summer or at the very start of Fall term, please submit by 1 April. In order to have an expiring or new protocol reviewed in time for work to begin at the very start of Spring term, please submit by 15 November.

When you submit your report, please include any changes that you would like to make to the originally approved project at that point. Because we are required to keep track of the number of active files we have open at any one time, we ask that you inform the IRB if your project is not complete within a month after your estimated completion date, or by one month prior to the end of your year’s approval, whichever comes first.

If any injuries, participant distress, or other problems involving participants or others are encountered in the conduct of your research, you must notify the Chair of the IRB, the IRB Administrative Officer, and the Associate Dean of Faculty with oversight of IRB as soon as possible. This notification must occur no more than five days after the event.

Best wishes,

Michael L. Spezio  
IRB Chair

cc: Amy Emmert, Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert

## Consent Form for Zandalee Spring's Senior Thesis

### Immigrant Masculinities: Lived Practices of Mexican American Male College Students

You are being asked to take part in a research study that examines constructions of masculinity as seen by Mexican American college students. You were selected as a possible participant because you expressed interest in my project. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to better understand how masculinity is constructed from the point of view of male, Mexican American college students and to explore factors that may contribute to their construction(s) of masculinity. Among the many issues I'm interested in are the ways in which experiences of family, labor, and immigration intersect to construct masculinity. Because of vulnerabilities around immigration status, I will only speak with you if you are a U.S. citizen.

**Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, I will ask that you participate in an informal interview. The number of times we meet will depend on your availability and desire to participate in the completion of my thesis. The time will depend on how much you would like to share and may be broken up based on your availability. The interviews should last no more than an hour, but I may contact you, based on your consent for follow up questions. With and only with your permission will I tape record and transcribe the interview. I will only use your name in my thesis if you specifically ask me too. Otherwise you and your comments will remain anonymous. Your identity will be kept confidential and you will have the option to choose your own alias.

**Risks and Benefits:** I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. That said, there is always a minimal risk involved when conducting interviews. Some questions may trigger memories especially when discussing topics around family and your experience growing up as a young Mexican American man.

There are no real benefits to you other than you get talk and tell your story. You will also be receiving a copy of my thesis should you desire one.

If you chose to use your own name instead of an alias, there are some risks involved. It is important to acknowledge here that if you chose to use your own name instead of an alias, it makes you more identifiable. Some people may not like what you say and you could potentially face consequences for this.

**Voluntary Nature of Participation:** Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations in the college that you are currently studying in. You may choose not to answer any question in the interview. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**Confidentiality:** The interview recordings and transcripts for this project will be kept private. In any sort of report I might make public will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only I will have access to these records. All recordings will be erased after transcripts have been recorded unless the participant requests otherwise. There are some items that I am unable to keep confidential. If you tell me about a crime that you have committed, I am legally responsible to report this to the police. In the event that confidentiality is breached there is no injury coverage for this project. Scripps College cannot cover any costs of injury resulting from this project if any were to occur. However, protective measures like a secured password protected folder are in place to protect your confidentiality. Furthermore, upon completion of thesis, your audio file will be destroyed. Your audio file will be kept for at most one week. After which time the file will be destroyed and all that will remain is the transcription.

The best way to ensure complete confidentiality of your responses in this study is to complete the questionnaires and interview as instructed, leaving out any reference to identifiable information that refers 1) to past illegal activity that has not already been settled by the court system and 2) ongoing or imminent harm to any person, especially a child. However, if for some reason you find the questions distressing and/or need further clarification, or you need to stop for any reason, you retain the right to do so without any negative effect on your relationship with the researchers and with Scripps College. If you decide to provide identifying information about illegal activity or imminent or ongoing harm to yourself or others, please note that the confidentiality of this information may not be fully ensured.”

Your name or other identifying information will be kept confidential. Unless you specifically request that your name is used, you will be referred to in my thesis under in alias of your choosing. However, if you do chose to use your actual name, only your first name will be used.

If you disclose information about sexual assault that you are aware or participated in, I am legally obligated to report you and any other persons to the proper authority at your school. I will not ask questions about sexual assault, but if you bring it up this is the process that I am legally obligated to follow.

**If you have questions or comments:** I, Zandalee Spring am the principle researcher for this project. If you have any questions now, please ask. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 650.722.3505, [zsprings6397@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:zsprings6397@scrippscollege.edu), or at 250 N. College Park Drive Apt #J37 Upland, CA 91786. You may also contact my advisors, Tomás Summers Sandoval at [tfss@pomona.edu](mailto:tfss@pomona.edu) or Piya Chaterjee at [piyachaterjee2014@gmail.com](mailto:piyachaterjee2014@gmail.com) (professors). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this project, you may contact Scripps College Institutional Review Board Chairs Michael Spezio at [mspezio@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:mspezio@scrippscollege.edu), Amy Emmert at [aemmert@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:aemmert@scrippscollege.edu), or Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert at [gedwalds@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:gedwalds@scrippscollege.edu).

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to questions I asked. I am at least 18 years of age and consent to participate in this project. I was born in the US and still hold US citizenship. If I chose to use my own name, I have done so of my own will and recognize that I may place myself at risk.

Printed name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of Principal Investigator Zandalee Springs Date: 2/12/15  
Signature of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby grant permission to be recorded and grant permission for the interview to be transcribed, understanding that the work will remain anonymous.

Signature of Participant Date:

I hereby grant permission for my name to be included in reports of this research.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (please initial one)

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the project and was approved by the IRB on February 6, 2015.

Interview Questions:

The interview will be open-ended, however the following topics will be discussed:

1. How do you define or construct masculinity?
2. Are there people, stories or other things that have deeply impacted your construction of masculinity?
3. Do you define masculinity differently than your family does? Do you think there's a generational/cultural gap?
4. Do you see labor and race as important or impacting to your construction/perception(s) of masculinity?
5. How do you or don't you see women playing a role in constructing masculinity?
6. How do you see/define the term machismo? If/Why or in what contexts don't/ do you use it? Do you identify with it?
7. For someone who is unfamiliar with masculinity and/or machismo what are some important concepts that they grasp?
8. Do you see education as having influenced your views on masculinity/ how you see yourself as a man?
9. What do you see as making a man masculine? Are there ways or things that automatically mark a man as feminine? What do you define as feminine?

YES OR NO SURVEY SEARCH alfredo mirande and machismo article

10. In what situations do you prefer to speak Spanish or English?



I would like to thank you for your time and for opening up to me to discuss the ways in which you construct masculinity. I would like to remind you of the purpose of my study and an opportunity for you to ask questions, now that you have completed the interview. I, Zandalee Springs am doing my Senior Thesis on the construction(s) of masculinity in relation to family, labor, and immigration. I will be looking at the way that these topics come together to construct masculinity through the use of both oral histories and scholarly sources. My thesis is anchored around your experience(s) and as such your participation is central to my research. I'm not interested in what you think I want to hear, but your life as told by you. Among the many issues I'm interested in are the ways in which experiences of family, labor, and immigration intersect to construct masculinity. Because of vulnerabilities around immigration status, I will only speak with you if you have legal immigrant status.

**If you have questions or comments:** I, Zandalee Spring am the principle researcher for this project. If you have any questions now, please ask. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 650.722.3505, [zsprings6397@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:zsprings6397@scrippscollege.edu), or at 250 N. College Park Drive Apt #J37 Upland, CA 91786. You may also contact my Piya Chaterjee at [piyachaterjee2014@gmail.com](mailto:piyachaterjee2014@gmail.com) (professors). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this project, you may contact Scripps College Institutional Review Board Chair Michael Spezio at [Michael.spezio@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:Michael.spezio@scrippscollege.edu), Amy Emmert at [aemmert@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:aemmert@scrippscollege.edu), or Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert at [gedwalds@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:gedwalds@scrippscollege.edu).

If you feel that you are experiencing great emotional distress, you can contact your school's resource center. Here is their address and phone number: Veitch Student Center, North Wing Riverside, CA 92521-0320. Phone 951.827.5531

## Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Zandalee Springs** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 09/13/2014

Certification Number: 1556702

## ***Appendix B: Interview Questions***

### *Person:*

What is your full name? Does it hold any significance? Do you have a nickname? Who gave it to you?

To date, is there an accomplishment that you're most proud of? Are others proud of it too?

Who was your idol growing up?

### *Family/Home:*

Have you always lived where you live now?

How'd your family come to live where they're currently living?

When and where were you born?

Where did you grow up?

What is family?

Are you close to your family?

What was it like growing up at home?

Did you spend a lot of time at home?

Did your family do a lot of things together?

What was home life like?

Who lived with you growing up?

Were there other family members who lived close by?

What schools did you attend?

How do you define your family?

Where was home?

What is home?

How were and are holidays spent?

Is or was your family religious?

Did your family eat meals together? Who cooked the meals?

Are there any stories that you were always told by grandparents or relatives that impacted you? Or Do you have any memorable stories from your childhood?

Is there a memory from childhood that sticks out to you?

What languages do you speak?

What is the role of the mother?

What is the role of the father?

What are the roles of siblings? How about godparents and grandparents?

### *School/Friends:*

Were you involved in your community in any way? How so?

What did you do outside of school?

Do you have any hobbies? Have they changed?

What was school like? Was there a teacher that influenced you?

Growing up did you play any sports or were you on any teams? Are you currently?

Who were your friends growing up? Are you still in contact with them?

Who are some of your best-friends today?

After high school, did you go straight to college?

Where did you go to school?  
Was education pushed in your family?  
Did your parents agree with your choice to go to college? How about your friends?  
What did you major in? How'd you choose that major?  
Did you minor in anything?  
Are there classes that you took that really influenced you? How about any professors?  
Are there any classes you wish you had taken?

*Labor/Jobs:*

What is labor or work to you?  
What do your parents do for work?  
What ways did you help your family growing up? How about now?  
Did you have chores growing up?  
When did you start doing paid labor?  
What was your first job?  
Have you had other jobs since?  
Who or what did you want to be growing up? What do you want to do now?  
Did you work while attending school?  
What job or career are you working towards now?  
What's your dream job?  
Is non-paid labor still labor?  
What do you know about the Bracero Program?  
What do you know about NAFTA?

*Dating/Masculinity:*

What were your parent's views on dating? If you had a sister were they the same?  
Did they differ from your friends views?  
How or are your parents involved in your dating life?  
Would you or have you ever dated someone your parent's didn't approve of?  
How do you define or construct masculinity?  
How do you define or construct masculinity different than you friends or family? Do you think there's a generational gap?  
Who taught you what it means to be a man?  
What does being a man mean to you?  
How do you see or define the term machismo and macho? If/Why or in what contexts do or don't you use it? Do you identify with term?  
For someone who is unfamiliar with masculinity and/or machismo what are some important concepts that they grasp?  
What problems do you see with the terms macho, masculinity, and machismo?  
What differences do you see between stereotypes and masculinity or machismo as its enacted?  
Do you think whites define macho and machismo differently than it is in practice?  
Do you see competition as part of define manhood? How about violence?  
Do you think masculinity can be plural?  
What does it mean to be a good father?  
What does it mean to be a good mother?

What are ways that one fails to be a man?

How do you or don't you see homosexuality as fitting in with constructions of masculinity?

What are your views on homosexuality? Do they differ from your parents or friends?

What ways do you see performance as being involved in masculinity, machismo, macho culture?

Have you heard of the term marianismo?

*Statements:*

Do you agree with the following statements: (Mirandé 88).

“A real man has complete respect and authority in the family”

“The man is the most influential parent in the family”

“ A man should be willing to stand up or take risks for something he believes in, even at the risk of losing his life”

“One of the worst things a man can do is to disgrace or dishonor his family”

“Men should never cry or show their feeling”

“A sign of a real man is his ability to withstand pain”