Taking a Cultural Perspective on Intimate Partner Violence

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by

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ABSTRACT
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Intimate partner violence continues to be a growing social concern associated with extensive physical, emotional, and financial consequences. Previous models of intimate partner violence have failed to recognize the role cultural components may play in the etiology of violence, specifically cultural values, the bi-dimensional process of acculturation, and sociodemographic variables. Prior research has shown these factors all contribute to women's perceptions of violence and such perceptions may impact the relationship between exposure and emotional outcomes. The present study examined how women's cultural background influences their perceptions of violence and subsequent adjustment. Eighty-six Latina women completed measures assessing cultural values, acculturation levels, attitudes regarding aggression, exposure to intimate partner violence, and psychological adjustment as well as semi-structured interviews assessing perceptions of violence in two vignettes. Analyses revealed a moderating effect of cultural values on the relationship between exposure to intimate partner aggression and perceptions of violence; however perceptions did not mediate the relation between violence exposure and subsequent adjustment. Cultural values specific to gender roles were more salient when considering perceptions of causation of violence, whereas global attitudes about aggression and dating aggression were more salient for women's perceptions of the acceptability and seriousness of violent behavior.

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Taking a Cultural Perspective on Intimate Partner Violence

Despite an abundance of research on the topic, intimate partner violence (IPV) continues to be an enormous social problem. This construct has been defined both narrowly and broadly across a variety of studies but typically refers to incidents of aggression or conflictual behaviors occurring within a couple (Center for Disease Control, 2003). These incidents may include physical and/or verbal aggression as well as sexual assault. It is estimated that such acts occurs every 15 seconds somewhere in the United States (United Nations, 2000). In addition, nearly one third of women in the U.S. will report being physically or sexually assaulted by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999).

The costs associated with intimate partner violence are estimated to exceed $5.8 billion each year (CDC, 2003). These expenses are directed toward medical and mental health care services and the indirect costs of lost productivity. Beyond the monetary costs, the physical and emotional consequences of intimate partner violence are considerable. Over 37% of injuries seen in emergency rooms are a result of intimate partner violence incidents (Rand, 1997; Warshaw, 1994). These injuries range from minor inflictions such as cuts and bruises, to serious damage including broken bones, burns, and knife and gunshot wounds (Guth & Pachter, 2000). Emotional consequences of intimate partner violence include depression, anxiety, phobias, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Woods, 2000). Besides the immediate consequences of intimate partner violence, many women face long-term consequences from prolonged exposure to the stress of battering. These include pelvic pain, arthritis, and cardiovascular disease (Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999).

Intimate partner violence has been shown to affect all segments of the population (CDC, 2003). However, several studies have shown that some groups may experience it at higher rates.

For instance, Field and Caetano (2003) found that relative to Caucasian women, Latina and African American women were two to three times more likely to report incidents of intimate partner violence. Ingram (2007) found that 57% of Latino participants endorsed incidents of violence within their lifetime. In addition to increased rates of intimate partner violence, Latino women may be subject to unique challenges in coping due to stress related to immigration and acculturation processes as well as language, legal, and economic difficulties (Mattson & Rodriguez, 1999). These factors in addition to elevated rates of abuse within Latino populations showcase the importance of examining these women's experiences of intimate partner violence. In addition, Latino populations are the fastest growing minority and immigrant group in the United States, comprising 14% of the national population (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003), further emphasizing the need for interventions designed to aid Latino victims of violence.

The three largest groups in the Latino population in the United States include people of Mexican descent (66%), Puerto Rican descent (9%) and Cuban descent (4%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Kaufman Kantor, Jasinski, and Aldarondo (1994) found that the highest rates of intimate partner violence occur among Puerto Ricans (20.4%), followed by Mexicans (10.5%) and then Cubans (2.5%). Due to the heterogeneity within the Latino population, it is important to understand how cultural elements that may vary between subgroups (e.g., religious, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors) may differentially affect incidents of intimate partner violence. However, that being said, there are also many commonalities which exist within traditional Latin American families and their experiences acculturating to a new society which also need to be taken into account. In particular, cultural values and beliefs inherent to this population may influence how intimate partner violence is perceived. Therefore, it is important, when attempting

to understand IPV within the Latino population, to examine the cultural context in which it occurs.

Conducting Culturally-sensitive Research on IPV

Given that opinions of intimate partner violence may be influenced by cultural values, incidents traditionally categorized as violent may be considered acceptable within specific cultures. Therefore, the critical question becomes whether it is the perception of the act or the act itself that is most critical to determining whether an individual has been exposed to intimate partner violence. This point has important implications for women's behavioral and emotional responses. If a woman views specific acts as acceptable and minor due to their association with specific role expectations, this may prevent her from seeking outside assistance. Similarly, this may also lesson the effects such acts may have on mental health.

While attempts have been made to identify variation in definitions of what constitutes intimate partner violence, an initial problem is the tendency to compare across ethnic categories commonly used by the U.S. Census Bureau (Gonzales & Kim, 1997). These categories include Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. The tendency to categorize cultures in this way is termed "ethnic lumping" (Fontes, 1993a) and this process ignores the diversity that occurs within each of these groups. For example, the use of the term American Indian to represent all Native American communities fails to account for differences among the 651 federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native populations. These groups are culturally heterogeneous and widely dispersed geographically and maintain their own languages, family structures, social and religious functions, and health practices (Norton & Manson, 1996). Yuan, Koss, Polacca, and Goldman

(2006) found, when studying physical and sexual assaults in adults from six different Native American groups, rates of both types of assault differed significantly among groups.

Another problem that is common in multicultural studies is using the majority view of intimate partner violence as the standard. Known as an "etic" approach to research, the underlying assumption of this approach is that intimate partner violence is a phenomenon that is universally defined (Malley-Morrison, 2004; Smith & Bond, 1998). Krahe, Bieneck, and Moller (2005) further divide this approach into two subcategories: imposed and derived. An imposed etic approach involves transferring preconceived definitions and measurements into another culture. Several problems have been noted with this approach, most notably, a lack of functional equivalence. This refers to whether an instrument used to classify intimate partner violence in one culture classifies the same underlying construct in another culture. To date, there is little research that has effectively addressed this problem (Straus, 2004).

In order to correct these fallacies, it is important to utilize a cultural variant perspective that acknowledges differences in functioning as a result of intimate partner violence may be due to cultural, social, and historical influences (Hampton, 2005; West, 2005). This type of approach is commonly referred to as taking a derived etic approach to research through identifying problems and issues for research across cultures but allows specific conceptual definitions and measurement tools to be developed for use in each culture based on the socially shared views of its members (Krahe, et al., 2005). An alternate method is the emic approach. The primary goal of this approach is to understand a construct's development within a specific culture, rather than to compare across cultural groups. To do this effectively in the case of intimate partner violence, researchers must first ascertain whether or not a given culture has developed perceptions of

forms of violence that are considered illegitimate and then describe specific behaviors that may fall into this category.

Defining the term "culture". Before even considering the role of culture in intimate partner violence, it is important to define what is meant by this term. One of the clearest and most well known definitions was put forth by Locke (1998), who defined culture as a construct that captures a socially transmitted system of ideas that shape behavior, categorize perceptions, and gives names to selected aspects of experience. This definition has been incorporated into Locke's model of multicultural understanding, which highlights the interrelationships among several components of culture including personal awareness, awareness of world events and how they translate into personal meaning, an understanding of dominant culture from individual, family and community perspectives, and finally an ability to evaluate the effects of different cultural practices on an individual. These components provide a solid foundation for understanding and exploring ethnic differences.

Beyond providing a conceptual definition of culture, it is also important to operationally define this construct. To do this adequately and to truly examine the vast number of factors that are incorporated in the use of this term, Malley-Morrison (2004) suggests the notion of unpacking culture. This concept involves gathering extensive demographic information from participants including ethnicity, the culture with which they identify, the country of their birth, the country of their parent's birth, socioeconomic status, childhood and current religions, education level, acculturation level, length of time in the U.S., and employment status and occupation. In doing so, researchers can examine relationships among these variables as well as their relation to intimate partner violence.

Although they are important to examine, these variables do not fully represent the concept of culture as defined by Locke (1998). Therefore, a necessary additional step in future research is to examine how ideals and beliefs inherent to particular populations may influence perceptions of intimate partner violence and how such cultural values may be correlated with other variables such as acculturation and ethnic identity.

Cultural Perspectives on IPV

Differing perspectives from nations around the world have been examined in an effort to provide a better understanding of how intimate partner violence is conceptualized across cultures (Malley-Morrison, 2004). Results suggest large discrepancies between cultures on what is deemed tolerable versus what is considered abusive. For example, the Family Violence Prevention Fund (1993) found Asian Americans are less likely than Caucasian Americans to define a husband's shoving his wife or "smacking her in the face" as intimate partner violence. In fact, in many Asian languages, there is no term for intimate partner violence (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2005). In addition, Malley-Morrison and Hines (2004) found acts such as burning with a cigarette, throwing things, slapping, and constraining one against one's will were deemed more serious by Caucasian women than Mexican American women. Similar results were found by Torres (1991), who found that, in comparison to women who self identified as Caucasian, those who self identified as Latino were less likely to label behaviors such as biting, slapping, and shoving as abusive when presented with various abusive scenarios until their frequency increased. In addition, a larger proportion of Caucasian women perceived emotional abuse as intimate partner violence compared to Latino women.

Such definitional differences raise the question of what aspect of intimate partner violence has the strongest consequence and thus where interventions should be targeted. For

instance, whether it is the acts themselves or how they are labeled (i.e. abuse versus normative). The decision to label a particular behavior as abusive or violent has important implications that may include reduced help-seeking and failure to disclose. In addition, severe physical and emotional consequences may be contingent upon how specific acts are perceived in terms of their severity and acceptability. For example, incidents resulting in extensive physical injuries may be considered more serious relative to incidents resulting in minor injuries or no physical harm such as a verbal altercation. Alternatively, incidents that are considered more serious may have a stronger psychological impact. Because of this, it is imperative that differing perspectives be examined and understood rather than simply focusing on which acts are associated with which individuals. In addition, in attempting to illuminate varying perspectives on intimate partner violence, it is important to understand values and beliefs which may be culturally-bound and how these values may influence women's perspectives on violence.

Latino cultural values and beliefs. Research has consistently found several values and beliefs to be inherent to Latino cultures (Lopez-Baez, 1999; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). For example, the strong role of extended family is evident in the concept of familism. This concept is one of the most important cultural values in Latino populations and emphasizes the overall needs of the family as superseding those of the individual members while underscoring the reliance on family for emotional, structural, and material support (Vasquez, 1998). This reliance on family may serve as a protective factor against abuse or have the opposite effect. On the one hand, the importance of family as a cohesive unit may deter Latino men from doing anything that may threaten family functioning; however, if violence is perpetrated, many Latino women may feel they are tearing apart their family, the very support system they need the most, by disclosing it. This may lead many to return to an abusive husband

or never disclose the occurrence of abuse. In addition, many issues regarding family are encouraged to be dealt with privately, further reducing the chances of Latino women seeking external help.

The concept of machismo is another important cultural value in Latino cultures. In the positive sense, this concept emphasizes the man as the head of the household and encompasses a nurturing, caring, protective role characterized by courage, pride and obligation to the family. These qualities promote protection against any type of maltreatment within the family, including intimate partner violence (Mayo, 1997; Perilla, 1999; Comas-Diaz, 1995). However, the negative connotations of machismo reflect hypermasculine, chauvinistic, and aggressive behavior by men and suggests that men perceive themselves as having certain rights and privileges that it is their wives' responsibility to fulfill (Anders, 1993; Ingoldsby, 1991; Vasquez, 1998). In addition, the responsibility for maintaining the welfare and honor of the home falls on the man, forcing him to be strong in the face of adversity and to maintain pride at all costs (Leong, Wagner, & Tata, 1995). Women who endorse this view may feel it is their husband's right to perpetrated violence towards them and their responsibility to endure it without complaint (Abalos, 1986). Therefore, women's perceptions of machismo may be relevant to understanding how intimate partner violence is perceived and defined in Latino cultures.

Another important value to consider is marianismo, the female counterpart to machismo. Several researchers have postulated that this concept originated from the Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary and women raised under the tenets of marianismo are encouraged to model their behavior after that of the Virgin Mary (Stevens, 1973). This involves emulating self sacrifice for the sake of family, being spiritually untainted and an exemplar of morality (Boyd-Franklin & Garcia-Preto, 1994). Wives are assumed to be spiritually superior to their husbands and therefore

able to tolerate any suffering inflicted upon them. Many Latino women learn early in their lives that intimate partner violence (or certain behaviors that might be perceived as intimate partner violence by others) is to be expected and tolerated as a sometimes unavoidable part of marriage and that husbands have the right to physically discipline wives while still demanding unconditional loyalty from her (Vasquez & Rosa, 1999). In addition, women learn to depend on men financially and this cycle is perpetuated by raising their daughters with the same principles (Kasturirangan & Williams, 2003).

Several studies have examined how these cultural values may affect incidents of intimate partner violence (Dutton, Orloff, Hass, 2000; Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 20004). For example, Mattson and Ruiz (2005) held focus groups with Latino men and women to identify their beliefs about what triggers intimate partner violence and what role Mexican culture plays in these incidents. Men identified machismo as the leading cause of violence due to incongruent development within the couple in education, socioeconomic status, mutual friendships and manner of thinking which occurred after the couple had immigrated to the U.S. To men, the violence was a means of controlling women's level of power. Despite women's increased freedom with respect to educational attainment and employment, power within the spousal relationship was maintained by the men through violence perpetration. Women also reported machismo as being responsible for intimate partner violence because it promotes the belief that it is women's responsibility to tolerate the abuse rather than attempt to stop it. These responses noted strongly the inequality that exists. In addition, both men and women in the study noted the increased dissonance that occurred when immigration required modification in gender roles, allowing women the opportunity to become primary breadwinners and men to take on more restrictive roles.

Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) conducted focus groups with a small sample of first generation Latino women who had survived incidents of intimate partner violence and sought counseling. Participants endorsed many traditional values, including being raised in households that promoted marianismo-like views such as learning to be a good housekeeper, wife and mother as well as being strong and brave in the face of adversity. In addition, perpetrators were described as dominant, controlling individuals to be catered to, which parallels the negative aspects of machismo. Finally, familial concepts were also noted such as first reaching out to family for assistance rather than any legal service. This study shows the importance of examining such cultural values for not only understanding perceptions of intimate partner violence but also responses including which services may be utilized. One important methodological point to note in this study is the focus on women who had sought outside assistance. Due to the inclusion of such individuals, it is impossible to say whether these results generalize to those who choose not to utilize outside assistance.

Morash, Bui, and Santiago (2000) conducted a qualitative study with 159 women of Mexican descent. They that found physical abuse was reported in 37% of families in which the women indicated that they or their partner had changed gender role expectations. Specifically, these women reported feeling disappointed that their husbands were not performing the expected role of family provider in instances of economic hardship, forcing women to obtain jobs and sometimes to become the primary breadwinner. In addition, abuse was also shown to occur in situations in which extended family members attempted to enforce gender roles or support male dominance. One hypothesis for this occurrence is that such violence was used as a means of "correcting" the reversal of gender roles that took place when women were forced to be the economic providers. The intervention of extended family underscores how strongly these ideals

and values are enforced to maintain not only harmony within the spousal relationship, but also within the family unit as a whole.

Klevens et al. (2007) conducted ten separate focus groups with 77 Mexican American individuals that examined perceived prevalence of intimate partner violence, as well as definitions, causes, and consequences of abuse. Definitions of intimate partner violence included physical aggression such as hitting as well as insults involving humiliation, criticism, control, and a sense of male entitlement. However, no mention of sexual abuse was made. In addition, many individuals attributed perpetuating intimate partner violence to having witnessed or experienced violence as a child, jealousy, stress resulting from financial problems, alcohol or drug use, machismo, and communication problems. Several participants also noted changes in culture as a cause of intimate partner violence. Specifically, some male participants noted the increased freedom many women experience upon immigrating to the U.S. leads them to be less dependent on their partners, creating a discord between her traditional role of caretaker and a new, more egalitarian position. It should be noted that one advantage of this qualitative study over many others is its use of both men and women to examine factors relating to intimate partner violence.

Additionally, other studies have found support for the concepts of machismo and marianismo as antecedents to abuse. Fawcett, Heise, Isita-Espejel and Pick (1999) found that participants born in Mexico typically ascribed intimate partner violence to a lack of education, economic hardship, jealousy, and alcohol use. Male participants were most likely to blame external factors such as stress, alcohol or being driven to it by the wife, taking no internal responsibility for perpetration. Women also placed blame on themselves for provoking the violence by not behaving or appropriately serving their roles in the family, as well as not being

able to make their partners behave; responses which reflect the concept of marianismo. Additionally, Finkler (1997) found that women reported feeling judged if they left their husbands for disrupting the family dynamic and rejecting appropriate social roles, reflecting the downside of familism. Finally, Flores-Ortiz, Valdez, Curiel, and Andrade Palos (2004) found that both male batterers and female victims espoused a greater belief in male superiority and female passivity.

It should be noted that studies conducted in Mexico that have examined origins of violence in intimate partner relationships have found similar results to the above-mentioned studies. Glantz, Halperin, and Hunt (1998) found that the majority of women reported women's violations of traditional gender roles to be the main cause of violence. Taken together, these studies illustrate the ingrained nature of many cultural concepts within Latino populations and how specific gender roles may strongly affect women's decisions to remain in abusive situations despite available resources. In addition, given the importance of these cultural beliefs in Latino culture, it is expected that they may have strong implications for how intimate partner violence is perceived in Latino populations.

Role of Acculturation and Immigration

When examining how culture may affect conceptualizations of intimate partner violence and subsequent decisions to report and receive assistance it is important to examine acculturation. Acculturation has been defined as an overarching process of adjusting to a new culture that involves changes in identification with one's cultural group and the larger society (Berry, 2003). Previous models of acculturation have been one-dimensional in nature, operating under the assumption that individuals abandon values and ideals of their country of origin in order to adopt those of the new, receiving culture. However, more recent studies of acculturation

have adopted a bi-dimensional approach in which retention of the original culture occurs independently from the orientation towards the larger society (Phinney, 2003). During this process, changes to one's own cultural group as well as to the larger society can occur in multiple domains including behavioral practices, identity, and values (Phinney, Horenzczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001).

Studies examining how levels of acculturation may affect incidents of intimate partner violence have provided inconsistent findings. For example, Garcia, Hurwitz, and Kraus (2005) reported that highly Anglo-acculturated Latino women were more likely to report intimate partner violence compared to those who were less acculturated. Similar results were reported by Ingram (2007) who found that rates of abuse among Latinos increased the longer they lived in the U.S. Other researchers have found a negative relationship between level of acculturation and incidents of intimate partner violence. Firestone, Harris, and Vega (2003) found that stress associated with the process of acculturation increased the likelihood of abuse by reducing educational attainment and limiting occupational choices. Incidents were also increased in couples where women who held non-traditional views on gender roles sought greater decision-making power in their relationships, creating somewhat asymmetrical marital relations and deviating from more accepted cultural values.

Further complicating the effect of acculturation on incidents of violence, it seems probable that family members such as children may be at different levels of acculturation from their parents, providing additional challenges to family dynamics. For example, as children begin attending school and learning a new language, they may acculturate more quickly into the dominant culture and begin to deviate from expected roles. The value of familism, which promotes a woman's responsibility to raise children in an appropriate manner, may increase the

likelihood of violence as mothers are blamed for any deviations children exhibit from expected behavior (Flores-Ortiz, 1993). In addition, Caetano, Schafer, Clark, Cunradi, and Raspberry (2000) found that couples with at least one moderately acculturated partner were three times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than couples with two low acculturated partners. Therefore, it seems plausible that the relation between acculturation and violence may be, in part, mediated by whether partners are acculturating at the same rate.

Difficulties may also arise due to power imbalances resulting from women entering the work force and beginning to experience greater economic freedom. Such freedom may threaten existing gender roles, resulting in loss of self-esteem and increasing stress for men who may have difficulty finding a job to support their families. Situations such as these may result in violence in order to vent frustration and correct the imbalance of power (Flores-Ortiz, 1993). Wildsmith (2004) found that many working class Latino women place a high value on domestic roles, which is further reinforced by parents and husbands who discourage women from gaining higher levels of education and career skills. If women are forced into working through the process of immigration, this may begin to erode traditional familial roles and create dissonance. In addition, there is some evidence that behaviors and attitudes associated with strong gender role ideology weaken with increased contact with U.S. mainstream culture (Firestone and Harris, 1994). This may be due to Latino families retaining symbolic allegiance to traditional gender roles but in practice adapting role behaviors as required by the demands of their daily lives. Therefore, role expectations may become less traditional and more flexible as groups become more acculturated. When this occurs, both men and women's perceptions of intimate partner violence may also change. Specific conceptualizations may converge with mainstream ideas of intimate partner violence being unacceptable.

One reason for the inconsistencies in research examining potential relationships between acculturation and levels of intimate partner violence is methodological in nature. As previously noted, many studies have used one dimensional models of acculturation or oversimplified their definitions of acculturation by operationally defining this variable by generation status. This information only indicates where individuals and their ancestors were born, rather than the processes associated with acculturation that may be operating in their lives. Therefore, more comprehensive methods of examining acculturation must be utilized in order to understand the relationship between acculturation and intimate partner violence. One way of doing this is by also assessing individual's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity can be thought of as one aspect of the acculturation process that can be distinguished from other aspects by virtue of its focus on subjective feelings about one's ethnicity (Phinney, 2003). In addition, bidimensional measures must be incorporated to understand this adaptive process in terms of both the original culture and the host culture.

One study that does take a more complex and well-rounded approach to examining the affects of acculturation was done by Harris et al., (2005). These researchers examined the relations between acculturation and gender role ideology and wife abuse for women from different countries of origin (United States versus Mexico). Through the use of multiple measures of acculturation, information was gathered regarding perceived level of acculturation as well as level of acculturation stress. Specifically, six indicators of language preference as well as length of time in the U.S. were examined in the context of a bi-dimensional model of acculturation.

Results indicated that higher levels of acculturation were significantly associated with less reported abuse for Latino individuals born in the U.S. (Harris et al.). In addition, expression

of more traditional gender role attitudes was associated with less reported abuse in all individuals, regardless of country of origin. The researchers postulate that individuals who hold traditional views of gender roles may be less likely to define certain situations as abusive. Alternatively, it may also be plausible that such individuals are less forthcoming with reported incidents of violence, whether they consider them abusive or not. This explanation is consistent with the Latino value of familism which encourages matters to be dealt with privately and not disclosed to those outside of the immediate family. Finally, it may also be the case that violence is not occurring in this sample.

Implications for Intervention and Treatment

Several factors have been found to precede battered women's decisions regarding whether or not to seek help. These include the severity and frequency of violence, the availability of personal resources, and the perceived sense of self worth. In addition, cultural barriers may also prevent some women from seeking assistance. As a whole, Latina victims of intimate partner violence tend to underutilize social service agencies such as shelters, departments of social service, crisis hotline, and mental health services (Gondolf, Fisher, & Mcferron, 1991; Torres, 1991). One possible explanation for this underutilization may be the low level of acculturation many Latino women experience (Lipsky, Caetano, Field, & Larkin, 2006). Language barriers and other difficulties acclimating to mainstream culture in the U.S. could bar women from seeking help. Alternatively, these women may minimize these occurrences and avoid outside assistance in dealing with such incidents, possibly due to fear of reproach from their partner or deportation if they are not in the country legally. In addition to underutilizing existing services, many Latino women do not leave violent relationships, and those who do leave often return to their abusers (Torres, 1991; Dutton, Orloff, & Hass, 2000). Krishnan,

Hilbert, and VanLeeuwen (2001) found Latino women were more likely to report staying with violent partners for longer periods of time (10 or more years) compared to non-Latino women.

A number of explanations have been posed for why this may occur including economic dependence, not wanting to separate children from their father, hoping their partner will eventually change, and love. However, these explanations may not be inherent to Latino women. Other studies have reasoned cultural and language barriers may also play a role (Murdaugh, Hunt, Sowell, & Santana, 2004; West, et al., 1998). A lack of culturally-sensitive services also may play a role. Additionally, studies show many Latino women have poor knowledge of existing services (Klevens, 2007). Consequently, it is important to develop interventions that may aid women who choose to stay or return to abusive situations.

Women who do reach out for assistance typically do so first to a trusted friend or family member (Kelly, 1996). Ocampo, Shelley, and Jaycox (2007) found Latino teens were more likely to seek help from friends in situations of dating violence before turning to adults or seeking formal help. Many Latino women report the main factor in deciding to seek help or leave their abusers is the welfare of their children (Acevedo, 2000). Fear of losing custody of their children, that health care providers and other institutions are blind to intimate partner violence, or that they will be discriminated against have all been listed as barriers to treatment for Latino women (Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; Dutton et al., 2000).

Specific Aims

This study explored the relation between cultural values and Latina women's perceptions of intimate partner violence. Due to the fast paced growth of Latino communities in the U.S., it is becoming increasingly clear that a need exists for services geared specifically to culturally unique subsets of the population. Better understanding of women's subjective experiences as

well as specific cultural components that may be associated with these experiences is needed. Providing culturally specific interpretations of what defines intimate partner violence may assist in developing programs targeted to assisting individuals who hold such views. This would challenge existing practices of implementing programs that are non-culturally specific and could assist in removing barriers many Latino women encounter when attempting to seek assistance in intimate partner violence situations.

Although previous models of intimate partner violence have emphasized the need to understand the development of perceptions of violence when examining etiology, such models have failed to recognize the role cultural components may also play, in particular the bi-dimensional process of acculturation and sociodemographic variables. In addition, the question of whether particular cultural values are the mechanism through which these factors affect women's perceptions of IPV (serve as mediators) or whether such values may modify women's perceptions of violence (serve as moderators) has not been addressed. In addition, previous studies have also indicated women's perceptions may impact the relationship between intimate partner violence exposure and emotional outcomes (O'Neil & Kerig, 2000). However, again this relationship has not been examined in the context of specific cultural factors. Therefore, the goals of the present study were to examine an integrative model that incorporated all of these components and to explore the specific function of cultural values to better understand the demographic and risk factor profile of Latino victims of intimate partner violence. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested.

   Hypotheses.

1. Cultural values would mediate the relationship between acculturation/ethnic identity and perceptions of intimate partner violence.
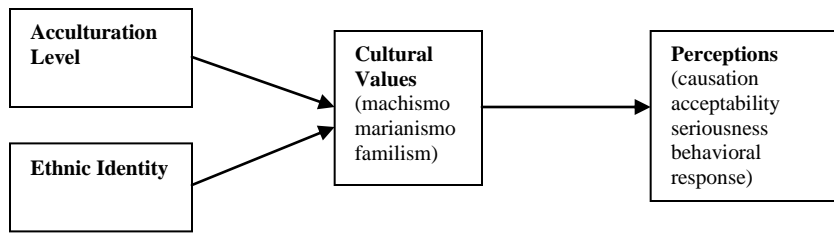
Figure 1. Hypothesis one mediation model

a. Women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was caused by a violation of gender roles. In contrast, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of marianismo and machismo values, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was not caused by a violation of gender roles.

b. Women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo, which in turn would predict the perception that male perpetration of violence was more acceptable, and that violence was less serious. In contrast, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of marianismo and machismo values, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was less acceptable and more serious.

c. Women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of familism, which in turn would be related to a lower likelihood of recommending that women seek help outside the family in response to violence. In addition, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of familism, which in turn would predict the perception that it was appropriate to seek help outside the family in response to violence.

2. Cultural values (machismo, marianismo, familism) would moderate the relationship

between intimate partner violence exposure and perceptions of violence.
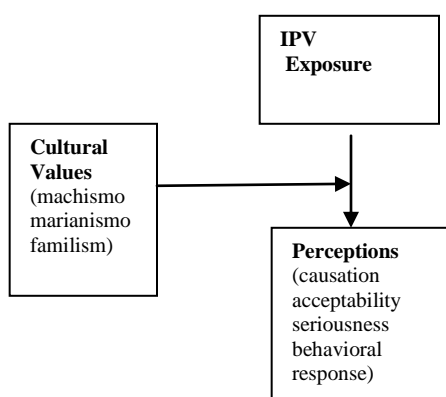
Figure 2. Hypothesis two moderation model

    a. Women endorsing higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo would

        exhibit a stronger positive association between IPV exposure and the perception

        that aggression was caused by a violation in gender roles compared to women

        who endorsed lower levels of these values.

    b. Women endorsing higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo would

        exhibit a stronger positive association between IPV exposure and the perception

        of acceptability and a stronger negative association between IPV exposure and the

        perception of seriousness of aggression compared to women who endorsed lower

        levels of these values.

    c. Women endorsing higher levels of familism would exhibit a stronger negative

        association between IPV exposure and the perception of seeking help outside the

        family in response to violence.

3. Cultural values (machismo, marianismo, familism) would moderate the relationship

between intimate partner violence exposure and emotional outcomes.

a. Women who endorsed higher levels of machismo, marianismo, and familism would exhibit a stronger negative association between IPV exposure and psychological maladjustment. Women who endorsed lower levels of these values would exhibit a stronger positive association between IPV exposure and psychological maladjustment.

Method

Procedure

Eight-five Latino women were recruited from area Catholic schools. One limitation of many studies examining factors associated with intimate partner violence is their use of shelter samples. Therefore, victims who have not accessed these services tend to be underrepresented in the literature. In addition, previous literature has indicated Latino women are less likely to seek services for intimate partner violence. Therefore, recruitment from community agencies addressed both of these concerns.

Area elementary and middle schools were contacted, informed of the study and asked to participate. Schools sent a letter to parents of children between 9 and 14 informing them of the purpose of the study. Those interested in participating were contacted to schedule a time for their participation. All participants were given the option of taking the interview and completing all measures in Spanish or English as well as completing the study on site where recruitment took place or at a lab on the university campus. Participation included completion of a series of Likert-scaled instruments and a demographic questionnaire as well as a semi-structured interview involving two hypothetical vignettes.

All materials for the proposed study were translated into Spanish and then back translated into English by two research assistants who were fluent in Spanish. In addition, due to the

sensitive nature of the information gathered, the semi-structured interview was pilot tested to ensure items were worded appropriately.

Measures

Intimate partner violence. The Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) is a 78-item, widely used and accepted measure to assess intimate partner violence. The CTS2 asks respondents to think of situations in the past year that resulted in disagreement or anger with their spouses or partners and to indicate how often they or their partners engaged in each of the acts on a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (more than 20 times). The CTS2 utilizes five subscales: physical aggression, psychological aggression, negotiation, injury, and sexual coercion.

Researchers indicate the CTS2 reliably discriminates violent relationships from nonviolent relationships (Clements & Sawhney, 2000; Marshall, 1992; Rodenberg & Fantuzzo, 1993). In addition, the CTS2 has been used with several Hispanic and Latino populations to assess for violent relationships (Jasinski, 1998; West, Kantor, & Jasinski, 1998). In the present study, overall mean scores were computed for perpetration (CTS2-P) and victimization (CTS2-V), across the following domains: psychological aggression ("I insulted or swore at my partner"), physical aggression (I twisted my partner's arm or hair"), and injury (I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight"). Both scales indicated moderate internal consistency (CTS2-P: $\alpha = .71$ and CTS2-V: $\alpha = .85$).

Acculturation level. The Acculturation Rating Scale of Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II; Cueller, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995), is a 30-item assessment used to measure the acculturation process by examining behavioral ("I enjoy reading books in Spanish", "I enjoy reading books in English") and attitudinal preferences ("I like to identify myself as a Latino", "I

like to identify myself as an Anglo American"). Although developed primarily for persons of Mexican ancestry, the ARSMA-II has been used with other Latino and Hispanic subgroups (Garcia, Hurwitz, & Kraus, 2005). This instrument consists of two subscales: the Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS) and Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS). Both subscales were found to have good internal reliability in the present sample (MOS: $\alpha = .91$ and AOS: $\alpha = .89$ respectively).

Familism. The Familism Scale (FS; Lugo Steidel & Contreras, 2003) is an 18-item questionnaire that assessed several components of familism: family comes before the individual ("Children below 18 should give almost all of their earnings to their parents"), familial interconnectedness ("A person should cherish the time they spend with his or her relatives"), familial reciprocity in times of need ("A person should always support members of the extended family, for example aunts, uncles, and in-laws, if they are in need, even if it is a big sacrifice"), and familial honor ("A person should feel ashamed if something he or she does dishonors the family name"). One advantage of this scale is its use of a 10-point Likert scale. Previous research with Latino populations have recommended a wide range of response options due to the extreme response style of many Latino individuals (Marin, Gamba, & Marin, 1992). In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was found to be .84.

Ethnic identity. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) is a 20-item measure, which examines aspects of ethnic identification, ethnic practices, and belonging. Respondents are asked to indicate how they feel about or react to their ethnicity or their ethnic group. Sample items include "I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group such as history, traditions, and customs" and "In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my culture". Items are responded to

on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Good internal

consistency for the current study was found (α = .82).

Psychological maladjustment. The Symptom Checklist 90 Revised (SCL-90-R:

Derogatis & Savitz, 1999) is a 90-item self-report measure of psychopathology. Items are rated

on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely) with higher scores indicating greater frequency of

symptoms. The SCL-90-R is interpreted in the context of nine symptom dimensions including

somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility,

phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. For the purposes of the current study, only

two of these dimensions were utilized, depression ("feeling inferior to others") and anxiety

("worrying too much about things"). Therefore, participants completed a 38-item version of the

SCL-90-R. High internal consistency for the current study was found (α = .92).

Machismo. The Machismo Measure (MM; Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Black & Tracey,

2008) is a 20-item survey that was used to examine the Latino cultural concept of machismo.

The Machismo Measure included two subscales reflecting positive components of machismo

referred to as caballerismo ("men must exhibit fairness in all situations") and negative

components referred to as traditional machismo ("men are superior to women"). Items are

measured on a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly

agree). Previous research found moderate to good internal consistency using a sample of

Mexican American males (caballerismo: α = .71 and traditional machismo: α = .84; Arciniega,

Anderson, Tovar-Black, & Tracey, 2008); however, in the present sample, internal consistencies

across the two components were considerably lower (Caballerismo: α = .56 and Traditional

Machismo: α = .72). Therefore, only the traditional machismo subscale was used in subsequent

analyses.

Marianismo. The Latino Values Scale Revised (LVSR; Marano-Rivera, 2000) is a 28-item self-report measure of the Latino concept of marianismo. This survey uses a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to examine the endorsement of this concept. Sample items included "I often feel inferior in comparison to men" and "I find myself putting others' needs in front of my own". For the purposes of the present study two items pertaining to sexual behaviors were not utilized. This measure demonstrated good internal consistency with the present sample, $\alpha = .80$.

Justifiability of aggression in romantic relationships. The Attitudes About Dating Inventory (ADI; Foo & Margolin, 1995) is a 24-item measure that asks respondents about the justifiability of specific aggressive acts ("he/she comes at her/him with a knife", "he/she makes her/him look like a fool in front of her/his family and friends") by a woman/man towards their dating partner from 1 (Unjustifiable) to 7 (Justifiable). This measure demonstrated good internal consistency with the present sample, $\alpha = .95$. Given the high correlations between subscales ($r = .87$), a composite score was computed for the overall justifiability of dating aggression.

Aggression beliefs. The Normative Beliefs About Aggression Scale (NOBAGS; Huesmann, Guerra, Miller, & Zelli, 1992) is a 20-item scale that measures attitudes regarding aggressive behavior both under a variety of conditions of provocation and when no conditions are specified from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The General Beliefs subscale was utilized for the present study. This subscale consists of eight items that measure overall beliefs concerning the acceptability of aggression. Sample items include "In general, it is wrong to hit other people" and "It is usually ok to push or shove other people around if you're mad". This measure demonstrated moderate internal consistency with the current sample ($\alpha = .78$).

Demographic information. This questionnaire was created specifically for the proposed study to collect demographic information such as age, marital status, number of children, education level, employment status, religion with which they identify, household income, and whether they had ever sought assistance following a violent incident with their partner and if so, where. In addition, participants' were asked several questions regarding their cultural background such as ethnicity with which they identify, the country of their birth, the country of their parents' birth, country they were raised, and length of time in the U.S.

Vignettes. See Appendix H for complete vignettes. Vignettes were used to assess participants' perceptions of violence in order to provide a realistic context that could offer potential motives and justifications for aggressive behavior. Participants viewed two vignettes adapted from previous studies examining perceptions of intimate partner violence (Lane & Knowles, 2000). Both vignettes involved an argument between a man and a woman, witnessed by their child, which escalated into a physical dispute. In the first vignette, a husband and wife argue over who would prepare dinner and this leads to each pushing the other. In the second vignette, a husband and wife argue over helping their child with his/her homework and this leads to the husband slapping his wife, the wife slapping him back, the husband shoving his wife, and the wife throwing a glass at her husband. At the end of each vignette is a statement indicating that a child has witnessed the altercation.

This approach utilized aspects of qualitative research, allowing participants' own ideas to be examined without preconceived notions regarding intimate partner violence interfering. Interviews followed a semi-structured format with questions created prior based on deductive taxonomies of interest (acceptability, causation, seriousness, and behavioral response).

Acceptability and seriousness were assessed using two 7-point Likert Scales. Causation and behavioral response were assessed through open-ended questions.

A coding scheme for women's responses was developed utilizing a qualitative content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method used inductive reasoning, which allowed for themes and categories to emerge from data rather than relying on previous research or theory to derive codes. Such an approach is used in grounded theory development. Through a two-step process, a sample of the interviews was read and women's responses to each question were sorted into classes identifying the primary themes that emerged. Then based on the initial themes, a subset of interviews was coded by two independent raters to assess for overall fit. Once all necessary codes had been determined and refined, the remaining responses were coded. A second rater for reliability purposes coded one-third of all responses. High consistency was found across raters for each type of perception (causation: kappa = .87 and behavioral response: kappa = .87 respectively).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Women's ages ranged from 25 to 60 with an average age of 37. The majority (75%) reported being born in Mexico, while 14% reported being born in the United States. Additional countries of origin included Puerto Rico (2%), Nicaragua (2%), Honduras, Peru, Santa Domingo, and the Dominican Republic (7% collectively). Just over half of all women (54%) reported having lived the majority of their life in Mexico (see Table 1). On average, the women in this study had lived in the U.S. for 19 years.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Country	Country Born	Country Raised	Mother's Country of Origin	Father's Country of Origin	Country lived in Majority of Life
Mexico	63	56	70	67	45 (5)[a]
United States	12	20	4	7	30
Puerto Rico	2	2	3	3	1[b]
Nicaragua	2	2	2	2	2
Honduras	1	1	1	1	0
Peru	1	0	1	1	0
Santa Domingo	1	0	1	1	0
Dominican Republic	1	1	1	1	1

[a] indicated half of life was lived in Mexico and half lived in USA
[b] indicated half of life was lived in Puerto Rico and half lived in USA

The relation between women's country of origin and country where they were raised with their acculturation and endorsement of traditional Latino values was explored with a series of ANOVAs (see Table 2). With respect to acculturation level, women who were born in the U.S. reported significantly greater acculturation towards Anglo culture than those born in Mexico or Nicaragua, and women born in Mexico reported significantly greater acculturation towards Latino culture than those born in the U.S Similarly, women raised in the U.S. reported significantly greater acculturation towards Anglo culture compared to women who were born in Mexico, and women raised in Mexico reported significantly greater acculturation towards Latino culture compared to women raised in the U.S.

Women who were born in Mexico endorsed significantly higher levels of familism than those born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico, and those who were raised in Mexico endorsed higher

rates of familism than those raised in Puerto Rico. No differences in endorsement of machismo or marianismo were found across groups.

Table 2

Group Differences by Country Born and Country Raised

	Country Born	
	Mexico	U.S.
Anglo Acculturation	M=2.58*** SD = .70	M=4.10 SD = .54
Latino Acculturation	M=4.42 SD = .46	M=3.53 SD = .86
Traditional Machismo	M=1.59 SD=.80	M=1.48 SD=.71
Marianismo	M=3.16 SD = .50	M=2.98 SD = .62
Familism	M= 7.82 SD=1.03	M = 6.91* SD=1.12
	Country Raised	
	Mexico	U.S.
Anglo Acculturation	M=2.69* SD = .77	M=3.36 SD = 1.03
Latino Acculturation	M=4.46 SD = .40	M=3.73*** SD = .90
Traditional Machismo	M=1.53 SD=.74	M=1.70 SD=.92
Marianismo	M=3.10 SD = .54	M=3.20 SD = .49
Familism	M= 7.76 SD=.91	M = 7.29 SD=1.48

$*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.$

The relation between time spent in the U.S. with acculturation level and endorsement of values was examined through a set of correlations. More time spent in the U.S. was significantly associated with greater acculturation towards Anglo culture ($r = .66$, $p < .001$) and decreased acculturation towards Latino culture ($r = -.55$, $p < .001$). A weaker negative association was found between time spent in the U.S, and endorsement of familism ($r = -.21$, $p = .07$). No

significant association was found between time spent in the U.S. and endorsement of machismo and marianismo. It should be noted that these values reflect traditional views of male and female sex roles more broadly and therefore may be less affected by time spent in the U.S.

Fifty-eight percent of the women in the sample reported being married, while 16% were single and 14% were living with a partner. On average, women in this study had two children and had received approximately 10 years of education. Average household income was $18,750 and slightly more than half of the women (54%) were currently employed. The majority of the sample identified as Catholic (87%).

Help-seeking behavior. Thirty-one percent of the sample reported having sought help after a verbal or physical altercation with their spouse. Of these individuals, the majority indicated seeking help from a friend or family member outside the home (48%). Women who reported seeking help reported a higher level of intimate partner violence victimization (CTS2-V; $t (28) = -2.73, p < .05$). Despite previous findings to the contrary (Ingram, 2007), being a victim of intimate partner violence (CTS2-V) was not significantly correlated with length of time in the United States ($r = .02, p > .05$), education level ($r = -.15, p > .05$), age ($r = .01, p > .05$) or number of children ($r = .04, p > .05$). Perpetrating intimate partner violence (CTS2-P) was marginally significantly correlated with age ($r = -.22, p = .05$).

Correlations among constructs

Correlations were computed to examine the nature of the relationships between indicators of each of the constructs of interest: acculturation level, ethnic identity, cultural values, intimate partner violence, beliefs about violence, and psychological maladjustment (Table 3). First, measures of acculturation were moderately correlated with women more strongly acculturated to Latino culture indicating less acculturation towards Anglo culture as well as a stronger sense of

ethnic identity. Ethnic identity and acculturation towards Anglo culture were not significantly correlated. Variables capturing different aspects of cultural values were significantly correlated. Greater endorsement of marianismo was correlated with greater endorsement of both familism and traditional machismo; however, familism and traditional machismo were not correlated.

Regarding measures of aggressive beliefs, beliefs regarding the justifiability of dating aggression were moderately correlated with general beliefs concerning the acceptability of violence, intimate partner violence victimization, and psychological maladjustment. The majority of women endorsed extremely low levels of psychological maladjustment.

Table 3

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Variables of Interest

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Ethnic Identity	-	-.07	.35**	.23*	.02	.04	.03	.06	-.09	-.04	.04
2. Anglo Acculturation		-	-.40**	-.31**	-.18	-.16	.06	.09	-.04	.00	-.02
3. Latino Acculturation			-	.42**	.06	.02	.06	-.14	.06	.02	-.01
4. Familism				-	.08	.30**	-.05	-.01	-.01	.01	.01
5. Traditional Machismo					-	.23*	-.05	.03	.10	.02	.00
6. Marianismo						-	.06	.15	.06	.07	.36**
7. Intimate Partner Violence Victimization							-	.41**	.39**	.45**	.48**
8. Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration								-	.17	.24	.28*
9. General Aggression Beliefs									-	.24*	.21
10. Dating Aggression Beliefs											.38**
11. Psychological Maladjustment											-
Mean	3.22	2.85	4.24	7.59	1.55	3.11	0.27	0.27	1.14	1.47	0.52
Std Dev	0.49	0.86	0.65	1.09	0.75	0.51	0.43	0.52	0.35	0.87	0.52

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Responses to Vignettes

Women's perceptions of the acceptability and seriousness of aggression were significantly associated ($r = .45$, $r = .30$, $p's < .001$, respectively) and therefore were combined for subsequent analyses. Across the two vignettes, women perceived aggression in the first situation to be slightly more acceptable (M=1.30) and less serious (M= 5.83) relative to the second (acceptability: M=1.23; seriousness: M=6.70). Women perceived male-perpetrated aggression to be less acceptable (M=1.04) than female-perpetrated aggression (M=1.54).

Women's perceptions of the cause of aggression and their subsequent reactions, responses varied across the vignettes. Therefore, analyses were completed separately for each. Across situations, the most common perceived cause of aggression was a violation in gender roles, with approximately one third of women endorsing this perception in the first vignette relative to over half in the second. Less common responses (13% and 8% respectively) were those in which the cause was attributed to anger without further elaboration. Notable variability in responses across the vignettes was found. For example, over a quarter of women indicated causation to be due to an individual attempting to continue a conversation in the first vignette; however, this perception was not endorsed at all in the second. In response to the question about how they would respond in the situation, the majority of women indicated they would try to resolve the disagreement. Less common responses were not fulfilling the original obligation of making dinner or ending the relationship in the first vignette and fulfilling the original obligation of helping the child with their homework or continuing the argument in the second vignette (each were endorsed 1% of the time). Again, behavioral response perceptions varied extensively across situations. Tables 4 and 5 reflect for each vignette, the percentage of women who endorsed each type of perception, the code title, and a sample response that received this code.

Hypothesis One: Cultural Values as Mediators

Table 4

Perceptions of the Cause of Violence by Vignette

Endorsed		Code	Sample Response
V1	**V2**		
28%	54%	Not Fulfilling Obligation/Gender Roles	Because dinner wasn't ready and he's the man and you're serving when I say.
26%	0%	To Continue Conversation	Because he felt like she walked away while he was talking and he wasn't done with her.
24%	29%	Provocation	Because she said he was acting like a child.
13%	8%	Anger	Because he was angry.
10%	10%	Other	Maybe just because she just had a rough day.
0%	0%	Retaliation	She was getting revenge.
0%	0%	Self Defense	He was trying to get her off him.

Table 5

Coded Responses for Perceptions of Behavioral Responses by Vignette

Endorsed		Code	Sample Response
V1	V2		
40	34	Resolve Disagreement	Hopefully they're both calm down and apologize to each other.
13	1	Fulfill Original Promise/Obligation	Probably go cook dinner
10	6	Reciprocate Aggression	She may hit him back.
8	8	Withdrawal	Probably just walk away
5 0 3	15 0 12	Help Seeking Outside Family Within the Family Not Specified	Go talk with someone, pastor, counselor or something. Maybe get friends or family involved. Get help.
7	15	Other	They are going to have problems.
5	3	Reassure Child/Explain Conflict	Explain it to Kenya
4	1	Continue Argument	Argue back and forth with him.
2	0	Nothing	She won't do anything.
2	0	Emote	Cry
1	6	End Relationship	Probably move out or get divorced
1	0	Not fulfill Original Promise/Obligation	Tell him to cook his own stuff.
0	0	Deal with Injury	Get her face clean.

Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1a stated that women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was caused by a violation of gender roles.

In contrast, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of marianismo and machismo values, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was not caused by a violation of gender roles.

As can be seen in the correlation matrix of Table 3, acculturation towards Latino culture (MOS) was not significantly associated with endorsement of traditional machismo (TM: $r =.06$, $p > .05$) or marianismo (LVSR: $r = .02$, $p > .05$); similarly, ethnic identity was not significantly associated with these values (TM: $r =.02$, $p > .05$; LVSR: $r = .04$, $p > .05$). Thus, the first part of the mediational pathway was not supported.

To examine whether women reporting different causes of aggressive behavior differed in their endorsement of cultural values and acculturation levels, a series of ANOVAS were completed. Cultural values (marianismo, machismo, and familism), and acculturation (MOS and AOS) entered as dependent variables and cause of aggression entered as the independent variable. With respect to causation in the first vignette, findings revealed a significant difference in women's reported endorsement of familism, marianismo, and acculturation towards Anglo culture. Women who perceived the cause of the conflict to be due to a violation in gender roles endorsed higher levels of familism and less acculturation towards Anglo culture compared to women who perceived the cause to be due to the husband attempting to continue a conversation with his wife. In addition, women who perceived the cause of the conflict to be due to a violation in gender roles endorsed higher levels of marianismo compared to women who perceived the cause to be due to another response such as having a rough day or being tired. No significant differences were found across perceptions of causation in terms of endorsement of machismo or greater acculturation towards Latino culture. See Table 6 for additional information.

Table 6

Group Differences by Perceived Cause of Aggression in Vignette One

| | Perception of Cause of Aggression | | | | |
	Anger	Provocation	Parent Behavior	Continue the Conversation	Other
Anglo Acculturation	M=3.02 SD =1.14	M=2.80 SD =.76	M=2.51[1] SD =.70	**M=3.20 SD =.93**	M=2.98 SD =.70
Latino Acculturation	M=4.46 SD =.41	M=4.40 SD =.48	M=4.25 SD =.54	M=3.99 SD =.90	M=4.18 SD =.80
Traditional Machismo	M=1.65 SD =.62	M=1.47 SD =.70	M=1.82 SD =.87	M=1.45 SD =.84	M=1.27 SD =.43
Marianismo	M=3.09 SD =.55	M=3.12 SD =.52	**M=3.25 SD =.43**	M=3.13 SD =.47	M=2.60[2] SD =.61
Familism	M=7.85 SD =.87	M=7.73 SD =.89	**M=8.01 SD =1.25**	M=7.08[3] SD =.90	M=7.06 SD =1.26

Note. Bolded scores reflect the higher of the two scores in the significant difference relationship
[1] p = .06; [2,3] p < .05

With respect to perceptions of causation in the second vignette, no significant differences were found in terms of endorsement of cultural values or acculturation level.

Hypothesis 1b. Hypothesis 1b stated that women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of the values of marianismo and machismo, which in turn would predict the perception that male perpetration of violence was more acceptable and that violence was less serious. In contrast, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of marianismo and machismo values, which in turn would predict the perception that violence was less acceptable and more serious.

Since acculturation was not correlated with the cultural values, all variables (AOS, MOS, EI, TM, and LVSR) were examined simultaneously in a regression equation as potential predictors of the perception of acceptability; however, given that acceptability ratings for male-perpetrated and female-perpetrated aggression were not significantly associated, separated analyses were completed for each. The regression model including all predictors (traditional

machismo (TM), marianismo (LVSR), acculturation towards Anglo culture (AOS), acculturation towards Latino culture (MOS), and ethnic identity (EI)) was not significant for the acceptability of either male-perpetrated violence, $F(5,66) = 1.56$, $p > .05$, or female-perpetrated violence, $F(5,66) = 0.05$, $p > .05$.

All variables (AOS, MOS, EI, TM, and LVSR) were examined simultaneously in a regression equation as potential predictors of the perception of seriousness. The full model containing all predictors was not significant, $F(5,65) = 1.97$, $p > .05$; however, when examining the variables individually, a significant effect for endorsement of traditional machismo was found. That is, women who highly endorsed traditional machismo were more likely to perceive the violence as less serious ($\beta = -.24$, $p < .05$).

Additional exploratory analyses were conducted to explore alternative predictors of seriousness ratings. Specifically, women's perceptions of the justifiability violence in romantic relationships (ADI), perceptions of acceptability of male and female-perpetrated violence (ratings taken from the vignettes) as well as general beliefs about the use of aggression (NOBAGS) were examined in a regression analysis. The full model containing all predictors was significant, $F(4,63) = 4.68$, $p < .01$. Only one variable had a significant unique effect, however: women who endorsed male-perpetrated violence in the vignette as less acceptable were more likely to perceive the violence as serious (See Table 7).

Table 7

Attitudes of Dating Violence, General Aggression, Acceptability Ratings, and Seriousness

		Seriousness of Violence		
Variable	R^2	F	β	T
Step 1: Justifiability of Dating Aggression (ADI)	.23	4.68**	.16	1.25
General Beliefs About Use of Aggression (NOBAGS)			.04	.36
Female Violence Acceptability Ratings			-.19	-1.47
Male Violence Acceptability Ratings			-.41	-3.62***

** $p < .01.$ *** $p < .001.$

Hypothesis 1c. Hypothesis 1c stated that women highly acculturated to Latino culture would endorse higher levels of familism, which in turn would be related to a lower likelihood of recommending that women seek help outside the family in response to violence. In addition, women highly acculturated to Anglo culture would endorse lower levels of familism, which in turn would predict the perception that it was appropriate to seek help outside the family in response to violence.

Since acculturation was not correlated with familism, to examine whether women reporting different behavioral responses to aggressive behavior differed in their endorsement of cultural values and acculturation levels, a series of ANOVAS were completed. Cultural values (marianismo, machismo, and familism) and acculturation (MOS and AOS) were entered as dependent variables and behavioral response entered as the independent variable. Given that several perceptions had relatively low frequencies, several codes were combined to create four new codes based on conceptual similarities. Table 8 reflects the breakdown for the new codes by vignette.

Table 8

Coded Responses for Collapsed Perceptions of Behavioral Responses by Vignette

Endorsed V1	V2	New Code	Codes Combined
53	35	Active Resolution of Conflict	Resolve Disagreement Fulfill Original Promise/Obligation
14	7	Continue Conflict	Reciprocate Aggression Continue Argument
17	11	Passive Resolution of Conflict	Nothing Withdrawal Emote Not Fulfill Original Promise/Obligation Reassure Child/Explain Conflict
9	33	Change Relationship	Help Seeking End Relationship
7	15	Other	They are going to have problems

With respect to mother's behavioral response in the first vignette, findings revealed a significant difference in women's reported endorsement of familism. Women who perceived women would change their relationship status through either seeking help or ending it endorsed higher levels of familism compared to women who perceived women would respond in a vaguer manner, such as referencing possible future problems. No significant differences were found in terms of endorsement of marianismo or machismo or acculturation level. See Table 9 for additional information.

Table 9

Group Differences by Perceived Behavioral Response in Vignette One

| | Perception of Behavioral Response | | | | |
	Actively Resolve	Continue Argument	Passively Resolve	Change Relationship Status	Other
Anglo Acculturation	M=2.78 SD =.88	M=2.84 SD =.88	M=3.33 SD =.95	M=2.59 SD =.63	M=2.73 SD =.76
Latino Acculturation	M=4.36 SD =.54	M=4.33 SD =.49	M=3.96 SD =.87	M=4.26 SD =.63	M=3.81 SD =1.01
Traditional Machismo	M=1.68 SD =.79	M=1.50 SD =.42	M=1.30 SD =.75	M=1.43 SD =.88	M=1.63 SD =1.01
Marianismo	M=3.05 SD =.57	M=3.28 SD =.42	M=3.05 SD =.45	M=3.06 SD =.70	M=3.24 SD =.28
Familism	M=7.72 SD =.95	M=7.59 SD =.92	M=7.25 SD =1.35	**M=8.35** **SD =.79**	M=6.46[1] SD =1.25

Note. Bolded scores reflect the higher of the two scores in the significant difference relationship

[1] $p < .05$

With respect to perceptions of behavioral response in the second vignette, findings revealed a significant difference in women's reported endorsement of familism and acculturation. Women who perceived women would actively resolve the conflict endorsed higher levels of familism as well as greater acculturation towards Latino culture and weaker acculturation towards Anglo culture compared to women who perceived women would passively resolve the conflict. In addition, women who perceived women would actively continue the conflict endorsed greater acculturation towards Anglo culture compared to women who perceived women would actively resolve the conflict or change their relationship through either seeking help or ending it. Finally, women who perceived women to change their relationship through either seeking help or ending it endorsed greater acculturation towards Latino culture compared to women who perceived they would passively resolve the conflict. See Table 10 for additional information.

Table 10

Group Differences by Perceived Behavioral Response in Vignette Two

| | Perception of Behavioral Response | | | | |
	Actively Resolve	Continue Argument	Passively Resolve	Change Relationship Status	Other
Anglo Acculturation	M=2.63[1] [3] SD =.79	**M=4.08 SD =1.18**	**M=3.45 SD =1.00**	M=2.75[2] SD =.76	M=2.84 SD =.60
Latino Acculturation	**M=4.30 SD =.51**	M=4.45 SD =.61	M=3.57[4] [5] SD =.91	**M=4.40 SD =.58**	M=4.26 SD =.71
Traditional Machismo	M=1.69 SD =.74	M=1.34 SD =.26	M=1.24 SD =.36	M=1.54 SD =.99	M=1.56 SD =.54
Marianismo	M=3.14 SD =.54	M=2.92 SD =.98	M=3.06 SD =.45	M=3.01 SD =.52	M=3.28 SD =.37
Familism	**M=7.91 SD =.88**	M=7.22 SD =.95	M=6.64[6] SD =1.26	M=7.64 SD =1.06	M=7.47 SD =1.27

Note. Bolded scores reflect the higher of the two scores in the significant difference relationship

[1][2][4][5][6] $p < .05;$ [3]$p = .06$

Hypothesis Two & Three: Cultural Values as Moderators

Moderation analyses were conducted to examine potential relationships between endorsement of cultural values (traditional machismo (TM), marianismo (LVSR), and familism (FS)), intimate partner violence (CTS2-V and CTS2-P), beliefs regarding acceptability and seriousness of violence, and psychological maladjustment (SCLR).

First, moderation analyses were completed to examine whether endorsement of cultural values moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence and beliefs regarding acceptability. In each regression, centered variables were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by their interaction in the second step. In the regression, CTS2-P and LVSR were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by the interaction term (CTS2-P x LVSR) in the second step. Endorsement of mariansimo (LVSR) moderated the relationship between intimate

partner violence perpetration and beliefs regarding acceptability of female-perpetrated violence

($\beta = -.57$, $p < .001$) but not male-perpetrated violence ($\beta = -.03$, $p > .05$) (See Table 11).

Table 11

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Marianismo, and Acceptability of Female-Perpetrated Violence

Variable	R^2	F	β	T
		Acceptability of Violence		
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.05	1.85	.21	1.80
Marianismo (LVSR)			.05	.40
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.17	5.04**	.66	3.79***
Marianismo (LVSR)			-.06	-.49
CTS2-P x LVSR			-.57	-3.31***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To decompose this interaction, separate hierarchical multiple regressions were computed for high (1/2 sd above the mean) and low (1/2 sd below the mean) levels of the moderator. Findings indicated that for women who endorsed higher levels of marianismo, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with less acceptance of female-perpetrated violence ($\beta = -.10$). Alternatively, when endorsement of marianismo was weaker, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with greater acceptance of female-perpetrated violence ($\beta = .07$).

Figure 3. Impact of intimate partner violence perpetration on the relationship between women's endorsement of marianismo and acceptability of female-perpetrated aggression.

Endorsement of marianismo (LVSR) did not moderate the relationship between intimate partner violence victimization and beliefs regarding the acceptability of female-perpetrated ($\beta = -.02$, $p > .05$) and male-perpetrated violence ($\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$). In addition, marianismo did not significantly predict beliefs regarding acceptability.

In the next regression, IPV perpetration and traditional machimso (CTS2-P and TM) were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by their interaction term (CTS2-P x TM) in the second step. Endorsement of traditional machismo (TM) moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence perpetration and beliefs regarding acceptability of female-perpetrated violence ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .05$) but not male-perpetrated violence ($\beta = -.003$, $p > .05$). See Table 12.

Table 12

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Machismo, and Acceptability of Female-Perpetrated Violence

		Acceptability of Violence		
Variable	R^2	F	β	T
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.06	2.42	.24	2.09*
Traditional Machismo (TM)			.04	.35
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.13	3.72*	.43	3.18**
Traditional Machismo (TM)			-.02	-.14
CTS2-P x TM			-.33	-2.45*

* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$ *** $p < .001.$

To decompose this interaction, separate hierarchical multiple regressions were computed for high (1/2 sd above the mean) and low (1/2 sd below the mean) levels of the moderator. These analyses showed that women who were low on machismo exhibited a strong positive association between engaging in intimate partner violence and acceptance of female-perpetrated aggression ($\beta = .54$), whereas women who endorsed high levels of machismo exhibited a small positive relationship between engaging in partner aggression and acceptance of female-perpetrated aggression ($\beta = .07$).
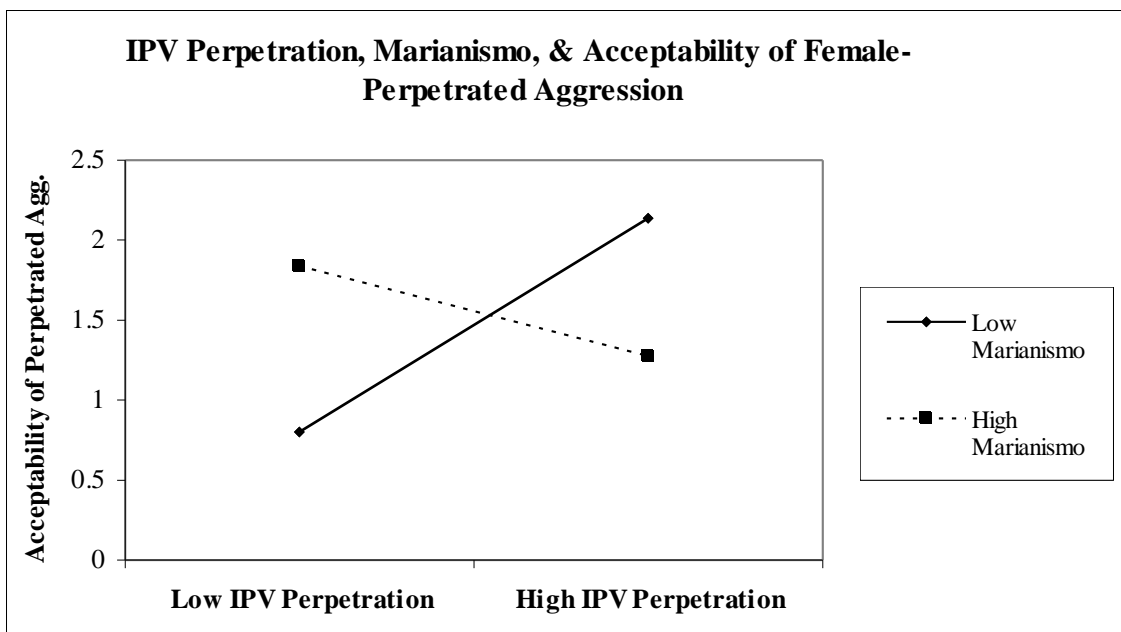
Figure 4. Impact of intimate partner violence perpetration on the relationship between women's endorsement of traditional machismo and acceptability of female-perpetrated aggression.

Endorsement of traditional machismo (TM) did not moderate the relationship between intimate partner violence victimization and beliefs regarding the acceptability of female-perpetrated (β = -.05, *p* >.05) or male-perpetrated violence (β = .04, *p* >.05). Endorsement of familism (FS) also did not moderate the relationship between intimate partner violence and beliefs regarding the acceptability of female and male-perpetrated violence. In addition, familism did not significantly predict beliefs regarding acceptability.

Next, moderation analyses were completed to examine whether endorsement of the same cultural values moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence and perceptions of the seriousness of violence. In each regression, centered variables were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by the interaction term in the second step. Endorsement of traditional machismo did not moderate the relationship between intimate partner violence and perceptions

of the seriousness of violence; however, it did significantly predict beliefs regarding seriousness (β = -.24, p < .05). Endorsement of marianismo and familism did not significantly predict perceptions of seriousness.

Finally, moderation analyses were completed to examine whether endorsement of cultural values moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence and psychological maladjustment. CTS2-P and LVSR were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by the interaction term (CTS2-P x LVSR) in the second step. Endorsement of marianismo moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence perpetration and psychological maladjustment (β = -.49, p <.001). See Table 13.

Table 13

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Marianismo, and Psychological Maladjustment

Variable		Psychological Maladjustment		
	R^2	F	β	T
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.18	7.58***	.23	2.07*
Marianismo (LVSR)			.35	3.18**
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.36	12.84***	.33	3.28**
Marianismo (LVSR)			.12	1.11
CTS2-P x LVSR			-.49	-4.40***

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

To decompose this interaction, separate hierarchical multiple regressions were computed for high (1/2 sd above the mean) and low (1/2 sd below the mean) levels of the moderator. Findings indicated when women endorsed marianismo more strongly, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with less psychological maladjustment (β = -.15). Alternatively, when endorsement of marianismo was weaker, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with greater psychological maladjustment (β = .81).

Endorsement of traditional machismo (TM) or familism (FS) did not significantly predict
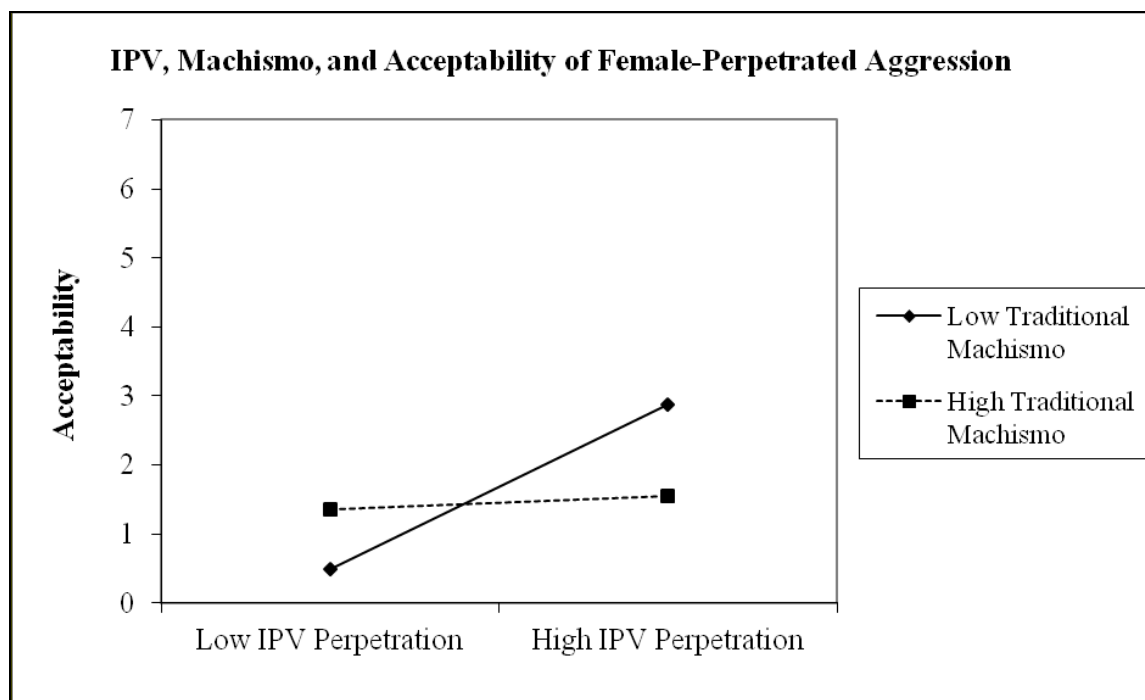
psychological maladjustment (SCLR).
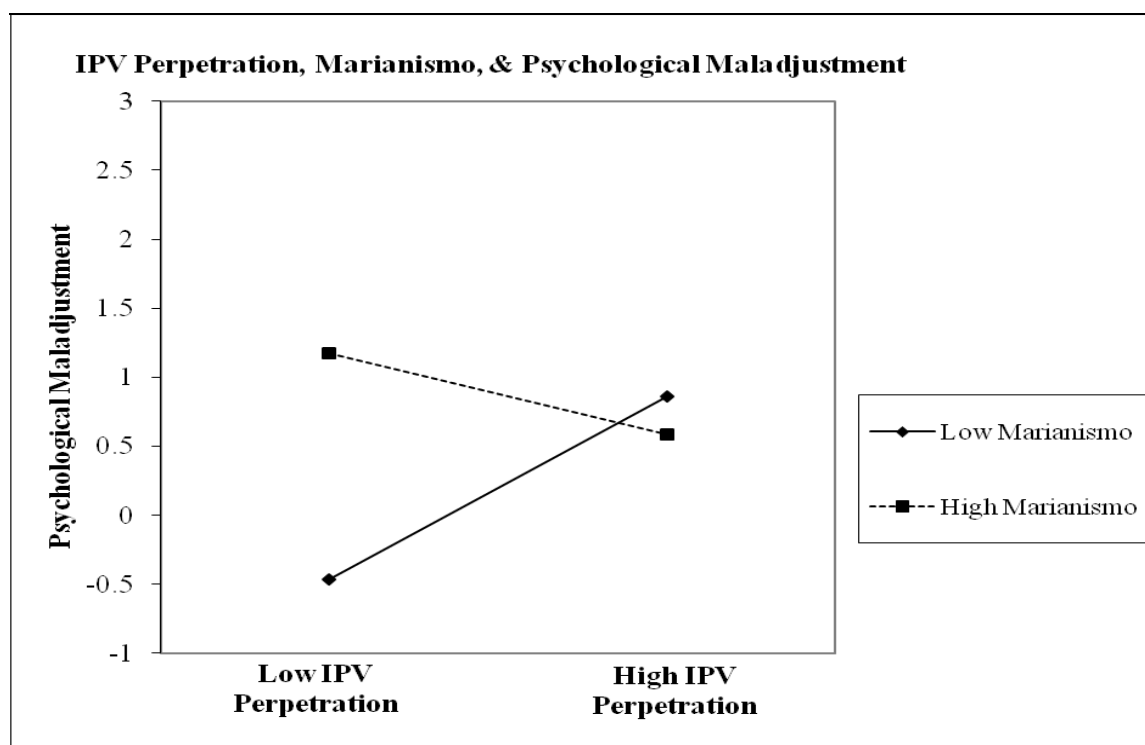
Figure 5. Impact of intimate partner violence perpetration on the relationship between women's
endorsement of traditional machismo and psychological maladjustment.

Hypothesis Four: Perceptions as Moderators Between IPV and Emotional Outcomes

Moderation analyses were conducted to examine potential relationships between intimate

partner violence exposure and emotional outcomes. Four separate multiple regression analyses

were completed. In the first regression, the centered variables (CTS2-V and acceptability rating)

were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by the interaction term (CTS2-V x

acceptability) in the second step. In the second regression, the centered variables (CTS2-P and

acceptability rating) were entered in the first step of the equation, followed by the interaction

term (CTS2-P x acceptability) in the second step. In the third regression, the centered variables

were entered in the first step of the equation (CTS2-V and seriousness rating), followed by the

interaction term (CTS2-V x seriousness) in the second step. In the fourth regression, the centered variables were entered in the first step of the equation (CTS2-P and seriousness rating), followed by the interaction term (CTS2-P x seriousness) in the second step.

Neither perceptions of acceptability or seriousness moderated the relationship between intimate partner violence victimization (CTS2-V) and psychological maladjustment (SCLR) or the relationship between intimate partner violence perpetration (CTS2-P) and psychological maladjustment (SCLR); however, significant main effects for perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence were found. See Tables 14 through 17.

Table 14

Intimate Partner Violence Victimization, Acceptability, and Psychological Maladjustment

		Psychological Maladjustment		
Variable	R^2	F	β	T
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Victimization (CTS2-V)	.23	11.27***	.50	4.64***
Acceptability of Violence Ratings			-.06	-.54
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Victimization (CTS2-V)	.24	7.93***	.54	4.71***
Acceptability of Violence Ratings			-.01	-.11
CTS2-V x Acceptability			-.13	-1.09

$^* p < .05.$ $^{**} p < .01.$ $^{***} p < .001.$

Table 15

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Acceptability, and Psychological Maladjustment

		Psychological Maladjustment		
Variable	R^2	F	β	T
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.08	3.12*	.28	2.33**
Acceptability of Violence Ratings			-.02	-.15
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.09	2.32	.34	2.45*
Acceptability of Violence Ratings			.01	.10
CTS2-P x Acceptability			-.12	-.85

$^* p < .05.$ $^{**} p < .01.$ $^{***} p < .001.$

Table 16

Intimate Partner Violence Victimization, Seriousness, and Psychological Maladjustment

Variable	R^2	F	β	T
		Psychological Maladjustment		
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Victimization (CTS2-V)	.24	12.00***	.46	4.52**
Seriousness of Violence Ratings			.13	1.27
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Victimization (CTS2-V)	.25	8.21***	.42	3.62**
Seriousness of Violence Ratings			.15	1.43
CTS2-V x Seriousness			.10	.85

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 17

Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Seriousness, and Psychological Maladjustment

Variable	R^2	F	β	T
		Psychological Maladjustment		
Step 1: Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration (CTS2-P)	.10	4.30*	.26	2.36*
Seriousness of Violence Ratings			.17	1.51
Step 2: Intimate Partner Violence Victimization (CTS2-P)	.11	2.96*	.24	2.13*
Seriousness of Violence Ratings			.19	1.61
CTS2-P x Seriousness			.07	.59

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to explore the role of cultural values in shaping perceptions of intimate partner violence. Several studies have found support for the incorporation of culture in the understanding of IPV (Kasturirangan & Williams, 2003; Morash, Bui, & Santiago, 2000). However, these studies have relied exclusively on the use of focus groups and qualitative methodological approaches and fall short of integrating culturally-relevant variables such as acculturation, values and beliefs, and demographic information. The present study sought

to build upon this by exploring how these cultural components contribute to women's understanding and involvement in intimate partner violence through an integrative model.

Collection of extensive demographic information such as country of origin, country raised, and time spent in the U.S., allowed for examination of variation within the Latino population with respect to endorsement of values, acculturation level, and ethnic identity. This improves upon existing research practices, which tend to define cultural background based exclusively on ethnicity. Findings indicated variation in the endorsement of familism as well as differences with respect to acculturation level. Due to under-representation of specific countries (i.e. Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Peru, Santa Domingo, and Dominican Republic), meaningful interpretations were limited with respect to how these differences may impact IPV.

Role of Acculturation and Ethnic Identity

Women's acculturation level and sense of ethnic identity were proposed to influence their perceptions of violence through their cultural values; however few significant associations were found. Acculturation to both Latino and Anglo cultures as well as ethnic identity was highly associated with endorsement of familism. Previous studies have suggested behaviors and attitudes associated with strong familism weaken with increased contact with U.S. mainstream culture (Harris & Firestone, 1997). This was supported in this study by finding a negative relationship between the number of years women spent in the U.S. and endorsement of familism. This finding may be due to the fragmentation of the extended family through the process of immigration. To address this possibility, future studies would benefit from assessing changes in family systems that are both physical and psychological in nature.

Previous research has suggested that acculturation may occur across multiple domains including behaviors, attitudes, values, and sense of cultural identity (Phinney et al., 2001; Ryder,

Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). It seems plausible that acculturation may also occur inconsistently within these domains. In the present study, no significant association was found between acculturation level/ethnic identity and endorsement of traditional machismo and marianismo. One reason for this finding may be a result of how the acculturation process was measured. Items from the ARSMA-II reflect behavioral preferences rather than true attitudinal preferences, therefore only assessing one aspect of culture. Such preferences may not be as ingrained as values and beliefs that reflect one's sense of self. The value of familism may reflect a global overall collectivistic attitude indicating how women perceive themselves relative to the larger community and therefore, may be more subject to change when processes such as immigration disrupt the larger community. To explore this possibility, future studies need to incorporate a more thorough understanding of the acculturation process across numerous areas as well as examine how acculturative stress may also impact these domains.

Role of Values

Cultural values were examined as potential mediators and moderators of the relation between acculturation and women's perceptions of IPV. Stronger evidence was found for a moderating than mediating role. When examining beliefs concerning gender roles, machismo and marianismo were found to moderate the relationship between IPV perpetration and perceptions of the acceptability of violence. When women endorsed high levels of marianismo, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence had a small negative association with acceptance of female-perpetrated violence, whereas women low in marianismo exhibited a small positive relation with acceptance of female-perpetrated violence. This finding reflects a situation in which women's behavior may be in contrast to their beliefs. For instance, women's belief in marianismo may reflect a belief in the expectation that women will allow themselves to be

victimized in an aggressive situation. By perpetrating violence women are behaviorally stepping outside their normative roles and into what may be considered, a male role and effectively, violating their own beliefs. To reduce this dissonance, women may limit their acceptance of this traditionally male behavior. To better understand this relationship, motivations for perpetration need to be explored. An important step for future studies is to examine the context in which women's perpetration occurs in order to understand how it relates to gender role expectations.

When examining beliefs concerning male gender roles, women who endorsed low levels of machismo exhibited a strong positive relation between perpetration of partner aggression and acceptance of female-perpetrated aggression, but for those who endorsed high levels of machismo, there was a very small positive association between engaging in partner aggression and perceiving female aggression as acceptable. Furthermore, women who highly endorsed traditional machismo were more likely to perceive violence as less serious. In contrast to women's conflicting views and behavior concerning marianismo, women's belief in traditional male behavior such as perpetration of aggression is in congruence with their own behavior. In addition, women may minimize the severity of violence when it is in accordance with traditional behavioral roles of men as hypermasculine and aggressive. Findings from the present study of a negative association between women's attitudes regarding the acceptability of male-perpetrated dating aggression and their seriousness ratings of violence provides further support for this interpretation. It should be noted that in the present study, the perception of seriousness incorporated attitudes regarding violence perpetrated by both males and females and therefore, it is not possible to examine how they may be impacted by the gender of the perpetrator. Previous research indicates the use of violence by women may violate the female gender role of

subservience (Vasquez & Rosa, 1999) and therefore, this may lead expectations of violence in general to be considered more serious than if male-perpetrated violence was considered alone.

Marianismo also moderated the association between intimate partner violence and psychological health. Specifically, when women endorsed marianismo more strongly, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with better psychological adjustment. In contrast, when women endorsed low levels of marianismo, greater perpetration of intimate partner violence was associated with greater psychological maladjustment. One possibility for this finding may be associated with contexts of violence perpetration. For example, if women's perpetration of violence is in self-defense or in the defense of her family, this, in conjunction with her views of the appropriate roles of women as caretakers, may limit the negative impact perpetration may have. Support for the argument that women's use of violence is often reactive has been found in previous research (Weston, Marshall, & Coker, 2007). It should be noted the present study examined violence perpetration as a global construct and therefore it is unclear what type of violence (verbal versus physical) is being committed. In order to better understand the moderating role of gender expectations in the relationships between intimate partner violence, perceptions, and emotional outcomes, a more thorough depiction of relational interactions is needed in terms of type of violence and motivations behind its use.

Finally, when examining beliefs concerning the role of family, women who endorsed familism more highly perceived aggression to be caused by parents violating gender roles compared to the perception that aggression was caused by one parent attempting to continue the conversation. This finding may reflect women's belief that within the family, individuals who fail to adhere to particular roles may potentially lead to negative consequences such as aggression. More specifically, in the vignette, the failure of the mother to have dinner made, in

effect, violated her role within the family system. Greater endorsement of familism was also associated with the perception that women would decide to change the relationship status either by ending it or seeking help in response to aggression compared to responding in a less direct manner. This finding indicates women's response to aggression may be made with the best interests of their family in mind. It seems plausible that by choosing to either end the relationship or seek assistance, women are acting in the best interest of their family, whether it is for only their children or the entire system.

There was a stronger tendency women in the present study for women to indicate women would resolve the disagreement in response to violence rather than seek help. The decision to resolve the disagreement and ultimately stay in the relationship echoes responses given by many women as part of a focus group on help-seeking behaviors completed by victims of intimate partner violence (Kelly, 2009). Women in that study indicated fear of losing their children and confusion regarding the available services for IPV. In addition, it seems plausible that through the process of immigration, many families are reduced in size, as extended family stay in the country of origin or are delayed in immigrating. This may reduce women's likelihood of seeking assistance from the family if immediate support cannot be provided. The finding in the current study of a negative association between time spent in the U.S. and endorsement of familism may reflect a reduction in the emphasis of the family over the individual due to physical changes to familial structures stemming from the immigration process. In one previous study, Mexican women were less likely than Anglo women to seek help from friends and family due to greater isolation because of their recent immigration status (West et al., 1998). Alternatively, women whose status is not legal may be less likely to seek assistance due to concerns that their immigration status may be revealed.

In addition to the role of cultural beliefs, women's attitudes concerning the use of aggression in dating situation as well as in general were examined. These attitudes were found to positively predict women's perceptions of the acceptability of female-perpetrated violence, indicating women's overall beliefs regarding the acceptability of female-perpetuated violence may be less context-specific relative to other types of perceptions. Alternatively, cultural values that drive perceptions of acceptability of intimate partner violence may also drive perceptions of other types of violence, indicating gender role expectations may generalize to all interpersonal relationships, not just romantic ones.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study had several strengths, it is also not without limitations. Specifically, several methodological issues may have limited the generalizability of findings. First, given the use of cross sectional data, the opportunity to make statements regarding causality was precluded. Therefore, no conclusions may be drawn with respect to the direction of relationships between constructs in this study. In addition, processes such as acculturation and development of ethnic identity are fluid in nature. Future studies would benefit from assessment of these processes at multiple time points across multiple domains and individuals to thoroughly capture the complexity of intimate partner violence.

Relatedly, the caballerismo subscale of the Machismo Measure exhibited low reliability and subsequently was dropped from analyses. One reason for this may have been the use of women to complete the measure. Previous research has utilized only male samples when exploring endorsement of this value. However, given that this has been shown to be an important aspect of the machismo cultural value as well as the current study's findings of the importance of examining gender roles, future studies would benefit from continuing to explore its associations

with perceptions of intimate partner violence by utilizing a measure that adequately encapsulates views this value reflects.

Statistical power may also have limited specific analyses that were conducted. For instance, on multiple occasions, analyses revealed marginally significant findings, which may have been significant given a larger sample size. While a power analyses conducted prior to data collection revealed a necessary sample size of 85, methodological difficulties led to the sample size being smaller than expected. Specifically, measures were translated and back translated in order for participants to choose whether or not to participate in Spanish or English; however, many women's reading levels where considerably lower than expected, resulting in missing data and termination of research sessions prior to completion of all measures.

The aim of the present study was to examine women's perceptions of intimate partner violence. While this is an important step in understanding potential reasons for its occurrence as well as responses to it, intimate partner violence is an interpersonal process, and at times reciprocal in nature, and therefore differences in perceptions of what causes intimate partner violence may differ across men and women. Previous studies have found men are more likely to blame external factors such as stress or stress for causing intimate partner violence, whereas women blamed themselves for provoking the violence (Fawcett, Heise, Isita-Espejel, & Pick, 1999). Future studies should incorporate an understanding of both men and women's perceptions to provide a thorough understanding of this process.

The present study's findings of equal perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence further reflects the often bi-directional nature of IPV; however, the present study was limited in its inability to examine the context of women's own experiences of using violence. Previous research that has attempted to understand women's motivations for perpetration, have

often highlighted its use in self-defense (Carney, Buttell, & Dutton, 2007); however, longitudinal models are needed to provide a true test of whether men's violence tends to precede women's or vice-versa.

On a similar note, the current sample was recruited through area Catholic schools. Utilizing a community sample allowed for inclusion of women who may not have formally sought services for intimate partner violence. While this is an important group to assess, levels of intimate partner violence in community samples have been found to underestimate the problem and therefore, results may not generalize to a clinical sample. Future studies should sample across a variety of sources to ensure a diverse sample is collected.

The present study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. By utilizing vignettes to assess women's perceptions of intimate partner violence, women were free to discuss their views without the obligation to discuss their own experiences in detail. However, it is important to acknowledge that responses may have been affected by expectations women may feel to provide answers that were congruent or expected by the researchers. To reduce this tendency, quantitative measures were also utilized to assess additional opinions regarding intimate partner violence in a more private manner.

Conclusions

Findings from the present study suggest an important role of culture in women's attitudes and subsequent functioning in response to IPV exposure. Existing theoretical approaches within the field of IPV have consistently failed to incorporate sociocultural contexts for the occurrence of violence, effectively ignoring a crucial element. Through examination of the role of values and processes such acculturation and immigration, a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of IPV can be made.

Presently, research varies with respect to many aspects of the causes and correlates of IPV within Latino populations; however, one aspect that consistently is highlighted is the under-utilization of services by victims of violence. This is typically discussed in the context of women as victims; however, the present study's finding of Latina women's involvement in IPV as both a victim and a perpetrator highlights an additional barrier to seeking help. It seems plausible that women who are involved in a reciprocally violent relationship may be less inclined to seek services due to their own role in continuing this cycle. In addition, changes in role expectations of both the individual and the family that may occur as a result of the acculturation process as well as dissonance that may occur as a result of inconsistencies in one's beliefs and their behavior need to be addressed. These, in addition to previously noted obstacles such as language, financial constraints, and cultural reasons, lend support to the need for services that are oriented towards the family rather than the individual. In designing such interventions, the complicated context within which intimate partner violence may occur is addressed and the needs of Latino families are better served.

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