A Grounded Theory Approach to Exploring the Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women's Identity Formation

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Abstract
As the Latino population grows, mental health and social service providers are challenged to meet the needs of this unique and diverse group. As clinicians we are engaged in an inter-subjective experience to acquire knowledge and understanding of the person before us. Our person-in-context lens and how we apply it is only as expansive and/or limited as our professional knowledge base allows. Although researchers in the psychological and behavioral sciences have briefly explored the impact of gender socialization within the Latino communities, known as machismo and marianismo, as it relates to clinical practice implications, empirical inquiry remains limited. Furthermore, the breadth of inquiry on machismo has focused primarily on how it relates to Latino men. Machismo, as an intricate part of the home and the culture, directly affects Latina women and their development. This qualitative study aimed to acquire an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of Latina women with machismo, and its impact on identity development. Using an intensive interview in-depth approach, the researcher conducted one individual sixty-minute interview with each of the twelve participants. The participants' narratives revealed three main constructs: Quien Eres (Who You Are) relating to their ascribed social identity, Quien Soy (Who I Am) relating to their self-concepts, and El Choque (The Clash) that takes place between the two. The participants' narratives also illustrated a responsive process to El Choque highlighting five major themes: 1) questioning machista principles, 2) increased awareness of self and machismo, 3) internal/external intolerance and confrontation of machista principles and behaviors, 4) defiant and rebellious behaviors, and 5) beliefs of equality and independence. Implications for practice and research are discussed. Further research is necessary and encouraged.

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A Grounded Theory Approach to Exploring the Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women’s Identity Formation

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**Introduction**

According to the US Census Bureau’s 2010 data, “the Hispanic population increased by 15.2 million between 2000 and 2010, accounting for over half of the 27.3 million increase in the total population of the United States”. The US census data reveals that while Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans remain the larger populace of the Latino groups in the US, there has been an increase of Central and South Americans (www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf). The US continues to experience an increase in the Latino population as well as a growth in ethnic variance within the Latino population. The continuous increase of the Latino population has generated great inquiry into the uniqueness of Latinos as a group and as individuals by many mental health and social service providers. The augmentation of literature on Latino populations is promising and motivating. The desire to know more, whether motivated by necessity or genuine passion on the subject highlights both gaps in knowledge and opportunities for inquiry. The following is my contribution towards an area of interest and identified gap in our knowledge base regarding Latina women, *la familia, la comunidad*, and identity. As Perez (1998) asserts, “without our identities, we become homogenized and censored” (p.89). I would go further by adding we become invisible, and as clinicians we cannot afford not to see our client.

As clinicians we are engaged in an inter-subjective experience to acquire knowledge and understanding of the person before us. Our inquiries explore relationships, family systems, home and other environments, culture, sense of self, and perceptions and feelings of all of the above and more. Our “person-in-context” lens and
how we apply it is only as expansive and/or limited as our professional knowledge base allows. When acquiring a sense of a person in context we are looking at the person, the context, and the inter-subjective engagement that exist between the two.

When we say context what do we mean? What variables within our sense of context are we looking at in developing our understanding of a client? While working with Latina women and Latino men are we exploring or considering cultural societal codes that exist within the client’s context (home, community, country of origin) as we formulate our understanding of this person and their lived experience? Clinically, do we integrate consideration of cultural beliefs on gender socialization and family roles, such as machismo and marianismo, to enhance our understanding of the client within her cultural context as opposed to our own? And if so, how has the existing research limited our perception of these terms? Research on machismo is primarily focused on Mexican, Mexican-American and/or Puerto Rican culture (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; De La Cancela, 1985; De La Cancela, 1986; Jezzini, Guzman, & Grayshield, 2008; Liang, Salcedo, & Miller, 2010; Reyna & Cadena, 2006) creating a misperception of the concept of machismo. To be an objective clinician requires an initial understanding that the concept of machismo may be prevalent all over Latin America, and the experiences and meanings applied to the concept manifest through individual experiences. Edelson, Hokodo, and Ramos-Lira (2007) explain,

Machismo refers to a set of beliefs about how Latino males should act. Positive traits typically associated with Machismo include: honor, pride, courage, responsibility, and obligation to family, while negative traits associated with machismo include: sexual prowess, high alcohol consumption, and aggressiveness. Latina women often evidence traits such as submissiveness,
deference to others, and self-sacrificing behaviors. These behaviors are consistent with the second dynamic, marianismo. (p. 2)

Therefore, when working with a Latina client are concepts like machismo and marianismo incorporated into our analytic lens of person-in-context? If yes to this question, to what degree does it occur? How expansive is our understanding of how such concepts are internalized and manifested behaviorally and emotionally by the client?

Looking at the person in context has become a guiding principle and lens in the field (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2008; Cote, 1996; Cote & Levine, 1987; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Zayas & Solari, 1994). A person’s first external context starts with the home, where we engage in relational dynamics influencing our development. At the most fundamental level, clinical social work practice is grounded on a principle, the understanding of the significance of the parent-child dyad in the development of the child’s person. Some of the most influential theories (interpersonal, attachment, object-relations, relational) that inform our practice stress the effect of the parent-child relational dynamic, as well as the effect of the environment on the developing child (Applegate, 1990; Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2008; Cath, Gurwitt, & Ross, 1982; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Jacobson, 1964; Mitchell & Black, 1995; Winnicott, 1964).

In general terms, the impact of the home environment and culture on a person’s sense of self is a subject that has resulted in a plethora of research inquiry (Crean, 2008; Denner & Dunbar, 2004; McDonald et al, 2005; Pelham & Swann, Jr. 1989; Porter & Washington, 1993; & Schmitz, 2006). Theorists and researchers alike have explored how they interrelate and impact development (Adams & Marshalls, 1996; Arciniega et al,
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2008; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Saez, Casado, & Wade 2009; Winnicott, 1964; Zayas & Solari, 1994). “As clinicians we also believe that what is taken in from the outside is not just the personal experiences in a client’s life but also the social forces at play in her culture and society”. (Flanagan, 2008, p. 124) As the Latino population grows, mental health and social services providers are challenged to meet the needs of this unique and diverse group. It is necessary to explore and acquire a deeper understanding of the intricacies that come into play between home, culture, and self of this population.

Gil and Vazquez (1996), explore how the cultural value of marianismo, the cultural feminine, relates to Latina women’s self-esteem. Gil and Vazquez (1996) explain that marianismo defines the ideal role of women. In their work, they demonstrate how this cultural value affects how a Latina may view herself, and in turn, how it impacts her decision making process. The impact of machismo, the cultural masculine, on the personal development of Latinos (men) has been researched and documented (Abalos 1993, 2002, 2005; Gallanti, 2002; Torres, 1998). As Abalos (2002) affirmed “because of the stories in which I was raised, especially a negative machismo and the story of patriarchy, which I experienced daily, I suffered a deep hurt within my own body and psyche” (p.12). While there has been research on marianismo and its affect on Latina women, as well as machismo and its affect on Latino men, the affect of machismo on Latina women needs further exploration. Machismo, as an intricate part of the home and the culture, directly affects Latina women and their development. How the cultural masculine is experienced and integrated into a Latina woman’s psyche directly speaks to the complexities of her selfhood.
Using Erikson’s theory on ego identity formation, along with tenets of object-relations theories, this study focused on how the presence of machismo in the family system becomes an integrated part of *el ambiente en la casa* (the environment of the home) and how that affects the child and her developing sense of self. From the Freudian framework where the ego is “the individual center of organized experience and reasonable planning endangered by both the anarchy of the primeval instincts and lawlessness of the group spirit”, Erikson emerged with a conceptual model of the ego in relation to social order and group identity. For Erikson, social forms co-determine the structure of the family, communicate to a child his/her group’s basic way of organizing experience, introduce her/him to a particular cultural style all of which lead to an understanding of a group identity and the beginning of his/her ego. Erikson shifted our conceptualization of human development from the individual’s internal conflict of instinctual drives to a model emphasizing the impact of external forces on the individual’s emerging understanding of self via group identity.

Object relation was one of the theoretical frameworks for this study because it helps the clinician to look at the ‘situation-in-person’ and to understand the power of that phenomenon (Berzoff, Flanagan & Hertz, 2008). It will incorporate our most fundamental principle of practice of looking at the context of a person’s environment to acquire a deeper understanding of the Latina woman’s reality. “In other words, what is ‘outside’ often gets ‘inside’ and shapes the way a person grows, thinks, and feels.” (Berzoff, Flanagan & Hertz, 2008) From this theoretical lens it is possible to conceptualize my hypotheses that the vestiges of experiences with machismo are
integrated in the developmental process and entwined in Latinas’ relational dynamics with herself and other.

“Machismo is a sacred story that can and does possess us and takes us over even when we rebel against it, the rebellion still dominates our consciousness and thereby prevents us from creating an alternative transforming self that is both feminine and masculine” (email communication with Dr. Abalos on 2/24/12). I was interested in understanding how machismo within the cultural context of a family system affects Latina women. The study will explore the following research questions:

1) In what ways does machismo manifest in a Latino family/household?

2) How have the experiences of machismo been integrated in the ego identity formation of Latina women?

3) How has this process affected her relationship with self and other?

**Literature Review**

Machismo is recognized as a cultural factor influencing the lived experiences of Latina women. Empirical studies with Latina women (Cianelli, Ferrer, & McElmurray, 2008; Edelson, Hokoda, & Ramos-Lira, 2007; Gonzalez-Guarda, Vasquez, Urrutia, Villarruel, & Peragallo, 2011; Jezzini, Guzman, & Grayshield, 2008; Kasturirangan and Williams, 2003) identify marianismo and machismo as cultural factors impeding service, and/or as an area that needs further exploration. “Particularly in Latina culture, the importance of being a good wife and mother are strong values that may make Latina women more vulnerable to violence and may reduce their perceived resources to stop it” (Edelson, Hokoda, & Ramos-Lira, 2007 p. 9). In their study of Latina women and
domestic violence, Edelson, Hokoda, and Ramos-Lira (2007) briefly mention machismo and marianismo as “two dynamics that may increase the risks and effects of domestic violence on Latino families” (p.2) and affirm treatment responses for Latina women should account for these cultural factors (p. 9). Similarly, researchers in another study on Latina women and domestic violence (Kasturirangan and Williams, 2003) assert it is necessary for practitioners to be aware and acquire knowledge of these cultural factors, yet “not to assume relational patterns or attitudes of the client on the basis of her ethnicity but rather use cultural knowledge as a flexible framework” (p.177). In a study by Gonzalez-Guarda, Vasquez, Urrutia, Villarruel and Peragallo (2011) on Latinas’ experience with substance abuse, intimate partner violence, and risk of HIV, machismo was identified as a cultural factor that served as a risk factor for these women. Similarly, according to Cianelli, Ferrer, and McElmurry (2008), “machismo and marianismo present significant barriers to HIV prevention” (p. 304). “The socio-cultural factors expressed as machismo and marianismo include gender inequality, lack of communication between partners about sexuality and violence in relationships” (Cianelli et al., 2008 p. 304). The relationship between these cultural factors and how they evolve into serving as barriers to service, or to being labeled “risk factors” for Latina women, is an intimate one.

An exploration of this relationship was initiated by Gil and Vazquez (1996), when they proposed the following questions regarding Latina women and marianismo: 1) How do Latinas get to be who they are? 2) How were the marianista principles of dependency and passivity transmitted to you? 3) How did you make them part of yourself (p.52)? Viewing the process of socialization as a cultural transmitter “which
enables children to learn society’s values, beliefs, attitudes, sex roles expectations, myths, 
religion, and language”, they explain how marianista principles are passed from mothers 
onto their daughters. It is the transmittance of personal and relational dynamics defined 
by your sex. Being born a girl you are prescribed a list of cultural expectations 
enshrining what you are to do and behave like as well as what it forbidden. Many 
Latina women would recall the resonance of the words, “las niñas no hacen eso” (girls 
don’t do that).

At a primary level, I am speaking of gender attribution and the meanings we 
apply to it. Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1990) explain “conventional meanings of gender 
typically focus on difference, emphasizing how women differ from men.” “Differences,” 
they state, “which have furnished support for the norm of male superiority” (Hare-Mustin 
and Marecek, p.22). The cultural constructs of machismo and marianismo uphold the 
story of patriarchy and male supremacy. Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1990) speak on the 
contribution of postmodernists and feminist psychodynamic theorists in how we discuss 
gender differences. A contribution which shifted the line of inquiry to seeing “the origins 
of differences as largely social and cultural rather than biological, where differences 
between males and females are seen as culturally specific and historically fluid” (p.23).

From this social and cultural rather than biological perspective, we can 
conceptualize how machismo and marianismo as “culturally defined modes of raising 
girls and boys in a traditional Latino family” (Kasturirangan and Williams 2003, p.163) 
affect a child’s identity formation. Within this context, Kasturirangan and Williams 
(2003) explain Latina women are: 1) raised to model their behavior after the Virgin
Mary, 2) seen as being able to bear a great deal of suffering without protest for the sake of the family, 3) not to seek outside help, 4) to put the needs of the family before her own, 5) to maintain relationships and preserve peace in the home, and as wives 6) expected to be respectful and submissive to their husbands. While feminist psychodynamic theorists like Chodorow, Eichenbaum and Orback, and Miller differ in their understanding of the origin of difference between males and females, “they all emphasize deep-seated and enduring differences between women and men in what is referred to as core self structure, identity, and relational capacities” (Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1990, p.23). Manago, Brown, and Leaper (2009) elaborate on the issue of gender differences (and inequality) on identity formation by pointing out “challenges to positive identity formation may be compounded for ethnic minority girls because of the interaction of their two devalued social identities” (p.751).

Historically, marianismo has been viewed in relation to the Latina woman’s socialization process and machismo associated with Latino men. However, at some point in the story they tend to emerge as a dyad, how one relates to the other and vice versa, and how each helps define the other as well. Or as Gil and Vazquez (1996) point out, in Latin American countries, “women are defined according to the rules of marianismo, which in turn is defined by the rules of machismo” (p.63). Traditional rules of a heritage of patriarchy that Gil and Vazquez (1996) noted, “pigeonhole both men and women, leaving them unhappy and unfilled” (p.63). While marianismo is and has been primarily related to how Latinas are socialized and affected by the marianista principles, the existence of such principles and practices in a household would have a direct affect on
the developing Latino boy as well. The same stands true for machismo and its affect on the developing Latina girl. “The politics of sexism inherent in the story of patriarchy destroys both the man and the woman, the wife and husband, and wounds the next generation” (Abalos 1993, p.53). Latina mothers, as the primary caregivers, and la comunidad Latina at a larger spectrum, perpetuate the principles of marianismo and machismo. Latina mothers, as well as the comunidad Latina, serve as messengers communicating and transmitting beliefs, values, and costumbres (customs) to the rising generation, and Latino men stand as the representation and manifestation of machista principles.

While machismo has been identified as an influential factor or barrier to service (Gonzalez-Guarda et al, 2011; Cianelli et al, 2008), it has not merited in-depth inquiry on the intricate interplay between machismo and Latina women’s development. The proposed inquiry may lead to an understanding of how such factors and barriers among Latinas are created and manifested, and more importantly offer a new avenue of exploration in understanding the lived experience of Latina women. The following section presents the conceptual framework of the study, which relied heavily on the works of Gil and Vazquez (1996) and Abalos (1993, 2002, 2005), and the following theoretical frameworks: Erikson’s theory of ego identity formation, object relations theory, and the cultural value of machismo as ethnic object constancy within the holding environment.

**Conceptual Framework**
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As a whole, the Latino population encompasses a diverse group of people from different countries of origin. While each one of these countries has their unique cultural customs, a few general values have been identified that pertain to the Latino population: *familismo, personalismo, marianismo,* and *machismo.* Although the focus of this study is on machismo, it is necessary to define both machismo and its cultural opposite, marianismo, to give a clearer picture of the cultural value system.

**Machismo**

“Machismo is a socially constructed, learned, and reinforced set of behaviors comprising the content of male gender roles in Latino society” (De La Cancela, 1986, p.291). In simple terms, machismo is a form of masculine ideology within Latino communities. As Liang, Salcedo, and Miller (2011) explain, “masculinity ideology is composed of the prescriptive attitudes and beliefs, shaped by cultural belief systems that men within a given society must follow” (p.201). For the purpose of this study, Torres’ (1998) definition of machismo was used. Torres (1998) defines machismo as the following: the complex interaction of social, cultural, and behavioral components forming male gender-role identity in the sociopolitical context of the Latino society. This definition was used because it encompasses the major themes of the concept yet it is general enough to allot for self-definition according to individual contexts and view of second-generation Latinas in the United States. Second-generation Latina women in this study are considered women who were born in this country whose parents migrated to the United States. The research participants were asked to define machismo as they see it in order to extract the emic experience as well as acquire a socio-cultural understanding of
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machismo as it is viewed and experienced by this population. At times, machismo will be referred to as the cultural masculine, since it is associated with masculine gender role identification.

As a pioneer and advocate for sociocultural psychotherapies with Latino clients, De La Canela offered a conceptual model where “machismo is analyzed and the client is educated as to how it functions for society and his ethnic group; that is, how machismo may be adaptive and maladaptive given specific psychosocial and cultural situations” (De La Canela, 1986, p.296). In his analysis of Puerto Rican machismo, De La Canela (1986) points out literature (at the time) on machismo generally fell into two categories, traditional or cultural. Traditional referring to the psychoanalytical perspective where machismo was seen as pathological, “related to unresolved Oedipal issues, manifested in inferiority complexes, and characterized as a compensatory cult of strutting virility” (p.291). “In the culturalist view, males are expressing a culturally valued and desirable ego integrative ideal of courage and honor through machismo” (De La Canela, 1986, p.292). In this analysis, De La Canela (1986) offers his conceptual model of machismo, which he claims, “attempts a class analysis of the so-called psychological and sociocultural aspects of machismo that reveals machismo’s contradictory, adaptive, regressive, and dynamic features” (p.292). De La Canela (1986) explains,

It defines machismo as a male behavioral and attitudinal configuration that predates capitalism yet has been instrumental in capitalism’s development. And just as capitalism obscures the necessity of institutionalized unemployment by defining the unemployed as somehow lacking the skills to succeed, machismo obscures the alienation effects of capitalism on individuals by embodying the alienation in male-female sex-role terms.
This conceptual model of machismo strongly accounts for the socio-economical factors (stressors) affecting some Latino men, women and their families. De La Cancela (1986) proceeds “it is not surprising that machismo’s positives; that is, males should provide for the family, are extolled by some Puerto Rican women given that patriarchal capitalism give women few chances for economic survival” (p.292). From this perspective, we may see how systemic, socio-economic factors incorporated into the conceptualization of machismo is internalized and integrated into the self. De La Cancela’s (1986) conceptual model offered a broader perspective on the concept of machismo emphasizing the influence of class, economic, historical, interpersonal and systemic factors.

In the literature, machismo and marianismo are presented as containing polarized elements of positive and negative attributes, or as Gil and Vazquez (1996) refers to it, a light side and a dark side. Galanti (2003) notes machismo is generally associated with male aggression, and the control and mistreatment of women (and children). Research on machismo highlights positive and negative attributes of the cultural phenomenon. Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) note “some conceptions of machismo emphasize exaggerated forms of male gender role behaviors such as heavy drinking, toughness, aggressiveness, risk taking, and virility, while alternative definitions for machismo have been proposed that endorse machismo as a culturally valued and desirable ideal of courage, honor, virility, physical strength, and as representing a protector, provider, and authoritative figure” (p.117). Similarly Torres (1998) noted the negative aspects of machismo involve male dominance, aggression, patriarchy, authoritarianism, and oppressive behavior towards women and children, while the
positive aspects involve self-respect, and responsibility for protecting and providing for the family.

Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank and Tracey (2008) conducted a study, of 154 men who self-identified as having a Mexican heritage, to develop a measure that better represented the construct of machismo and to understand its relation with psychological functioning. They made a distinction between positive and negative aspects of machismo to prevent a biased representation of the construct. They hypothesized machismo as a broad concept and term used to refer to two separate underlying constructs, one negative which they refer to as traditional machismo and one positive which they refer to as caballerismo. “Caballerismo refers to a code of masculine chivalry” and a caballero “has evolved to signify a Spanish gentleman with proper, respectful manners, living by an ethical code of chivalry” (Arciniega et al 2008, p.20). Arciniega et al (2008) posit, “traditional machismo can be described as aggressive, sexist, chauvinistic, and hypermasculine, whereas Caballerismo can be described as nurturing, family centered, and chivalrous” (p.29).

Arciniega et al (2008) found 1) Traditional Machismo was related to the more negative images associated with machismo 2) Traditional Machismo is related more to sex-role dominance than broader interpersonal dominance 3) Caballerismo relates to affiliation, emotional connectedness, and psychological well-being therefore capturing more positive aspects of behavior 4) satisfaction with life was found to be positively correlated with Caballerismo 5) neither Traditional Machismo nor Caballerismo is related to global indicators of well-being but there are relations to more specific aspects of
psychological functioning. They found “alexithymia, the degree to which one is not aware of affect, has significant and opposite relations to the subscales of Traditional Machismo and Caballerismo” (p.30). The participants whose alexithymia score indicated they lacked awareness of their feelings were more likely to exhibit traditional machismo, and those who had greater awareness of their emotions exhibited Caballerismo. Likely, less effective coping strategies were related to those who exhibited Traditional Machismo while effective coping strategies were related to Caballerismo. Furthermore, in this study which was geared completely towards Mexican men, Arciniega et al (2008) found “Caballerismo is associated with being born in Mexico, speaking Spanish at home, greater ethnic identity, and greater acceptance of other ethnicities” (p.31), while Traditional Machismo has a less clear pattern. They found Traditional Machismo “is associated with speaking Spanish at home, lower ethnic identity, and greater intolerance of other groups” (p.31).

In a study (Erdmenger De Staebler, Goicolea, Lubina, Gibbons, and Grazioso, 2011) exploring traditional machismo and caballerismo among Guatemalan students (30 women and 31 men), it was found that 1) students endorsed caballerismo to a greater extent than they did traditional machismo, 2) men endorsed traditional machismo more than women, 3) when reminded that they grew up in a machistic culture students overall rejected traditional machismo more strongly, 4) when reminded that they grew up in a machistic culture men endorsed caballerismo more strongly, yet the women did not. Erdmenger et al (2011) explain perhaps the women did not have the same response as the men did to caballerismo because they recognize “the latent sexism embodied in
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caballerismo, whereas men saw caballerismo as a way to re-claim masculinity in a positive fashion” (p.3).

A study conducted by Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) of 101 Latino men recruited from university campuses to examine the influence of ethnic identity, gender role socialization, and male identity found the following: 1) the relationship between ethnic identity and hypermasculinity suggests Latino men who indicated a greater identification with their ethnicity also tended to endorse some of the negative stereotypes associated with Latino masculinity, and 2) the relationship found between gender-role socialization and hypermasculinity suggests the home environment is also a powerful source of messages regarding male gender role norms. Arciniega et al (2008) posit “the more one identifies as Mexican, the more one embraces the pride and honor associated with the ethical code that is indicative of caballerismo” (p.31). Although Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) found Latino males endorsing the negative stereotype and Arciniega et al (2008) found Latino men endorsing the positive, both studies support the idea that sociocultural context plays a causal role on the development of individual identity. Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) explain both studies “support the view that men receive powerful messages regarding gender role norms from their ethnic group, and that increased identification with one’s ethnic group is likely to be an important factor in males’ appropriation of the gender role norms specific to their ethnicity” (p. 125).

Baumeister and Muraven (1996) assert society and culture “provide a context in which the self has to operate and to do so it adapts in far-reaching, important ways” (p.415). They conceptualize the relationship between identity and social context within
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the realm of adaptation as a way of recognizing the causal importance of culture yet also recognizing the power of individual choice and change. Baumeister and Muraven (1996) define identity as “a set of meaningful definitions that are ascribed or attached to the self, including social roles, reputation, a structure of values and priorities, and a conception of one’s potentiality” (p.406). They illustrate how individual identity navigates between the pressures of social and cultural values, and individual needs and wants by adapting to social conditions and possibilities. “More precisely individual identity is an adaptation to social context” (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996 p.405). With the understanding of the causal significance of sociocultural context and identity, in this study, machismo is viewed as a pronounced element of the sociocultural context of Latinas.

At a broad level, machismo seems to be a catch phrase destined to appear when speaking about Latino families. The scientific community has not been able to reach consensus on what this concept means (Arciniega et al, 2008; Falicov, 2010; Reyna & Cadena, 2006; Saez, Casado & Wade, 2009; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Yet, when it is brought up in dialogue with a Latina woman she recognizes it like one would a cousin de nuestro país (from our country) or even as a closer kin depending on her experience with machismo. Perhaps this divergence exists because, as De La Cancela (1986) points out, machismo as a social construct “cannot be understood in one-dimensional terms, for there are different forms of the phenomenon which respond to different societies or to specific sets of social relations-classes, pressures, and needs” (p.291). From a clinical perspective, the divergence within the scientific community, and
potentially between practitioner and an individual client on how machismo is defined, and more importantly experienced, is a gap that requires careful attention.

As Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) point out, “past efforts to understand machismo have not arrived at a consensus description or definition of the term” (p.117). Machismo, as a social construct, has a fluidity to it that makes it difficult to generalize and categorize, rather it must be placed within its socio-cultural and historical context. Failing to do so would be a disservice to the reader and anyone attempting to understand this cultural phenomenon, not to mention, a misrepresentation. It must be understood within its given context and individually defined. As research shows there are variant and contradictory definitions and meanings applied to the word/concept machismo (and its other forms: macho and machista) depending on who you are speaking with, their age, their culture, their socio-politics, etc. (Castillo, 1994, Guttmann, 1996, Miranda, 1997).

For example, a 70-year-old Mexican who was born and raised in Mexico, might have a different idea of what it means to be macho, than a 16-year-old Mexican-American male dependent on what was culturally transmitted within the individual’s social context. The same idea would apply to women and girls when speaking of machismo (machitas and macho). Therefore, it is imperative to have these concepts personally defined and explored within the clinical setting.

**Marianismo**

The following section will focus on a brief but concise explanation of the cultural feminine, marianismo. Gil and Vazquez (1996) explore how the cultural value of marianismo relates to Latinas’ self-esteem. They describe self-esteem as “la fuerza
potente, the powerful force, within yourself that is capable of enabling you to realize your fullest potential as a human being”, and acknowledge it as “the key to personal growth” (p. 13). They examine how marianismo and its many elements may be intricately embedded in a Latina’s intrapsychic structure. Gil and Vazquez (1996) developed the following list, which they refer to as “the Ten Commandments of Marianismo in its purest, darkest form” (p. 8):

1. Do not forget a woman’s place
2. Do not forsake tradition
3. Do not be single, self-supporting, or independent-mind
4. Do not put your own needs first
5. Do not wish for more in life than being a housewife
6. Do not forget that sex is for making babies-not for pleasure
7. Do not be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal and physical abuse, alcohol or drug abuse
8. Do not ask for help
9. Do not discuss personal problems outside the home
10. Do not change those things which make you unhappy that you can realistically change

They highlight how these mandates affect Latinas perception of self, influence Latinas’ decision-making process, and how they may lead to unhealthy intra- and interpersonal dynamics.

Marianismo is about sacred duty, self-sacrifice, and chastity. About dispensing care and pleasure, not receiving them. About living in the shadows, literally and
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figuratively, of your men-father, boyfriend, husband, son-your kids, and your family. Aside from bearing children, the marianista has much in common with una monja de convento, a cloistered nun-but the order she enters is marriage, and her groom is not Christ but an all too human male who instantly becomes the single object of her devotion for a lifetime. (Gil and Vazquez, 1996, p.7)

Trujillo (1998) explains the church developed the “feminine ideal” in the image of the Virgin Mary. “The men of the church support this image and teach their brethren to desire it in their women, while also teaching women to emulate and personify it” (Trujillo, 1998 p. 219). Similarly, Torres (1998) notes marianism is based on the cult of the Virgin Mary and serves as the counterpoint to machismo, stipulating that women are morally and spiritually superior to men. On the lighter side of marianism, Gil and Vazquez (1996) identify that it promotes loyalty, compassion, and generosity. In the work of Gil and Vazquez (1996), the emphasis lies on how Latinas manage/merge marianism and the acculturation process; old country traditions with new world self-esteem. Gil and Vazquez (1996) present Latinas with an honest look at the fabric of our development as it relates to marianism and our womanhood, and offer a guide for transformation.

Chicana feminist theorists and scholars have examined and reconstructed the binding images and principles attributed to gender-specific roles and expectations offered by La Virgen, the symbolic cultural and religious icon of la cultura. Trujillo (1998) summarized the many ways the Virgin Mary/La Virgen de Guadalupe have been reconstructed by Latina women to better serve their needs, their images, their vision, and ultimately, their truth with themselves and one of the main binding and defining icons of the culture. Trujillo (1998) explains the Virgin Mary has been a symbol representing
salvation, motherhood, and the feminine ideal. Trujillo (1998) adds, “the Virgin Mary, the all-loving, all accepting Mother, possesses the power of divine sanction” for “God is on her side, and she is on his” (p.216). Trujillo (1998) posits Chicana lesbians and Chicana artists have “re-constructed her in the image of strong women, women we admire, or women who are simply part of our daily existences”, identifying the traditional representation of La Virgen as limited and as a means of repression.

Anzaldua (1999) refers to La Virgen de Guadalupe as “the single most potent religious, political, and cultural image of the Chicano/Mexicano” (p. 52). With regards to La Virgen de Guadalupe, or Lupe, as Anzaldua (1999) claims she refers to her, she writes: “She, like my race, is a synthesis of the old world and the new, of the religion and the culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered” (p.52). Anzaldua represents La Virgen as a symbol of tolerance. She goes on to explain Chicanos have tres madres (three mothers). “All three are mediators: Guadalupe, the virgin mother who has not abandoned us, la Chingada, the raped mother whom we have abandoned, and la Llorona, the mother who seeks her lost children and is a combination of the other two” (Anzaldua, 1999 p.52). Anzaldua (1999) points out “Guadalupe has been used by the church to mete out institutionalized oppression” (p.53). In fact, Anzaldua (1999) notes the identities of all three mothers has been subverted and encouraging what she refers to as the virgin/puta (whore) dichotomy.

Similarly, Castillo (1994) writes “in modern man’s schema women must choose between one of two polarized roles, that of mother as portrayed by the Virgen Mary vs. that of whore/traitor as Eve” (p.116), or as Trujillo (1997) refers to it “good girl-bad girl”
syndrome. “Good woman”, Castillo (1994) posits, “equals mother equals the Virgen Mary but not Eve, whose behavior is forever questioned” (p.117). Nieto (1997) notes, “marianismo (veneration of the Virgen Mary) has had tremendous impact upon the development of the Chicana” (p. 208), and La Virgen has been the ultimate role model for women. Through our culture we inherit these archetypes of whore vs. virgin or good vs. bad creating a girl’s paradigm for identification. To illustrate how these archetypes manifest emotionally, consider Gil and Vazquez (1996) report on one of the subjects of their book, “the very thought of having sex made her feel guilty because in her country, decent women remained virgins until marriage” (p.29). Castillo (1997) affirms, “we must remind ourselves that the Virgen Mary is not the innate archetype of female nature, the dream incarnate; she is the instrument of a dynamic argument from the Catholic Church about the structure of society, presented as a God-given code” (p.116). Trujillo (1998) and Anzaldua (1999) assert it is necessary for us to examine, identify, reject, interpret, and redefine these cultural icons and archetypes.

The works of these noted scholars and theorists have served to deconstruct and reconstruct some of the binding cultural icons and concepts related to Latina women and gender attribution. Similarly, Abalos’ work does the same for Latino men and machismo. Abalos (2002) uses a theory of transformation as the guiding infrastructure of his argument. He presents the painful consequence Latinos experience as a result of this ethnic object constancy, machismo, which permeates through our culture by breeding in one’s individual holding environment. He highlights how machismo is a concept of rigidly ascribed attributes of masculinity that dictates to Latino men the expectations of
his assigned gender role, which leads to a “fragmented self”. His claim of transformation is that of becoming a whole person.

Abalos (2002) explains “the terms (masculine and feminine) represent two archetypal forces within each human being that have been radically deformed through the politics of gender roles, which attributes certain characteristics to women and others to men” (p 7). He elaborates on how the separation from or denial of the feminine forces is what leads to the fragmented man. Through the telling of his story, Abalos encourages a critical analysis of the Latinos intra-psychic development as it relates to culture, politics, machismo, and gender identification. This analysis may be useful for self-understanding on a personal and political level, and professionally for clinicians working with Latino children and families.

**Erikson’s Theory on Ego Identity Formation**

For this study, identity formation will be defined as it was introduced and used by Erikson’s theory of ego identity formation. Erikson’s theory focuses on the following concepts: ego identity, the identity stages, and the identity crisis. Ego identity is a multidimensional process that, as Cote and Levine (1987) noted, can only be understood by adopting social psychology and sociological perspectives. “Identity is a social-psychological construct that reflects social influences through imitation and identification processes and active self-construction in the creation of what is important to the self and to others” (Adams and Marshall, 1996, p.433). As Cote and Levine (1987) explain the ego interacts with itself and the other psychic structures, the id and the superego, as well as the person in, and the normative expectations of its social environment. Cote and
Levine (1987) distinguish the difference between ego identity and ego identity formation. Ego identity is conceptualized as a personality characteristic, while ego identity formation is “the process by which this personality characteristic is formed and continually transformed throughout the life cycle” (Cote and Levine, 1987, p. 275).

In *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), Erikson presents his developmental theory in eight stages of the life cycle. The eight stages and their psychosocial crisis (Berzoff, 2008, p.103) are as follows:

1. Infancy: Trust vs. Mistrust
2. Early Childhood: Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
3. Preschool: Initiative vs. Guilt
4. School Age: Industry vs. Inferiority
5. Adolescence: Identity vs. Identity Confusion
6. Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs. Isolation
7. Middle Adulthood: Generativity vs. Stagnation
8. Maturity: Integrity vs. Despair

Erikson (1968) explains a person’s experience through the stages is to be viewed as “a progression through time of a differentiation of parts” (p.93). Thereby, indicating the following: 1) that each item of the vital personality to be discussed is systematically related to all others, and that they all depend on the proper development in the proper sequence of each item, and 2) that each item exits in some form before its decisive and critical time normally arrives” (Erikson, 1968, p.93).
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Going from Freud’s internal and individualistic view to a dyadic framework, interpersonal relationships, along with the process of socialization, are both given a significant role in the development of a child. According to Hinde and Hinde-Stevenson (1987), “each relationship is influenced by the social nexus of other relationships in which it is embedded” (p.3), as well as the social values and norms of the social group. They explain norms and values are “transmitted and transmuted through the agency of dyadic relationships” (p.3). Through these interpersonal relationships a child’s group identity evolves. “Socialization, in a broad sense, includes the tendencies that establish and maintain relations between individuals and that ensure the integration and respect of individuals as participants within a society that regulates behaviors according to societal codes” (Adams and Marshall, 1996, p. 430).

To illustrate the developmental process of group identity, Erikson (1968) shared anthropological observations made by him and H.S. Mekeel in 1939. They compare the group identity of Sioux Indians with the American civil service employees. They explain how the identities between these two groups “rest on extreme differences in geographic and historical perspectives (collective ego-space-time) and on the radical differences in economic goals and means (collective plan)” (p.48). The comparison highlights how the context in which a group lives (i.e. their goals and means of survival) influences their values, their way of doing things, and in turn creates their lived experience. Furthermore, it stresses that every aspect of human experience must be defined within its given socio-cultural context. From the hunting and gathering society to the industrial world of machinery, Erikson explains, “the expansiveness of civilization, together with its
stratification and specialization, demanded that children base their ego models on shifting, sectional, and contradictory prototypes” (p.49).

In *Childhood and Society* (1968), Erikson explained the following regarding Identity vs. Role Confusion (Stage Five):

> The integration now taking place in the form of ego identity is, as pointed out, more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It is the accrued experience of the ego’s ability to integrate all the identifications with the vicissitudes of the libido, with the aptitudes developed out of endowment, and with the opportunities offered in social roles” (p.261)

This stage of adolescence is worth highlighting. It is where previous childhood experiences and identifications, and ego developments are coming together offering the springboard for the young adult.

Second-generation Latina women as stated, as girls, were raised in homes by their first generation parents whom brought with them *the old country traditions*. “In most Hispanic families, parents socialize children to behave in ways important to the family’s culture, whether or not it is in accordance with the norms of the dominant culture” (Zayas and Solari 1994, p. 203). When considering the lived experience of a second-generation Latina-Americana, within the socio-cultural context of her home and that of the world outside of her home, we may find contradictory prototypes. As Way (2005) attests “experiences, perceptions, or ways of speaking cannot be decontextualized, taken out of the culture, time, and place” (p. 533). Similarly, in accordance to Erikson’s theory, ego identity formation and development is occurring in the integration of past childhood identifications with new opportunities offered to her in social roles. “To discuss how a person perceives his or her world means to take into account and understand that these
experiences are intimately connected to her or his location in the world” (Way 2005, p. 533). We can extrapolate that in a Latino household with gender-specific role attribution, the Latina girl is restricted from various opportunities based on her being a girl.

**Object Relations Theory**

Object relations theory will be used as the basis for data analysis because it offers the language and concepts that best grasp the developmental process and formation of intra-psychic structures. “Object relations theories focus on the interactions that individuals have with other people the process through which individuals internalize those interactions, and on the enormous roles these internalized object relations play in psychological life” (Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2008, p.122). It is based on the beliefs that: 1) a person has an internal world, 2) it is formed by their external objects, 3) there is an internalization process of these external objects, 4) in this internalization process the intra-psychic structure is forming, and 5) the significance lies in the meaning these objects acquire for the individual. Applegate (1990) clarifies an object may be “a person, place, thing, fantasy, idea, or memory that is invested with strong emotion” (p.87). A person’s internal world “compromises representations of self and other” which are formed by objects of and within the individual’s holding environment (Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2008, p. 134). “These representations are not observable and may not reflect the actual situation, but they are the content of the internal world and the building blocks from which relationships with the self and with others are ultimately formed” (Berzoff, Flanagan, & Hertz, 2008, p. 134).
From this perspective, how has a second-generation Latina woman internalized constantly being told las niñas no hacen eso (girls don’t do that) as she witnessed her male counterparts go off to play outside freely, as well as some of her other female peers? What message(s) were transmitted in these moments regarding being a girl and at a deeper level about being a Latina girl? How does she experience that emotionally? How does it inspire her mentally?

Take into consideration the same questions with regards to the more aggressive forms of machismo or what Arciniega et al (2008) referred to as Traditional Machismo (i.e. the womanizer, the abuser). For example, a father cheating on his wife communicates messages of mistrust and betrayal to a daughter. The presence of machismo in a home affects what messages will be transmitted to the Latina girl. How that betrayal is viewed and addressed in the young Latina’s home communicates messages of self-worth, one’s place (a taste of patriarchy), and sense of justice (or lack thereof). These experiences offer her introductions to the self. Does she implode? Or explode? Is she outraged? Or is she unaffected? Does she rebel? Or comply? Is there a split? Or cohesion?

Similarly, let’s consider the Latina woman who experienced another form of machismo, where the father was more of a provider and protector of family. Or the Latina woman with a father who at different times was aggressive or the many other forms of traditional machismo, while at other times adhering to characteristics of caballerismo, what messages were communicated within this relational dynamic? The answers to these questions are examples of the many possible ways machismo manifest behaviorally and
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how these behavior manifestations may communicate and transmit identity-forming messages. By clinically examining the meanings a client applies to experiences with machismo and assisting her in rewriting her narrative we create the opportunity for transcendence.

Using object relations theories, this study will explore the relational dynamic between machismo and Latina women. Although object relations theories have been criticized for: 1) the use of the word object to refer to people, 2) emphasis on separation and individuation, 3) emphasis on patriarchal values, 4) being mother-blaming theories, and 5) lacking of applicability to diverse family structures and backgrounds. Burack (1992) goes on to explain that feminist theorists who defend object relations theory present it in a more applicable and appropriate contexts. They highlight the true capacity and, what may be the true purpose of the theory.

“Gender theorists argue that, although it has not often been used in this way, object relations is amenable to the construction of theories that explain the dialectic between psyches and changing social forms. Embedded in this argument is an understanding of object relations theory as explicating not a static human nature, but psychic processes. As social arrangements, relational experiences, and forms of nurturance differ, so too do the subjective consequences and their imprint on identity differ.”(Burack, 1992, p. 503)

From this perspective, there is a shift in focus to what object relations theories set out to accomplish, a theoretical framework to help understand the influence of a person’s world on his/her psyche. This occurs through the development of self-representation and object representation. In this case, as a theoretical framework it will help understand how the presence of machismo (as it is defined and experienced by the individual Latina woman) has influenced and affected her. Object relations theories illustrate how this influence, in turn, relates to a Latina woman’s sense of self and sense of the world.
Machismo as a Cultural Object

To revisit the theorists discussed in the conceptual framework for this study, what Gil and Vazquez, and Abalos are speaking of is personal definition. The inevitable quest of who am I is examined via the relationship between the cultural feminine (marianismo) and Latinas, and in Abalos’ case, the cultural masculine (machismo) and how it relates to Latinos and the Latino family. These theorists make a clear argument on the influential potency of cultural values on the developing self. Within object relations theory this process can be understood by a concept coined by Bowles as ethnic object constancy (Applegate, 1990).

Bowles suggests that the cultural and ethnic ethos is internalized through the filter of each individual’s psychodynamics to form an ethnic self-representation unit that is transmitted as an internalized representation from generation to generation. She points out that although this representation is individual, unique, and autonomous, it is interrelated to and has influence all other self-representation units. (Applegate, 1990, p.93)

Marianismo and machismo, as active elements of the culture, become an integrated part of el ambiente en la casa (the atmosphere of the home), and therefore an active element of the family system. Both Gil and Vazquez (1996), and Abalos (2002), examined these ethnic (cultural) object constancies in a gender-compatible correlation (marianismo and Latinas, machismo and Latinos). This study will explore the relational dynamic between the cultural masculine, machismo, and how it impacts the identity formation of Latinas. Although, machismo is attributed to male gender role identity, it strongly communicates to Latina girls and women messages about their identity, their place, and their potentiality. It communicates normative cultural beliefs and behaviors; what is expected of them based on their gender, what will be or will not be tolerated, and what is
unacceptable. This is an area which necessitates exploration, especially with a culture that has such pronounced cultural values related to gender roles and identity, which have been identified as risk factors to health and safety concerns with this population, as well as barriers to prevention, as mentioned earlier in this section. (Cianelli et al., 2008, Gonzalez-Guarda et al., 2011)

For some time now, machismo and marianismo, as cultural phenomena, are subject matters that have gotten the attention of theorists and researchers (Abalos, 2005, 2002, 1993; Amaro & Russo, 1987; Anzaldua, 1999; Arciniega et al, 2008; Castillo, 1994; Cianelli & McElmerry, 2008; Galanti, 2003; Garcia, 1997; Gil & Vazquez, 1996; Guttmann, 1996; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Miranda, 1997; Nieto, 1997; Perez, 1998; Saez, Casado, & Wade, 2009; Trujillo, 1997, 1998; Vasquez-Nuttall, Romero-Garcia, & DeLeon, 1987). Although researchers in the psychological and behavioral sciences have briefly explored the impact of gender socialization within the Latino communities, known as machismo and marianismo, as it relates to clinical practice implications (Arciniega et al, 2008; Bracero, 1998; Confresi, 2002; Comas-Diaz, 1987; Edelson, Hokoda, & Ramos-Liras, 2007; Espin, 1987; Falicov, 2010; Jezzini, Guzman, & Grayshield, 2008; Kasturirangan & Williams, 2003; Reyna & Garcia-Cedna, 2006; Salgado de Synder, 1999; Torres, 1998; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002; Zayas & Solari, 1994), empirical inquiry remains limited. There is growing research on the direct affect of machismo on Latino men (Arcinigea et al, 2008; Reyna & Cadena, 2006; Saez, Casado, Wade, 2009; & Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). However, no empirical studies
were found where the primary focus was the affect of machismo on the development of Latina women.

As noted earlier, Gil and Vazquez (1996) explored marianismo as it relates to the development of women and acculturation. Jezzini, Guzman, and Grayshield (2008) point out clinical literature shows that “Latinas in treatment often present with complaints involving cultural conflicts or differing sex roles expectations” and call for practitioners to increase “their knowledge of Latinas’ psychosocial adjustment and gender role identification process” (p. 6).

While there is literature and research discussing these topics, it remains scarce and a gap does exist. Machismo and marianismo are being identified as cultural factors that influence the Latino community, yet there is a lack of in-depth inquiry of how these concepts affect the person, her sense of self, and her identity development. This is an area that requires more attention as it may shed light on the origin of specific and relevant behavioral manifestations. To the best of my knowledge, the impact of machismo on the development of second-generation Latina women has yet to be explored. Logically, it makes sense as marianismo is attributed to female gender roles and machismo to male gender roles. However, the presence of machismo in a home influences family dynamics, thereby becoming part of a Latina woman’s immediate environment. Investigating the impact of machismo on Latina women could offer another angle of insight providing a more holistic view of how this cultural, familial dynamic interplays with development. In turn, it would broaden and enhance our clinical lens.

**Culturally specific terms and definitions**
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- **Machismo** – gender specific roles and expectations ascribed to Latino men. Or as Torres (1998) defines it “the complex interaction of social, cultural, and behavioral components forming male gender-role identity in the sociopolitical context of the Latino society” (p. 16). Some researchers (Arciniega et al, 2008; Torres et al, 2002 and Reyna and Cadena, 2006) point out that machismo has been recognized to have negative and positive attributes. The negative attributes associated with traditional machismo such as hypermasculinity, aggression, sexism, and chauvinistic behaviors. The positive ones associated with caballerismo (Arciniega et al, 2008).

- **Machista** – a male or female who endorses machismo in practice and/or belief (Bracero, 1998; Falicov, 2010).

- **Caballerismo**– refers to a code of masculine chivalry (Arciniega et al, 2008).

- **Caballero**– a man who endorses caballerismo. Or as Arciniega et al. (2008) explain “a gentlemen with proper, respectful manners, living by an ethical code of chivalry” (p.20).

- **Marianismo** – gender specific roles and expectations ascribed to Latina women. Or as Gil and Vazquez (1996) point out marianismo defines the ideal role of women, associated with sacred duty, self-sacrifice, and chastity.

- **Marianista** – a female or male who endorses marianismo in practice and/or belief (Gil and Vazquez, 1996).

**Methods**
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From the mid 1980’s forward there has been a growth in interest and inquiry on machismo and the concept of masculinity in the Latino culture. However, the breadth of inquiry on machismo has focused primarily on how it correlates to Latino men. The researcher aimed to acquire an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of the Latina woman with machismo. The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop a grounded theory related to the impact of machismo on the identity development of Latina women. Due to the fluid nature of this cultural phenomenon and the impact of individual experience, a qualitative approach allots for an emic perspective to acquire richer context. Since research on the affect of machismo on Latina women is limited, a grounded theory approach was implemented. Grounded theory principles allowed the researcher to stay close to the data and the participants lived experience throughout the process of theory development. Information was gathered using an intensive interview in-depth approach. This methodology in particular lends itself to understanding Latina women’s perceptions of their experience with machismo.

The intensive interview explored the following questions: How did machismo manifest in your family and what messages did it communicate to you about being a girl? How did this idea of being a girl affect your sense of self while you were growing up? How did this self-representation influence your view of your abilities and capacities? How has this affected your relationship with self and others? In the current study interviews with second-generation Latina women were analyzed to develop a theory explaining the experience of Latina women with the cultural masculine. The theory
addresses the manifestation and perceptions of machismo, internal challenges of identification with machismo, and internal and external responses.

Sample/Participants

Participants were primarily recruited from colleges and universities in New Jersey and New York. The researcher emailed recruitment information to student organization leaders of 20+ colleges and universities within the two states. Study flyers were posted on campuses and local businesses, and participant referrals were accepted.

Initially, the researcher conducted a brief phone interview to screen the participants’ compatibility with inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria included:

1. Participants were required to be second-generation Latina women recently entered into young adulthood. According to Erikson’s theory (Berzoff, 2008) the stage of young adulthood (Intimacy vs. Isolation) follows adolescence, the stage of identity vs. role confusion (between the ages of eleven to eighteen), therefore participants were between the ages of nineteen through twenty-two to acquire perspective of the young adult yet remain close to issues of the prior stage of adolescence.

2. Participants were students in the undergraduate level in New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia or Connecticut.

3. Participants self identified as Latina women who have experience with machismo in their childhood home and/or community.

Exclusion criteria included:
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1. Participants were not to be from the researcher’s social circle.

2. Participants were not to be receiving mental health services or have a history of receiving mental health services within a year.

Twelve women, self-identified as second-generation Latina women, agreed to participate in the study. The women in the sample are between 19 to 22 years old. The participants family’s country of origin represent a variety of countries, including Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

Nine of the women were raised in Northern Jersey. Two participants were raised in the Bronx, NY. One participant was raised in Miami-Dade, FL but is living in New York. All but one of the participants associated their childhood neighborhood to low socio-economic status. Two of the participants have lived in the parents’ country of origin at some point.

Nine out of the twelve participants come from two-parent homes. Three participants come from a single parent (mother) home. With the exception of one, all participants have siblings. The majority of the sample has brothers. None of the participants were married, divorced, or had children of their own. By nature of the inclusion criteria, all participants identified as having experience with machismo in their upbringing.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Numbers/Frequencies</th>
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</table>

Table 1

*Characteristics of Interviewees (N=12)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>19-22</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 years old</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years old</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years old</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td>Single</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Divorced</td>
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<td>Single (Mother) Parent Home</td>
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<td>Only Child</td>
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<td>Raised with Male Siblings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raised only with Female Siblings</td>
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<td>Parents Country of Origin</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Nicaragua</td>
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| Participants Profiles |   |
Before completing the interview, participants completed the face sheet (Appendix 2) that inquired about demographic information, parents’ country of origin, childhood neighborhood and household structure, as well as the participants travel to parents’ country of origin. This section provides participant profiles based on the information reported on the face sheet. In order to protect anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym in this document (Table of Sample, Appendix 3).

**Maria** is 21 years old raised in West New York, NJ. Her mother was born in Mexico, her father in Chile. She was raised by both parents and is the oldest of 4 children. She has 2 sisters and a brother. She has traveled to Mexico a few times and has not traveled to Chile.

**Victoria** is 22 years old raised in the Bronx, NY. Her parents were born in the Dominican Republic. She was raised by both parents and is the middle child. She has one older sister and a younger brother. She traveled to DR as a teenager.

**Josefa** is a 19 year old raised in West New York, NJ. Her mother was born in Mexico and her father in El Salvador. Her parents are divorced but she has lived with both of them at different times during her childhood. She has a younger brother and a younger half-sister.

**Kristina** is a 22 year old raised in Union City, NJ. Her parents were born in Colombia. She was raised by both parents and is the youngest of 3 children. She has one older sister and an older brother. She traveled to Colombia one time.
Sara is a 20 year old raised in West New York, NJ. Her parents were born in Costa Rica. She was raised by both parents and has one younger sister. She travels to Costa Rica often.

Diana is a 22 year old from North Bergen, NJ. Her parents were born in Cuba. She was raised by both parents and has one older brother. She traveled to Cuba once.

Patricia is a 19 year old from West New York, NJ. Her parents were born in Mexico. She was raised by both parents and is the oldest of 4 children. She has 2 younger sisters and a younger brother. She has traveled to Mexico a couple of times.

Blanca is a 21 year old from Bergenfield, NJ. Her parents were born in Colombia. She was raised in a single parent (mother), multi-generational (grandparents) home. She has one older brother but was not raised with him. Blanca lived in Colombia for 10 years.

Elsa is a 21 year old from the Bronx, NY. Her parents were born is the Dominican Republic. She was raised by both parents and is the middle child. She has 2 brothers. Elsa lived in DR for 2 years.

Yvette is a 21 year old from Passaic, NJ. Her parents were born in the Dominican Republic. She was raised in a single (mother) parent home but reports mother had two significant relationships during her childhood. She is the middle child and has 2 brothers. Yvette travels to DR often.

Marissa is a 19 year old from Miami, Fl. Her mother was born in Costa Rica and her father in Nicaragua. Both parents raised her. She is an only child. She has traveled to their country several times.
Juana is a 22 year old from Irvington, NJ. Her parents were born in Honduras. She was raised by both parents and has an older brother. She travels to Honduras often.

**Statement of Human Subjects**

Once participants agreed to meet with the researcher, the interview began with a brief explanation of the study and the statement of research. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. Each participant was informed her participation was voluntary and is able to withdraw from the interview at any given moment. The researcher began the interview by gathering demographical information on the participant before conducting the interview. The researcher informed the participants they were free to express themselves in English and in Spanish at any given time during the interview depending on what felt most natural to her in response to the questions.

The statement of research (Appendix 1) covered the following information: purpose of study, why they were asked to participate, length of study, what was expected of participant, risks and benefits, issues concerning confidentiality and injury, payment and/or compensation for participating, and contact information was provided in case participant had questions or complaints regarding the study.

In this study, participants were asked to participate in a one-time interview for approximately an hour. The hour with the participant covered statement of research, question & answers, general information and interview. The potential risk in this study was that the participant might find the questions too personal and feel uncomfortable. Participants were informed they did not have to answer any questions they felt
uncomfortable to answer and were free to refuse to complete the interview. All participants completed their interview.

The information participants’ shared was kept strictly confidential and secure. All information, such as forms, transcripts and audiotapes, were kept in locked cabinets. The face sheets were kept in a separate locked file cabinet from the transcripts. The researcher never used participants’ names, personal data or information about where they live or work in the write-up of the interview. All transcripts have been given an identification number to protect confidentiality.

Participants were informed there are no expected direct personal benefits to their participation in the study. However, by participating they are contributing to increasing the knowledge base of the community and presumably the Latina population. Upon concluding the interview each participant received a twenty-dollar gift card to Starbucks. The interview concluded with the researcher expressing appreciation for the participant’s involvement in the study and inquired about their interest in assisting with member checking.

Data Collection

To obtain data, the researcher used the face sheet for demographic information and an interview guide to conduct participant interviews. Interview questions focused on gathering information on the participants’ beliefs and experiences with machismo. Specifically, the questions inquired about their definition and perceptions of machismo, how it manifested in their life, and how it has affected them.
Each participant completed one individual interview. Interviews ranged in length from approximately 40 to 60 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher transcribed each recording. A semi-structured format was used to allow the researcher and participant flexibility to expand on specific questions. The interview guide used is listed in Appendix 4. The questions were grouped into four main sections.

Interviews began with a couple of introductory questions to ease the participants into the interview process. Participants were asked about their childhood neighborhood and family structure. The second group of questions solicited their definition of machismo and initiated the exploration of her experiences with machismo. Specifically, the questions inquired about her perception of how machismo has affected family members. Participants were also asked to identify a machista in her life and to explain the behaviors and/or beliefs of the identified person. The third group of questions inquired about their relationship and experience with machismo. Specifically, questions solicited information on whether or not participants ascribe to machismo and how machismo has affected them. Lastly, participants were asked one to three debriefing questions depending on available time. The debriefing questions solicited participants’ suggestions for clinicians working with Latino population.

**Data Analysis**

“Qualitative research aims to explore a given phenomena with the intention of establishing the meaning it holds for those whose lives it touches” by implementing analytic strategies and extracting meaning from the data (Birks, Chapman, and Francis...
2008). The analysis of data was based on the principles of grounded theory founded by the works of Glaser and Strauss (1967), which consisted of an inductive approach to the coding process. In accord with the steps outlined by Charmaz (2010) for data analysis for grounded theory, the researcher engaged in line-by-line open coding, focused coding, axial coding, and ended with theoretical coding.

**Open Coding.** Charmaz (2010) explains line-by-line coding is the initial step in coding. It is a process where you review the transcript naming each line of your written data. “During initial coding, the goal is to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (Charmaz 2010, p.46). The objective during open coding was to stick as close as possible to the data in order to see and extract the participants’ perceptions and experiences with machismo. In accord with Charmaz’s (2010) recommendations, the initial codes constructed were simple yet precise codes.

**Focused Coding.** Focused coding was the second step in the coding process. Charmaz (2010) explains, “these codes are more directed, selective, and conceptual”, and serve “to synthesize and explain larger segments of data”. Review of data from interviews resulted in a list of approximately 220 concepts. Analysis of the concepts led to the second part of the coding process, where the researcher compared concepts, grouping them into relevant categories. Categories generated an abstract explanatory term or phrase representing the participants’ experience or process. This process, of comparing concepts for relevance, and grouping and categorizing generated 20 categories.
Axial Coding. The researcher employed axial coding to start “piecing together” the data that had been fragments into concepts and categories. Saldana (2013) points out “axial coding is the transitional cycle between initial and theoretical coding processes of grounded theory” (p. 218). The researcher revisited the conceptual and theoretical framework to analyze the 20 categories and induce the main categories. “Axial coding aims to link categories with subcategories, and asks how they are related” (Charmaz 2010, p.61). At this point of analysis, the researcher compared the categories with the initial codes generated from open coding to examine the categories compatibility with raw data and explore links between categories. Analysis of the main categories and review of the conceptual and theoretical framework elucidated three main constructs of the emergent theory.

Following the method recommendations of Saldana (2013) regarding the significance of analytic memos and “graphics-in-progress that illustrate the central/core and its related processes”, the researcher used analytic memos and diagrams to explore the linkage of categories.

Theoretical Code. Saldana (2013) posits, “a theoretical code specifies the possible relationship between categories and moves the analytic story in a theoretical direction” (p. 224). To help generate the theoretical code, memos, central constructs, categories and concepts were reviewed in constant comparison with interview data to help determine the relationship between the constructs. Also, the researcher examined the data for the participants’ feelings and actions towards machismo. Analysis of the core constructs and related properties resulted in the development of the theoretical code. A
discussion of the theoretical code and diagram is presented in the *Discussion* section of this document.

**Quality and Rigor of the Study**

To address the issue of rigor, the researcher employed triangulation, member checking, audit trail and reflexivity strategies. “The aim of triangulation is to increase the understanding of complex phenomena, not criteria-based validation, in which the agreement among different sources confirms validation” (Malterud, 2001, p. 487). Triangulation was used by having a colleague serve as a second-coder to two out of the twelve transcripts to increase dependability. Both coders compared and discussed results until reaching agreement. To enhance credibility, the researcher applied member checking, where “the investigator’s account is compared with those of the research subjects to establish a level of correspondence between the two sets” (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 51). Two out of the twelve participants engaged in this process. An audit trail and presentation of raw data by using quotes from the transcripts (Birks et al. 2008, Charmaz 2010, Hewitt 2007, Malterud 2001, Morrow 2005) were also employed strategies.

To facilitate the reflexive process and enhance the researcher’s awareness of the relationship(s) between codes and categories, the researcher engaged in memo-writing. “Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparison and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue” (Charmaz 2010, p. 72). Birks, Chapman, and Francis (2008) highlight memo-writing can enhance the research process and outcomes particularly in grounded theory, and serves as an analytical strategy allowing the researcher to achieve abstraction while remaining true to the data. Memo-
writing served to keep a running commentary throughout the research process, which also serves as an internal audit trail on the analysis of data.

**Instrument**

Qualitative research involves a “researcher-as-instrument” approach to data collection. In this sense, the researcher’s use of self is the primary instrument, or tool, for data collection. As Way (2005) asserts, “when we try to understand a new phenomenon, we are coming into it with expectations and preconceptions”. The researcher will remain open to the views held by the research participants by remaining mindful and questioning the validity and limitations of her personal biases and assumptions (Way, 2005).

“To understand how reality is constructed and interpreted, the researcher’s inherent subjectivities, including values, beliefs, and emotions should be accepted as centrally involved in the research process, and the notion of objectivity rejected as neither necessary, nor even desirable” (Hewitt, 2011 p. 1149). As Ahern (1999) explains “the ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective one is because it is not possible for researchers to set aside things about which they are not aware” (p.408). The researcher has considered and provided issues of reflexivity in the research. The following section provides the researcher’s reflexivity statement.

**Reflexivity Statement**

I am a Latina woman who comes from a household with various and very active elements of machismo. Prior to making academic inquiry on the subject, machismo has been something of great discontent. I have had and still have an ongoing relationship with
A Grounded Theory Approach to Exploring the Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women's Identity Formation

Valenciano

Machismo, both through my relationship with my parents and their home (my family system) and with myself, internally (the strands that have been embedded in me as a result). My experience with machismo is an area I will have to monitor for personal biases and preconceptions during this investigative process.

My academic inquiry has introduced machismo as a cultural phenomenon of great complexity. Machismo is represented as a cultural manifestation, a social construct with such fluidity that it is difficult to generalize, categorize, and even define. Like many of the authors I have read, I have found myself presently challenged in my attempt to define it for this project (although I always felt and feel I could recognize it for what it means to me). I have been introduced to terms such as negative machismo, which I found to be a redundant term and wondered if there was a positive form and what did that look like. Then I was introduced to its opposite, Caballerismo, which comes from to be a Caballero (gentleman). From my personal point of view, the concept of a machista (a man who lives out machismo practices either behaviorally and/or within his value system) is a completely different concept than a Caballero. While they are different, and in a way we may say they are opposite of each other, that opposition does not equate Caballerismo as the positive form of machismo. In other words, I have always thought of machismo and caballerismo as two separate concepts and attitude and behaviors. I had not considered Caballerismo as a part of or form of machismo. I do agree these concepts are cultural manifestation and social constructs that acquire definition and meaning dependent on the social-cultural and political context of an individual and time.
In relation to defining machismo, Reyna and Cadena (2006) point out the
“adjectives that are repeated more in the definitions are the following ones:
aggressiveness, violence, virility and superiority (on the woman)”. In my work with
young Latinas and their families, mainly their mothers, in their homes and in my office
alike, I have heard echoes of this definition of machismo in their stories. From the 5 year
old girl who angrily stated, “Who does he think he is”, not as an inquiry but rather as an
exclamation, as she spoke about her father’s infidelity and his refusal to leave the house.
Another example is the mother, who came in desperate and conflicted about how to rid
herself and her children of the abuse of her husband, their father, who surrendered to the
hopelessness of her reality by saying “es que todos son machistas y ningunos sirven para
nada!” (They are all machistas and good for nothing).

My interest in this subject was initially inspired by personal experience, which
during my undergraduate years turned into a political issue and cause. During the last
few years, as a social worker providing services to children and families in a
predominantly Latino community, this issue resurfaced. As a clinical social worker, my
interest lies in bringing forth a better understanding of the experience of Latina women,
highlighted within the cultural context of her family system and community, to generate
gender-specific insight as it relates to machismo. Ideally, extracting these stories and
realities as defined by the individuals perception of what was lived would further inform
our practice lens of perceiving, assessing, exploring and analyzing the narratives of this
population in therapy. As the researcher of this qualitative study, I would ask the reader
to be mindful that “when we try to understand the cultural world, we are dealing with interpretations, and interpretations of interpretations” (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1979).

In conclusion, the experience of interviewing the participants offered a sense of mutuality and familiarity. Their narratives highlighted various cultural aspects of my person as a Latina woman, although our parents may be from different countries of origin, a common ground exist. A few examples were, the role of la hija (the daughter) and how at times la hija es la voz de la madre (the daughter is the mother’s voice), the confusion felt by desiring the “positive” forms of machismo, the questioning of caballerismo and how good or bad is it for us? It was affirming to witness their overall response of enthusiasm on the subject. From a clinical perspective, the participant who shared that she was “seeing things (her experiences) differently now that they were asked about from that contexts” and how “certain things were clicking” for her during the interview, spoke volumes.

**Results**

In this chapter findings from the study are reported. The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of machismo on second- generation Latina women identity formation. Using grounded theory methodologies, the data was analyzed. The study explored how second-generation Latina women: 1) define and perceive machismo, 2) who they have identified as machistas, 3) the qualities and characteristics they possess conceptually and/or behaviorally that define them as a machista, 4) what they identify as effects of machismo as it relates to their gender, and 5) how they have reacted/responded
to machismo. The data delineated various elements of machismo and the relationship second-generation Latina women have with the cultural masculine.

The findings of this study suggest it is important to consider the impact of machismo on second-generation Latina women. It may be explored by considering the following: 1) how second-generation Latina women define and perceive machismo, 2) what personal messages their perceptions of machismo have communicated to them, 3) if and how second-generation Latina women have integrated these perceptions into their sense of self, 4) the dynamic relationship between their ascribed social categories and their personal ideologios, and 5) the components of the dialectic-like process influenced by this relationship.

The data revealed machismo created a dynamic relational discord between cultural ethos and self-representations of the participants in this study. Final analysis generated one overarching category, or theoretical code, labeled “Redefining Her Personal Identity”. Under this theoretical code are the three main constructs, “Quien Eres: Ascribed Social Identity”, “Quien Soy: Self-Concepts”, and “El Choque”, illustrating the relationship between second-generation Latina women’s identity formation and machismo.

The following section will provide an in-depth examination of these constructs. The section begins with an exploration of the participants’ definition of machismo. Excerpts from the data will be provided under each section to illustrate the emergent theory. It is worth noting some excerpts could be attributed to other categories and concepts, as they may interrelate and overlap.
Quien Eres (Who You Are): Ascribed Social Identity

Endorsement of Traditional Gender Roles. To discern participants’ perception of machismo, each participant was asked to define machismo in her own words. The data illustrates several categories associated with their definition of machismo: traditional gender roles, male superiority, and female subservience. The following concepts were associated with the endorsement of traditional gender roles category: 1) sexist belief system, 2) men have a sense of entitlement 3) men have authority and 4) men are the providers of the family. The examples below illustrate these noted themes:

I guess it’s kind of the sexist male way of feeling certain things in society so like defining the roles of the man and the roles of the woman depending on the man having the upper hand type of thing so that’s kind of how I see it… the woman would be more of the submissive type so things that would be expected of her would be cleaning the house and cooking and keeping everything in order so that the man can just come and kind of come to a clean house and enjoy his evening as opposed to the man who is the provider so he would go out and do all the hard work and bring back the money needed to keep the household going so yeah, that would be kind of my definition. – Blanca

I feel like machismo is when a man feels like, feel entitled, feels entitled to act, to believe, to behave in any way that the society’s man is supposed to be um I feel like yeah society had this social construction of this man he’s allowed to go out and do whatever he wants to do but the woman needs to stand back and do whatever he says basically the women needs to be submissive to him um the woman needs to act accordingly basically she needs to follow his lead and yeah that’s basically what I believe machismo is. – Yvette

Um, I think like, I would define it like a man thinking he’s entitled to more than a woman, um, like sexist, but um, like in a, sexist like in a way that they think its just like, like the world’s law. Like that guys can do this and like girls can’t do that and that like this is like the way it is, “I can get away with doing this and like you have to stay home”. – Diana

As the data revealed, participants perceive machismo places women in a submissive and inferior position to men. By machismo establishing the man’s role and position, it
consequentially dictates the role and position of a woman. The narratives highlight the following perceived roles and position of women within a machista structure: 1) oppression, 2) female abidance, 3) female passivity and submission, and 4) responsibility over domestic duties. The participants narratives exemplify machismo endorses female subservience.

**Cultural Ethos.** Cultural ethos, or the shared beliefs and ideals of the collective, serve as a guide to individuals within a shared culture. Cultural ethos comprises the collective ideals, and in turn communicates expectations of the individuals within the group. As the data revealed machismo imparts an understanding of a man’s role and position, and through comparison does the same for woman.

*When I was little I grew up watching it, you know like mom cooks and dad just relaxes and they both work and dad is expected to bring the most money home kind of provide more provide for more of the necessities. And um brothers are not supposed to cook or play with dolls. And that’s just the way it has been.* - Maria

*He couldn’t cry you know like if something happened he got hit oh why are you crying like wussy stop crying you’re a man like grow up you know my brother was like four it was like grow up you need to be stronger you need to do this like it was kind of like that he was really strict really strong on him like my older brother wouldn’t cry if he didn’t get a toy because oh you’re not a kid you need to grow up and be a man and understand that this is how it works.* - Yvette

*I was basically taught to take care of my siblings and to clean and to cook um I wasn’t allowed to talk back to my uncles or to any of the men in my family cause they’re the men you know they’re like they’re up here and we’re suppose to respect them cause um they’re just the men of the family and we’re suppose to take care of them. I guess not take care of them but just make sure they have dinner like they come home and they are not complaining that there’s nothing to eat.* - Patricia

*When I was like in grammar school like I wasn’t allowed to go to anybody’s house like my friend’s houses or like sleep over like no like I had my bed I could sleep there my brother like did whatever he wanted like even though we were young, like he would go like hang out with his friends he would do whatever.* – Diana
In the examples above, most of the participants (10) illustrate gender-specific child-rearing practices, or traditional gender roles practices in their upbringing.

**Them vs. Us, Here vs. There.** The narratives demonstrate a sense of separation, highlighting a theme titled, *them versus us* and *here versus there*. Within this separation there is a disassociation between the women and machismo. It is within this space, or footing, this relationship seems to be taking place. In other words, according to the data, the participants do not view machismo as something that pertains to them, although clearly it is part of their upbringing. The following examples highlight this theme:

*I assume my family is the way they are because they grew up in Colombia. Cause I grew up, the times are different that’s why I would always tell my mom when she tells me I shouldn’t be in the park. I’d be like well everyone goes to the park. Its not a big thing cause the culture here in America its ok it doesn’t matter. So for like my cousins that grew up here I don’t think it would affect them because they grew up in America so they don’t experience it but I guess its more the older folks.* - Kristina

*He grew up with my father so I think for him or looking at him I feel like he is in some ways machsita I feel he has that mentality just because my father is like I said a lot older, so that’s the way my father grew up that’s the way he was raised.* - Blanca

*When I was little I grew up watching it you know like mom cooks and dad just relaxes and they both work and dad is expected to bring the most money home kinda provide more provide for more of the necessities. And um brothers are not to cook or play with dolls. And that’s just the way it has been but now that I’m older and my sister that’s eighteen we both we’ve taught our siblings and our brother too oh you have to be very equal and respectful to each other.* – Maria

The narratives revealed most participants identified and associated machismo as a way of life from another time and place, and not necessarily pertaining to them or “this day and age”. The participants’ reported a view of machismo as a concept of a way of life foreign (meaning from another country) and/or antiquated (pertaining to an older generation) in
comparison to their dominant culture and generation (modern western society) revealing an intrinsic cognizant distance and separation between her and machismo.

**Violence Against Women.** Participants’ narratives on machismo spoke of violence against women. Most of the women spoke of masculine authority and entitlement as core elements perpetuating the violence they witness against female family members. The women spoke of a sense of entitlement that the men feel or that the men are endowed on the basis of them being male. The examples below illustrate this assertion of power and control, and violence.

*He slapped her across the face. It was not a fun experience to witness and he said I am the man of this house and my daughter will not hear such things in my house. Um and I really feel there’s no more accurate manifestations of machismo than that one um he asserted his masculinity as being a reason for having a strong role and as, a strong role in the household, and as a reason and justification for exerting violence on my mom.* – Marissa

*He wouldn’t care who was around he would demean her verbally and he would grapple (man-handling) her, not like hit her across the face like that in front of little kids but he would grab on her wrists and put her against the wall and say you need to shut up, you need to shut up because we’re around people but he would demean her verbally like not care about anything.* – Yvette

*He would get aggressive with her and then like I said on the weekends he would go get drunk come home hit her, beat her and then we’d be scared and we would call the cops.* – Josefa

The narratives illustrated participants’ views of aggression towards women as a manifestation of machismo in the form of physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, humiliation, violence, and fear.

**Fear and Confusion.** A few participants explicitly expressed the fear elicited by machismo. Along with fear, their narratives revealed a sense of confusion stimulated by
machista principles and behaviors. Several women recalled significant experiences that stimulated fear and confusion in them.

*I kind of feel like there was always that fear of him and I feel that that’s in large part due to the fact that she was used to being the quiet one behind the scenes so yeah...Like a fear of speaking up to him cause she never spoke up to him like anything that...there was like a fear of speaking to him in some sort of way and that kind of resonated through the house.* – Blanca

*It was always like a sense of being scared and confused. It was like I just didn’t understand why they treated woman that way. I just didn’t understand.* – Kristina

*I guess it felt kinda scary because I didn’t really know, I didn’t understand too much of it and I didn’t understand why they acted this way towards me and then again I was a child and I wouldn’t question it cause I wasn’t suppose to cause I was a child and as I grew older you know I became more aware of my surroundings and the people around me.* – Patricia

The data suggests there is a relationship between machista principles and behaviors manifesting as violence against women and the stimulation of fear and confusion on participant’s understanding of the treatment of women.

Los Machistas. The participants’ narratives revealed that any given family member could be a machista. The data revealed any family member could transmit and reaffirm machista principles, depending on the individual’s behaviors and beliefs. The following examples are of identified machistas in the participants’ upbringing.

**Grandfather**: *I would say my grandfather was pretty much the epitome of what I would picture a machista I feel like he never really cared to think about the women in his family it was more of a, even his mother when she was alive I know my mother has told me she used to cater to his every need... he always supported his family when it came to money but he always expected her to have food ready on the table and just the same things that my grandma did like my great grandma did for him before it its like, its your mom why is that expected she’s not your wife and even if she was your wife you shouldn’t expect those things of her but that’s just the way he was raised I guess so I think he exemplifies it perfectly.* – Blanca
Grandmother: And my grandmother she absolutely like believes in that. I remember one time when Hilary Clinton was running for president, not that I liked Hilary Clinton cause I was always for Obama but when it was still, like they hadn’t voted on the democratic candidate and I was telling her how I think it’s so cool that like even though I’m not for her I think its awesome that finally there’s like a woman running and like standing a chance like to be president. I probably am a feminist I always say I’m not but like that just made me really happy. And my grandma was like no like a woman cant handle that. Like I literally couldn’t believe it was coming out of her mouth. I got like loud with her. That’s my grandma I never get loud with her but I was like I can’t believe you’re saying that like you’re getting me so mad I told her that that’s like a shame that her being a woman is saying that. How is she gonna say that like a woman can’t handle the same role that a man could? So, that’s one thing I’ll never forget like my grandma just showed me, like how highly do you thing of your sex that you think like they can’t handle powerful roles, or like being something important. - Diana

Father: It was just my dad um you know just his idea of a guy not doing anything in the house and like he’s gonna grow up go to school and then work and then that’s it. And then provide for which ever family he makes. - Victoria

Mother: Um I feel like since they both grew up in Honduras like to her that was ok. Like ok the girl has to cook and clean cause that’s how she grew up, was kinda like oh ok. She enforced it if you will. - Juana

Uncle: She cooked she cleaned she took care of the kids I never saw him stay at home and play with the kids it never happened and she also used to work so it’s not like she did one thing…like she needed to do everything that doesn’t make sense to me either and the fact that he felt he was entitled to, he was able to talk to her however he wanted, he could demean her in front of people, he could demean her in general like I feel that that’s definitely machismo I feel like those things shows that he embodied machismo…he never thought that he was doing anything wrong he always believe that because he was a man he could do all these things and it didn’t mean that they were wrong he was just doing what he needed to do as a man. – Yvette

Aunts: Every time we would go to my aunts house they would always do the same thing, that you know “the women here in America they think that they can do whatever they want y ellas se queren mas que el hombre (they think they are better than the man) and no its not like that. The man has to work and the woman has to submit and take care of the kids at home”. – Josefa

Brothers: I mean definitely when it comes to what they expect out of a woman yes, like they expect the woman to clean to cook to be passive I think that’s the biggest thing like they expect the woman to be passive. - Elsa
The examples above illustrate the various manifestations of machismo recognized in the participants’ narratives. The examples highlight male superiority, female submission and passivity, male aggression towards women, and traditional gender role practices.

**Quien Soy (Who I Am): Self-Concepts**

**Implications of Women’s Social Role and Position.** The participants spoke of machismo as a cultural element of a patriarchal belief system on gender, forming the socio-structural characteristics of the collective. That not only pertains to male gender attributes and roles but also dictates the place and role of Latina women. For example, an element of machismo is male superiority, which in turn communicates female inferiority. Another example from the data would be that according to machismo men have power and control, and women are powerless. Power and control, and patriarchy were concepts associated with the *male superiority* category. Elsa spoke of patriarchy as the foundation of the established cultural norms on the role of men and women.

*I would describe it as a way a patriarch is portrayed I guess in Latino culture it’s like an exemplification of patriarchy in Latino culture so I guess the gender normative rules of women are not only touched upon but used as a way to like guide how your life is supposed to be, like the man always have to, having to speak like the man having the voice I guess in a relationship like them being the ones to confront situations or I guess like the woman just being passive you know taking the back seat even though if there’s an issue or its her personal issue he has to kind of address it or like I said just like living the domestic life of cleaning, cooking, up keeping the household and them not being shared. – Elsa*

Josefa associated machista principles with Latino men having power and control and in turn Latina women being voiceless and powerless.

*It’s when the guys want to control everything. It’s when he believes the woman has no power at all. That she has to be by his word like if she wants to do*
Marissa highlighted how machista principles ascribe social roles to Latino men and Latina women placing Latina women in an inferior position to their Latino male counterpart.

*In my own words machismo is a social construct and it’s a mentality that men and women should serve fundamentally different roles in society and that they are ascribed different responsibilities and that they were like preordained to fulfill certain roles in their lives just by the nature of being female or male and along with this like distinction um I guess you could attribute a sense of superiority um on behalf of males over women in just, in terms of sexual capacity, professional potential, and just in any social environment or structure.* – Marissa

The data revealed through machismo, the participants are being informed of their culturally ascribed social identity. The data illustrated machismo as a cultural object transmitting messages of a Latina woman’s place in the world in relation to men as well as messages of her capabilities and obligations. As one participant points out:

*Um machismo I would say is when I guess a man who believes he is superior to women just because he is a man um that we has more power over them and whatever he says goes kinda thing. And I guess it does make women part of it cause if the woman accepts it or just doesn’t have a choice then she gets controlled by it by the whole thing.* – Maria

The data illustrated machismo is a cultural belief system implying or imposing a sense of female submission and inferiority onto girls and women. However, it is the girl/woman’s response/reaction to machismo and how she integrates these messages that is pertinent to her identity formation. To go further, the process by which she manages and negotiates these messages seems to ultimately influence her introjections and self-representation.

**Rejections of Machismo.** To further assess the participants’ perception of machismo, participants were asked 1) if there were positive attributes to machismo and 2)
if there were negative attributes to machismo. Often times, caballerismo is identified as a positive form of machismo. Two of the 12 participants’ narratives illustrated a degree of consideration of caballerismo as a possible positive attribute.

No. I don’t think so at first I was thinking maybe yes just because sometimes I feel like it’s good when you’re able to say, I’ve been in relationships, I’ve been around men who say “oh walk in the inside of the street because we don’t want you to get hurt” and I guess sometimes machismo might come out as chivalrous in some aspect or the other but then again I feel like no. I feel like there’s no need to do that like if machismo wasn’t so ah evident in the world than maybe women wouldn’t be treated as bad as they’re treated. – Yvette

I mean I guess it’s nice if like guys wanna like to do things for you I guess that can be considered a more positive machismo like “oh like, I’m a guy, I’m like the male of the household” like being a gentleman I guess but I don’t really think of machismo as that, I think of machismo more as a like a sexist, like disrespectful man like trying to like control their woman or trying to like act like he’s like better I guess, or like higher like in a sense. – Diana

Out of the twelve participants, the two examples above were the only to mention caballerismo, or chivalrous behavior in their narratives. Yvette’s example demonstrates a brief consideration of protection towards women as chivalry, but concluded by stating protection towards women wouldn’t be necessary if women weren’t mistreated in the first place. The second example distinguishes caballerismo from machismo. Diana makes a distinction between what machismo and caballerismo mean to her, making them two separate concepts as opposed to caballerismo being an element of machismo.

One participant stated there are positive attributes to machismo but “to a certain extent”, making a distinction of jealousy and aggressiveness as acceptable until it becomes controlling and abusive.

Like I think you need to find like a medium to it. Cause maybe jealousy can be a trait of machismo...I think you have to find the happy medium between it cause jealousy is ok to a certain extent or like being strict or aggressive to a certain
 extent but not to the point it’s overpowering and you’re abusing someone because of it but I think where that fine line falls is in communication. So if you’re not verbalizing that you’re jealous or not verbalizing that you’re mad that’s where it becomes machismo because then you act on it. – Kristina

Victoria gave a definitive yes to machismo having positive attributes.

That although children are a lot to handle, you are able to have flexibility within the household that if you have some free extra time to breathe you can actually breathe. Whereas if you’re working full-time, and you come home to the kids and you have to cook and you have to do all these things, it’s a lot more work. It’s a lot more overwhelming. I guess to me being a household wife in the machismo’s eye is kind of beneficial to the mom so that she can be at ease and she doesn’t have to worry about the outside things like the money.

From her perspective being a stay at home mom is positive as opposed to doing both, working and taking care of the children. She seems to identify machismo solely as gender-specific roles pertaining to woman taking care of the domestic duties and the children while the man is the sole provider, without including the other elements of power and superiority illustrated by the majority of the participants. Although in her response to the negative attributes of machismo she did highlight these elements.

Overall, ten of the participants responded there aren’t positive attributes to machismo and expressed a rejection of machismo. The data revealed three prevalent categories associated with participants’ rejection of machismo: inequality, female oppression, and female inferiority. Elsa directly responded, “No. I don’t think that oppressing a woman is positive.” Marissa spoke of the sense of inferiority brought up Latina women by machismo and the possible effects of that sense of inferiority in Latina women.

I can’t think of any space or situation where that would be something that is favorable...if you constantly feel you are inferior to the individual um because of something you can’t control which is you know your gender, um your sex...if I
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Grew up in an environment saying that “oh you’re gonna cook for the rest of your life”...if I was raised with this mentality that this is the role in society I’m going to fulfill then there would be a self-fulfilling prophecy. I wouldn’t fill out applications for college, I wouldn’t seek internships. I wouldn’t seek new opportunities. I wouldn’t even think about it. That would be so far removed from my reality and what I see myself accomplishing that I would never get to that. – Marissa

Blanca expressed her rejection of machismo by highlighting the inequality that machista principles establish between men and women.

I think over all its just an unfair view just because I guess a lot had changed since the past and women have become the providers for their homes and they’re working just as hard, twice as hard because they’re still maintaining the household but they’re also going out and earning the money so I don’t think there’s anything good that comes from it, from having that very old fashioned train of thought. – Blanca

Most of the women spoke of machismo as an established cultural understanding on the role and position of Latino men and Latina women that limits Latina women. The women’s rejection of machismo seems to come with a view of machismo as limiting to their person.

Lastly, two of the twelve identified their defiance and “standing up against machismo” as the positive attribute machismo had in their life. However, all participants expressed a sense of defiance and opposition to machismo in their narrative, which will be discussed further at the end of this section.

I guess it worked out for me in a way because I guess my kind of ideal is that when people tell me I can’t do something I try to defy them and prove them that I can...like I guess in someway that’s a positive thing for me cause it helped me see the negative things about it and what I could do to make it better for myself...But I guess it depends on who’s doing it to you and the kind of person you are, cause if you’re more, if you take things more to heart it will affect you negatively. You’ll just do what you’re told but if you’re the kind of person that’s rebellious you’ll kind of take it and turn it around for yourself. – Patricia, 19
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Valenciano

*It hit a point where I was gonna be 16 and I was like no I don’t want to be like this anymore. I don’t wanna be like “oh because you’re a girl you have to stay home and cook” and I told him and I got really mad and I got courage to actually talk back to him...After that I stood up more for myself...I said I’m gonna grow up and I’m gonna be independent. I’m gonna be by myself. I’m not gonna let a guy try and control me like my dad did with my stepmom doing with my stepmom or my mother. So ever since I started, I’m gonna do whatever I can to like push myself.* – Josefa

The data revealed participants perceived machismo as socializing Latina girls/women towards specific roles based on their gender. The data illustrated a rejection of machismo, rejection of their role-related identities and a rejection of the undesirable role and position imposed on them.

**Self-Doubt and Insecurities.** The data illustrates machismo impacts the development of Latina women’s self-concepts. Participants expressed initial feelings of self-doubt and insecurities resulting from machista principles. The following two quotes represent self-doubt and insecurity.

*I believe that when I was younger it was very negative like everything ended up being bad because I was a girl and in my mind I was thinking well I’m a girl I can’t really do anything. Like I can’t change the fact that I’m a girl so I’m gonna do whatever they tell me to do. But as I got older was like well why does it matter that I’m a girl and then I started actually doing better in my academics and I’m thinking to myself well if I’m getting good grades it doesn’t matter if I’m a girl like I’m gonna do whatever I want to do.* – Juana

*I would say um at first I felt like I was not as strong and powerful but as I’ve grown up I’ve built up like a defense mechanism like with all this feminist information and my friends have similar beliefs that from just seeing it like seeing how unhappy people can be with machismo around them like I just like for me it just not what I want for me. I feel pretty good. I have good self-esteem that it’s not about what anyone else has to say.* – Maria

Both Juana and Maria spoke of how machismo has impacted their self-concept and affected their behavior as a young Latina girl and through their development. The
examples illustrate how as they got older and became more cognizant of themselves and their environment they developed their own ideas of their potentiality, of whom they are and what they want. The majority (11) of the participants’ narratives revealed a similar process to a varying degree.

**El Choque (The Clash).** The participants’ narratives illustrated discordance between their ascribed social identity as imposed on them by machismo and her self-concepts. In other words, there is a *choque* (clash) between her ascribed social identity and their self-concepts. Elsa spoke of gender roles as social constructs imposed on her and the internal conflicts it has created.

*Yes because of what, like understanding that gender roles can, gender roles are fluid, non universal, and they’re a construction, they don’t mean anything but being told that they do you know what I mean like understanding that like I can do whatever I wanna do etc but still being pushed into following them… it’s hard to choose what the right thing to do is because everything and everyone is telling you to fit into this box of being a Latina woman right, but you understand that it’s an imaginary box that you can step outside of it, that you can walk back in etc, it’s making that decision I know that I don’t have to be there, but everyone expects me to so is it worth fighting against it? It’s stressful because like you don’t know what the right thing to do is but you don’t know if that’s gonna lead you down the correct path.* - Elsa

Diana, like most of the participants, spoke of her experiences with machismo as catalysts turning her against it.

*I think it affected me in like the opposite way that she wanted it to affect me because I think she wanted me to be like oh yeah like I’m learning how to cook and clean and honestly I don’t know how to do any of those things... I just don’t think it’s like my role I don’t really believe in like that traditional, maybe like when I’m married one day if like, we like come, if we like split things, I’ll do like the laundry and like he’ll do something else but I won’t be like oh I’ll do everything domestic in the house and you can just like sit down like watch. I’m not gonna be like that, um, so I think it affected me like in turning me more against that mentality instead of like preparing me like the way she wanted it to.* – Diana
Patricia pointed out machismo helped her identify who she is via her defiance of machista principles.

*I think it has affected my sense of self in the way that at some point it helped me identify with who I am. Cause when I was growing up I really didn’t have a sense of who I was cause I was mostly the oldest daughter and that was it. My role was the oldest daughter and now it’s like well you know now it’s well I want to do this and I want to do that and I’ll do it. I don’t know I guess it helped me shape who I am mostly because of the way I took it cause I tried to change the way they thought about me so it changed me. I wasn’t, at first I was very shy and just like yea that’s ok I’ll do it and now I’m like no. Like I said I’m more defiant.* – Patricia

Juana illustrated similar process to both Diana and Patricia above, where she expressed machismo helped shape her through her defiance.

*I feel like it made me more independent and it made me more outspoken because I’m like the one that goes against whatever my father says. If he says go cook something and he’s been home for ten hours well why don’t you go cook it like I just feel like it made me who I am today.* – Juana

The narratives revealed the messages transmitted by machista principles were not aligned with the participants’ personal views. The participants’ narratives reveal an internal and external opposition to machismo. This discord is what the researcher is referring to as *El Choque* (The Clash). This discord continues to occur throughout their developmental process.

**The Responsive Process**

The data suggests *El Choque* between her ascribed social identity imposed by machista principles and her self-concepts motivates a responsive process. According to the participants’ narratives, the responsive process seems to unfold within them. Participants shared various stories revealing common themes within this process. The data revealed five elements associated with the responsive process: questioning,
awareness, confrontation, defiance, and independence and equality. Excerpts from the data are offered below to illustrate each identified element of the participants’ responsive process.

**Questioning.** The participants’ narratives revealed they experienced and continue to experience a questioning process. The participants shared various experiences that led them to question the validity of machista principles. This questioning process seems to happen at different times in their development. From a simple proclamation as a child on why her brother doesn’t have to clean but she does, to more recent inquires on why men are reared towards financial independence but women towards marriage. Their questioning seemed to take various forms at different stages in their development. Below are a few examples of the questioning process.

*At a certain age I started questioning well why, why do I have to learn how to cook or why do I have to learn to do that.* – Elsa

*I actually started to question things like why are they like that or why did they treat me like this when you know I’m not a bad person so why do they always criticize me and so pretty much I started to change the way I feel so that made me more aware of things that were going on as opposed to being blind following the lead how things should be. Like I started to question more things and started to see things more differently. And like certain behaviors I was like well, like when I was smaller I didn’t understand it but now I see that that’s the way they grew up. Even though they say things in a certain way they mean well you know.* – Patricia

*I believe that when I was younger it was very negative like everything ended up being bad because I was a girl and in my mind I was thinking well I’m a girl I can’t really do anything. Like I can’t change the fact that I’m a girl so I’m gonna do whatever they tell me to do. But as I got older was like “well why does it matter that I’m a girl?” and then I started actually doing better in my academics and I’m thinking to myself well if I’m getting good grades it doesn’t matter if I’m a girl like I’m gonna do whatever I want to do.* – Juana

Elsa’s recalls questioning the gender-specific roles and responsibilities practiced in her home. Patricia’s narrative illustrates how she began questioning the behavior of some of her family
members and specifically why they treated her how they did. Her acknowledgment that she is not a bad person led her to change how she dealt with machista principles in her family. In turn, she began “to question more things.” Juana shared how she felt “everything ended up being bad” because she was a girl. Once she questioned, “what does it matter that I’m a girl?” she began to do better in school and seems to have acquired an increased sense of her potentiality.

**Awareness.** The participants’ shared stories that revealed an acquired understanding of machista principles. They explained that through observation of their environment and family, specifically relational dynamics that display machismo, along with introspection on self and on being a woman, they developed their own understanding and ideas of machismo. The participants shared stories that demonstrated personal awareness of machismo and self, and how it has and continues to impact them. Below are a few examples of the participants’ acquired awareness:

*Um I think it’s made just not wanna be in that role I guess it’s made me aware of who I am as in the fact that like you know I am a woman and I know that regardless of where you go there’s gonna be like that typical oh you are a woman so like you should learn like you should know this but I feel like I guess empowerment because I see that it’s not ok… it’s just made me feel like I’m not that I’m not gonna be in that position. Like I’ll obviously be like I told you before I’ll probably do certain but I’m not gonna be in a position where I’m gonna be ok with machismo in the household because that’s not how it is. It’s always suppose to be equal power even though there’s always gonna be a little dominance over the other one, women and men can do the same exact thing.* – Sara

*I mean like lately it’s been really insane to see it cause now that I’m older I guess I observe more things or absorb more things like I’ve been seeing like my mom more um I don’t know, what do I describe it as, um like she’ll be more careful, like “oh don’t do this cause you’re gonna anger your dad or something like that, and my sister and I are like really hardcore, I guess the society we grew up in is more feminist than most generations so we’d be like “no mom don’t even think about that like if he gets mad it’s ok it’s not a big deal.”* – María

*I think that’s what pushed me into women and gender studies those experiences that a lot of times I didn’t even pick up on and the times that I did made me see*
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Valenciano

there’s something wrong like there’s a division between me as a woman and him or whoever as a man and I wanna understand why and understand how to fight it I think it’s pretty much shaped who I am in every way because had I not experienced that I wouldn’t have gone into women and gender studies I wouldn’t have educated myself in the way that I did that is not who I am like everything, I look at everything through a gender lens I don’t look at it just as Dominican woman or just as a Dominican or just as an American I look at it as a, first a woman then Dominican then a minority etc. – Elsa

Sara’s narrative illustrates how her awareness led to a personal understanding of sexism. This awareness also led to the development and/or recognition of her personal convictions as she stated, “I’m not gonna be in a position where I’m gonna be ok with machismo in the household because that’s not how it is.”

Maria reflects on her recent observations of the power relations between her mother and her father. Maria’s narrative illustrates her desire to understand the power dynamics similar to Patricia above. Maria makes a generational comparison to explain why she and her sister see things differently than her parents. “I guess the society we grew up in is more feminist than most generations so we’d be like “no mom don’t even think about that like if he gets mad it’s ok it’s not a big deal.” Maria’s narrative illustrates her desire to change her parent’s power dynamics. In encouraging her mother to see and behave differently towards her father, she reveals her belief and values regarding the power dynamics between men and women, husband and wife.

Elsa’s awareness led to more questions and a desire to know more. The purpose of her desire for knowledge was to “understand how to fight it.” Elsa’s narrative illustrates how she internalized her opposition to machismo as she directly stated, “I think it’s pretty much shaped who I am in every way.”
**Confrontation.** The participants’ expressed a varying degree of intolerance towards machista principles. The participants’ narratives highlighted the various ways they have confronted machismo in their home and their surroundings. Participants’ narratives illustrate numerous experiences of them verbally expressing their opposition of machista practices in their home, of confronting their fathers or other adult members of their family on machista behaviors and/or beliefs, as well as refusing to accept or behave passively towards machista comments made by friends or strangers. The following quotes illustrate a few examples of their confrontations.

*Yes he (brother) does chores inside the house and if he does outside work he’ll help my dad. We pretty much um and I made that point cause I didn’t like the way things were going with him only having to do outside work so I was like “he needs to do stuff inside too”. I was like “it’s time to cut that out”.* - Victoria

*If it’s a male and they say something like “oh you should be doing this”. Why because I’m a girl. I get very defensive and then I have to say something. I will be like okay even if I don’t have a good comeback I’m just gonna keep arguing no matter what. I have to say something cause if not it’s just gonna keep bothering me.* – Juana

*But um sometimes if he gets mad like he’ll stand up straighter to kinda like intimidate you and that I’ve noticed now that I’m older cause I’ll stand up to him and tell him off.* – Maria

Victoria expressed how her disapproval of machismo in her childhood led to her taking a stand. In her case, machismo manifested as gender-specific roles in the house where her brother wasn’t responsible for any domestic chores only “outside work.” Victoria confronted gender-specific roles and practices of the house by boldly stating “it’s time to cut that out.” Juana’s narrative reveals her irritability with and need to confront machista/sexist comments and beliefs. Maria identifies changes in her father’s demeanor and posture when he was angry which she perceives as a strategy he uses to intimidate
which in turn seems to get a reaction from her. “And that I’ve noticed now that I’m older cause I’ll stand up to him and tell him off.” Her narrative illustrates her intolerance and opposition to this form of manipulation and power dynamics.

**Defiance.** Defiance was another common theme in the participants’ narrative. The participants explained that their exposure to machista principles in their upbringing motivated them to be intentionally defiant against such ideals. The participants expressed a refusal to conform to machismo. Additionally, participants viewed their defiance as a positive affect of machismo. The following examples demonstrate a couple of ways their defiance manifested.

*I think it sort of just made me like how I am now it made me look at like it never made me resent men or anything like that I think it’s because it wasn’t the men in my family really doing it so much cause that’d make me resent it that’d make me resent men more, it’s just like looking at my grandma saying something like what I told you or like my mom trying to get me to do my gender role like that sort of made me like not want to be like that I don’t know if that’s wrong of me but it sort of like, I don’t know like I have too much pride I guess to just like conform to that so it sort of just made me look at it in like a negative light like look how you sound right now talking about like a woman and that just made me never wanna be like that.* - Diana

*Honestly, I don’t think it negatively affected me. It allowed me to be a little rebellious I can’t even lie. There were times I would want to sneak out and like you know if I wanted to go to a friend’s house and hang out with them because the curfews were getting too crazy. Even on the weekends. So it was affecting me in where I would act out rebellious behavior.* - Victoria

Diana’s narrative illustrates the development of resentment as a result of machista principles and practices being imposed on her and Latina girl/women in general. In her case, she clarifies it wasn’t the men in her family that imposed such belief systems and practices onto her but if it had been she stated, “*that would make me resent men more.*” Diana explained the imposition of gender-specific roles and beliefs from her mother and
her grandmother “made me like not want to be like that.” She rejected their views on women’s capacity and place in society. Victoria’s narrative illustrates how she defied the gender-specific restrictions placed upon her in her childhood household. In her case, she felt her brother had entitlements and she had restrictions. The different treatment and privileges between her and her brother seems to have stimulated her rebellious behavior.

**Independence and Equality.** The majority of the participants identified as themselves as independent women who believed in equality between men and women. Although they were raised with some varying degree of machista principles, they envisioned equal responsibility over domestic duties and believed they should have equal access to financial independence. A couple of participants expressed wanting their future husband to be the primary breadwinner. However, they did not see it fair or necessary for the woman to be solely responsible over the domestic sphere. Overall, they saw themselves as independent, capable and ambitious women who planned to desist machista principles in their future homes.

*It’s always like a clash cause they’re expecting something out of a Latina woman they’re expecting you to be passive or to be domestic or domesticated around them and I refuse to do that so it’s always an issue.* - Elsa

*I think once I move out that won’t be it. That won’t be how I would want to raise my children and or how I will have a relationship with someone else like my boyfriend or my husband I wouldn’t want to be very different cause I wouldn’t want to raise my children like that or myself. It wouldn’t be like that it would be different... Um it would be like a team effort not so much each person have their own specific duty like but if we do it would be equal it won’t be because you’re a man or a woman.* – Maria

*I can take care of myself. There’s no need for me to ask for a man to take care of me.* – Victoria
I’m gonna grow up and I’m gonna be independent. I’m gonna be by myself. I’m not gonna let a guy try and control me. – Josefa

When I’m older I do want to have a man in the house who is the breadwinner but I would like the responsibilities to be shared. So I think that’s how it’s different. So I wouldn’t want to be held responsible for all the domestic things and for all the children. I think it should be shared. – Kristina

I could be the one to bring in the most money and I’m ok with that. I’m ok with the guy staying home and taking care of the kid cause I know I’m gonna have a full time job in the future. You know I’m not gonna have the luxury of being a stay at home mom. But in that term I don’t think I’ll follow the typical role but now is not the same as it was before. It’s not the same thing as it was like in the 20’s when women were supposed to do that. Like they were restricted to certain jobs. Now they are not restricted we can do any job. We can do pretty much anything a man can do. – Sara

I’m like I don’t know proud to be a woman I’m like a part of a Latin sorority that’s independent and like I love that, we don’t have brothers so just stuff like that when I got to college I was attracted to that like I believe in that like I believe that if I were to be single for the rest of my life I’d be fine...I’ve never been one of those girls that need a boyfriend I don’t need a guy I guess so it’s made me more willing to be independent and more like I feel like it should be equal. – Diana

I’m in college now you know I’m gonna do something with my life and that’s pretty much it. One day I’ll buy a house for my family and make sure they’re ok that’s pretty much, my goal is to make sure that they are ok...I did become more independent but not to a point where I forgot about them. So like one of my goals is like one day get them a house, make sure they’re ok. – Patricia

I’m very independent and set in my ways and I feel like I would never allow a man to try to tell me what my place is. – Blanca

I’m me again but now I’m scared am I gonna go into another relationship and be this person again am I going to be submissive I don’t wanna do that now I don’t wanna get into another relationship because I’m like I’m gonna be this other person that I don’t wanna be again. – Yvette

Women are just as capable as being professional successful, academically successful, socially successful in just about any professional strain as men are um so in that term I do not ascribe to that role I do think that women should be just as independent as men should be, financially stable, emotionally stable, and socially stable without the necessitated support or help of men um that women don’t have any ascribed role. – Marissa
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"It’s like if you say that my role is in the kitchen like that’s not gonna happen. Like I will do the complete opposite and I won’t do anything for you. But I feel like it made me think, everybody’s equal." - Juana

Elsa speaks directly to the clash she experiences between what is expected of her as a Latina woman and how those expectations go against her personal beliefs of herself.

Maria’s narrative illustrates her vision of the household structure and relationship dynamics she hopes to implement in her household. Both Victoria and Josefa speak of their view of independence illustrating economical self-reliance and a sense of personal agency. Kristina expresses a desire for the man to be the primary breadwinner but household duties to be shared. Meanwhile, Sara expresses the opposite. She would be open to being the primary breadwinner and having her future husband as a stay-at-home dad. Diana identifies as “not needing a man”, while Patricia expresses a desire to provide for her present nuclear family.

Blanca asserts her sense of her social position and self-value as it relates to the man/woman dyad. Yvette’s narrative illustrates a fear of losing herself in a relationship. She expresses a fear of becoming submissive. Marissa directly states her personal beliefs of gender equality in opportunities and abilities. She proceeds to say women no longer need to be reliant on men, and women have every ability and right to be independent. Juana’s opposition to the traditional gender roles ascribed to women especially when imposed on her result in her becoming reactive and confrontational.

The data revealed every participant expressed an opposition to the social order of Latina women and Latino men established by machismo. All their narratives illustrate a present alternative conceptualization of gender value, not constrained or restricted to the
ascribed social identities perpetuated by machismo. According to the participants’ responses, men are able to be responsible for childrearing and women are able to be primary breadwinners. Their narratives illustrated an envisioned and desired alternative social structure in their future homes and families, free of the ascribed social roles imposed on Latina women and Latino men by machismo.

Summary

The data illustrate Latina women have a relationship with machismo, and in turn machismo has an impact on Latina women’s identity formation. Machismo may be seen as a cultural object, a dynamic force that exists within the everyday exchanges among Latina women and their family members, as well as the community at large. These everyday exchanges transmit gender-specific messages of what is expected and tolerated (i.e. girls help with household chores, boys don’t have to) and what is unacceptable and intolerable (i.e. girls can’t be around boys, boys can’t cry). The data revealed several common concepts regarding machismo/machista principles and Latina women.

- Machismo/Machista principles are transmitted via child-rearing practices and expectations.
- Any family member is able to transmit machista principles to the child (i.e. grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, uncles, aunt, etc).
- Machismo is based on traditional (antiquated) gender roles and attributions.
- Machismo gives boys/men entitlement and girls/women restrictions.
- Machismo is oppressive to Latina women.
- Machismo perpetuates power relations.
Machismo communicates messages of gender value and personal capabilities.

Machismo creates discordance between Latina women and the cultural masculine.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to use a grounded theory methodology approach to explore the impact of machismo on the identity formation of second-generation Latina women. The narratives of 12 second-generation Latina women revealed common themes offering insight on second-generation Latina women’s definition of machismo, perception of and experience with machismo, and how machismo has impacted their identity and relationships.

The discussion will address how manifestations of machismo transmit messages to Latina women about their ascribed social roles and expectations. Secondly, it will address the participants’ self-concepts and how the manifestations of machismo impact a Latina woman’s personal identity. Lastly, *El Choque* (The Clash) and the responsive process it stimulates along with the elements and purpose of this process will be discussed highlighting how machismo may affect Latina women intra-personally and interpersonally. Implications for practice and research will be discussed, as well as the limitations of this study.

The study found participants viewed machismo as a cultural belief system that transmits gender-specific messages to Latino boys/men and girls/women on acceptable and expected behaviors. The family system and cultural child-rearing practices are the primary social context of where and how these exchanges take place. The family system is a pertinent transmitter of machismo in a Latina woman’s upbringing.
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The participants’ narratives exemplify the Eriksonian principle that, “identity development occurs as a psychosocial phenomenon” (Berzoff, 2008). Similarly, Hinde and Hinde-Stevenson (1987) explain norms and values are “transmitted and transmuted through the agency of dyadic relationships” (p.3). As the majority of the participants explained they experienced and witnessed gender-specific roles and expectations. Initially, these expectations were communicated via child-rearing practices, which were part of the family systems daily exchange and routine.

Through these practices, Latina women received messages about her place within the collective as well as her roles. As she acquired a sense of her intra-group roles and expectations, she received messages of what it means to be a girl. She acquired an understanding of who she is as defined by the collective. Hobson, Chidambi, Lee, and Meyer (2006) highlight, “how from early in life, an individual’s relatedness toward people is structured by the process of identifying with others’ attitudes, and how this has important implications for the acquisition of concepts of self and other” (p.1). It is within the Latina woman’s socio-cultural context that she acquires an initial understanding of who she is.

According to machismo, as described by the participants, Latino men are to be the primary breadwinners, Latina women are in charge of the domestic sphere, Latino men are superior and Latina women inferior, Latino men have authority and power and Latina women are to be passive and are powerless. Machismo communicates to Latina women that based on the intersection of their gender and culture, they are ascribed a set of expectations, usually referred to in the literature as marianismo. Although the
participants did not directly differentiate between marianismo and machismo in their narratives, the female gender roles and attributions they highlighted were descriptive of marianista principles. As Gil and Vazquez (1996) explained, “the rules of marianismo are defined by the rules of machismo”.

Within the cultural structure created by machismo, as defined and perceived by the participants, a Latina woman’s gender ascribes social status and carries with it a list of presumptions on her potentiality and responsibilities. Primarily, placing Latina women in an inferior position to their counterpart. This position of inferiority is displayed or manifest in numerous ways. “Some psychologist have suggested that ‘gender’ operates not merely at the level of sex differences, or as the result of social interactions in which beliefs are expressed in actions that actually create confirming evidence for those beliefs, but also in the social structures that define power relationships throughout the culture” (Stewart and McDermott 2004, p. 521). All the participants’ narratives related machismo to power dynamics between men and women based on traditional gender roles.

The narratives illustrated numerous manifestations of machismo and marianismo in the home and community. The primary manifestation was in the form of traditional gender roles, along with other shared cultural beliefs and ideals regarding men and women. The cultural ethos identified as manifestations of machismo involved male superiority and entitlement, female submission and passivity, and male aggression. All of which communicate to Latina women their ascribed social identity, and ultimately describes the “ideal” woman, la marianista, within that cultural belief system (as illustrated on the following page in Figure 1).
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Figure 1. Influence of Cultural Belief System on Ascribed Social Identity as Perceived by the Participants
Machismo and marianismo are socio-cultural constructs founded on cultural beliefs on gender. Machismo and marianismo communicate to girls/women and boys/men messages of who they are within the collective. Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Ethier (1995) posit, “membership in social groups or collectives provide an important basis for self-definition” (P. 280). Machismo and marianismo exemplify the intersectionality of gender and culture as it relates to personal and social identity development, placing Latina women in a low-status social position within the group.

Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) explain, “context provides feedback about one’s social position (of the person in the group, of the group in relation to other groups) that can provide a sense of security (even superiority) or engender a source of threat to self” (p.165). Machismo communicates messages of social identity, or to be more specific, and borrow from social identity theory, it offers Latina women a “negative in-group status position” (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, and Miekle, 1999).

**Machismo, Social Identity, and Self-Concepts**

Amoit, De La Sablonniere, Terry, and Smith (2007) explained social identity refers to “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership to a social group (or groups) together with the value and the emotional significance attached to it” (p.365). It is within this process of acknowledging one’s social identity and recognizing one’s self-concepts that machismo is integrated into one’s sense of self and incorporated into one’s identity formation.
Participants’ definition and perception of machismo overwhelmingly highlight negative attributes of the cultural object as it relates to them as women. The narratives clearly illustrated power dynamics between men and women, and low socio-cultural ingroup status for women. For example, they point out machismo contributes the following: 1) inequality between men and women, 2) men having authority over women, 3) placing women in a submissive and inferior position, and 4) causing women to question their capabilities and self-worth.

The data suggests machismo had both, intrapersonal and interpersonal affects on these Latina women. Intra-personally, machismo communicated messages of her ascribed social identity. Machismo transmits messages of inferiority, submissiveness, powerlessness, and overall female passivity. The participants’ social identity as a Latina woman, and the roles, expectations and restrictions placed on her as a result of machista principles threaten her personal identity.

Adams and Marshall (1996) indicate “macro- and micro-environmental features influence identity formation through the shared values, ideologies, or norms that are socially constructed and communicated through signs, symbols, meanings, and expectations that are found in language, discourse or communication” (p.438). As noted earlier, the participants’ perceptions of machismo depict an invalidating environment for Latina girls and women. Within the social-cultural context of machismo, Latina women are perceived as second-class citizens within their own homes and communities. The participants’ narratives elucidate how machismo creates the socio-structural
characteristics of intragroup dynamics between Latino men and Latina women, placing Latina women in a negative in-group status position.

To elaborate on the impact of negative in-group status position, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) explained “we should not conceive of certain social identities as inherently attractive or unattractive, instead the same group membership may be seen either as identity enhancing or as jeopardizing a positive sense of self” (p. 165). From this perspective, it could be said the participants perceived machismo as jeopardizing a positive sense of self.

Gil and Vazquez (1996) remind us “in any society you’ll find an infinite range of behavior-individual characteristics and unique inner clashes between cultural expectations and personal needs” (p.23). The narratives demonstrate this conflicting view between the participants’ self-concepts and their ascribed social identity as Latina women. Within their present socio-cultural context, the participants’ interaction with machismo resulted in *El Choque* (the clash) between their ascribed social identity and their self-concepts, which initiated an internal and external response. The responsive process illustrated the conflict machismo creates for Latina women intra- and interpersonally, which also led the participants to a deeper understanding of their personal views and identity.

Their conceptualizations of personal identity has developed through the responsive process; through their personal confusion, through the questioning, in their increased awareness, through their anger and intolerance, and through their rebellious behavior. In their response to machismo, their personal beliefs and practices have formed
and evolved. In turn, allowing them to, at the very least, believe in an alternative. Although some participants expressed fear and a lack of knowing how to create the alternative in practice within a family system, they all expressed a desire for it. The data revealed the idea of an alternative to machismo. For example, the woman rejected endorsement of traditional gender roles and believed in equality between men and women.

The figure below illustrates the interplay between the primary constructs of this study. It demonstrates the clash that occurred between the participants’ identified ascribed social identity imposed on them by machismo and their self-concepts, resulting in their need and struggle to redefine their personal identity, internally and within their socio-cultural context.

Figure 2. Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women’s Identity

In Adam and Marshall’s (1996) discussion on the process of growth and development of personal identity, they highlight various theoretical approaches to
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identity formation. All of the mechanisms (self-awareness, distress/discomfort, confrontation, and resolution) highlighted by Adam and Marshall (1996), are present in the participants’ narratives, as is evident in the following constructs: Quien Eres (Who You Are), Quien Soy (Who I Am), and El Choque (The Clash), which is illustrated in below.

Figure 3. Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women Identity Formation

Quien Eres (Who You Are):
Ascribed Social Identity
• Endorsement of Traditional Gender Roles
• Cultural Ethos
• Them vs. Us, Here vs. There
• Violence against Women
• Machistas in Upbringing

Quien Soy (Who I Am):
Self-Concepts
• Implications of a Woman’s Social Role and Position
• Rejection of Machismo
• Self-Doubt & Insecurities

El Choque (The Clash)
• Confusion
• Questioning
• Awareness
• Anger
• Confrontation
• Opposition
• Defiance

The Responsive Process
• Starts Questioning Machista Principles
• Increased Awareness of Self & Machismo
• Internal/External Intolerance and Confrontation of Machista Principles & Behaviors
• Defiant and Rebellious Behaviors
• Beliefs of Equality and Independence
The participants’ narratives carried an opposing and defiant voice towards machista principles, and the ascribed social identity machismo imposes on Latina women. The participants expressed feeling confused, and at other times angry, by the differential treatment and expectations based on gender. For the majority of the participants confusion and anger seem to be the catalyst to their questioning, and in turn their heighten awareness. By their questioning of gender-specific roles and expectations within their family systems, and of the overall treatment and ideas on and towards women, the participants developed their personal views on their capabilities and capacity as women. In this sense, the beginning of questioning is the beginning of transformation.

At the forefront of this transformative process there seems to be an association of machismo as a concept from “over there” referring to their parents country of origin, and “not something from here” referring to where they are from. This disassociation creates a space between them and their sense of how machismo may or may not apply to them. The participants’ narrative also revealed this particular understanding of machismo as “something from their parents’ country” reinforces the cultural and generational gap between them and their parents and extended family members. This space and separation creates the Us vs. Them, Here vs. There factor.

All of the participants found their self-concepts were not aligned with machismo and what it contributes to them as women. The participants shared stories of the various ways their opposition towards machista principles manifested behaviorally within their socio-cultural context, primarily through confrontation and defiance. Machismo was
found to be an unjust and oppressive cultural paradigm, which has served to make them question their own abilities as well as their personal and familial responsibilities, in turn causing conflict within themselves and others.

The participants’ narratives and identified responsive process recognize machismo as an oppressive paradigm at an individual level. Her heighten awareness is her unveiling of the oppressive realities created by machismo and a shift in her perception of the established order. Her anger and defiance seem to be avenues towards her living out her sense of independence and equality. Her confrontation and rebellion are her personal attempts to expulse the myths created and developed in the old order. The experienced conflict derives from the Latina woman’s pursuit to redefine her personal identity, in opposition to machista principles and resistance towards machista practices. Case and Hunter (2012) posit, “acts of resistance are self-enhancing in that they allow for individuals to perform behaviors that are personally meaningful by virtue of their connection to one’s current and emerging sense of self” (p. 265).

Most participants expressed a form of defiance and rebellious behaviors. However, a rebellion exemplifies their fight against machista principles and against becoming marianistas versus a transformation, which would speak on behalf of an alternative reality of equality and independence. Therefore, a rebellion does not equate resolution. As Abalos (conversation on 5/6/13) pointed out “the rebel is controlled by the consciousness of the oppressor; going beyond the rebellion is transformation.” Throughout their narratives you hear their struggle “to figure it out.” It seems they are trying, yet challenged, to create new relationships with family members, men, as well as
live out their view and belief of themselves. Along with their fight and desire for the alternative, there is a sense of uncertainty of how to create it.

The narratives illustrate how the participants coped with machismo, and how they responded to it within the boundaries of their role as daughter, within the parameters of still being financially dependent on their parents, along with their present developing self-concepts. For the majority of the participants, this is a new dialogue. They have just started to reflect on family dynamics within a machismo framework and have recently acquired the terms. Flanagan (2008) explained, “there is no instinctual urge, no anxiety situation, no mental process which does not involve objects, external or internal; in other words, object relations are at the center of emotional life” (p.121). Many participants expressed how things became or are becoming clearer now that they can name it and are viewing it through that lens. From a clinical perspective, this speaks to the benefits of understanding machismo as a cultural object.

**Implications for Practice and Research Practice**

Findings from this study highlight a neglected yet pertinent area of interest regarding social work practice with the Latino population. Analysis of the participants’ narratives reveal perceptions of machismo as a cultural component placing Latina women in an oppressive, lower social status within their collective. Case and Hunter (2012) explained, “oppression has the potential to limit marginalized individuals in the social, political, and economic domains of their lives, while simultaneously exacting a psychological toll on their well-being.” (p.257). Participants’ narratives illustrate various examples of their internal struggle with their ascribed social roles (what is expected of a
Latina woman) and their self-concept (her view of herself), as well as other concerning physical elements prevalent in social structures based on power and control (aggression, violence, and fear).

By the nature of the study, the interview (dialogue) was conducted within a cultural context using familiar cultural language yet respecting the individual’s meaning and perception of the term, machismo. Besides the rich data this framework produces, it served to highlight the significance of having the language and exploring the meaning each individual has attached to it. Clinically, it reminds practitioners to honor the imprints of cultural components, the importance of the client’s narrative, and to acknowledge our role as guides of transformation. In other words, our role to assist clients develop or create a new narrative requires our ability to hear and understand their words and the meaning they have applied to their experience, which creates their reality. As clinicians, how would it affect our practice if we process machismo as a possible prevalent cultural object in the lives of Latina women?

**Machismo as a Cultural Object.** Weaver (2010) stated, “culture consists of beliefs, values, and world view that are learned and integrated into an individual’s identity” (p. 87). Taking into consideration the socio-cultural context second-generation Latina women are raised in, it is fair to say they are navigating between two cultures. Second-generation Latina women may identify with the parent’s culture to a varying degree, and/or may identify as bicultural.

Cultural identification, and the degree a second-generation Latina woman internalizes cultural expectations and roles, whether from her parent’s country of origin
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or that of the dominant culture, is an individual and complex self-construction resulting from personal introjections. Exploring the impact of machismo, and the way it manifests or manifested in a Latina woman’s particular household, as she perceives it directly speaks to her individual ethnic object constancy. From this socio-cultural lens, clinicians may assess, explore and analyze the intersection of her multiple identities (gender, culture, generational, etc.) as it pertains to her view of self and other.

On an individual level, machismo is lived, experienced, perceived, felt, and given meaning. Machismo as a prevalent cultural object holds the potential to be internalized and to create internal representations. Flanagan (2008) states, “a representation has an enduring existence, and although it begins as a cognitive construction, it ultimately takes on a deep emotional resonance” (p. 134). As guides of the transformative process, clinicians may assist clients through their unique journey with machismo. This is not to say this is the story of every Latina woman or every Latino family. In no sense, is any story of machismo exactly alike, even though some stories of machismo may have similar elements. Furthermore, the emergent theory may be applicable to other second-generation woman raised in a macho culture. Although this study focused on second-generation Latina women, the findings may not be limited to the experience of Latina women. Other non-Latina women raised in a male dominant culture may share similar experiences.

Considering and exploring possible manifestations of machismo and marianismo within a family system imparts insight on the significance of culture, gender dynamics, and family structure of a particular client. It may highlight how cultural beliefs and
values are embedded and internalized. Exploring machismo and marianismo could shed light on the origin of internal mental representations of others and internal images of self.

Bringing specific attention to *El Choque*, it may also enhance our understanding of young Latina women’s rebellion as a reaction (and possible initiation of an adaptive response) to an internalized oppressive structure. Understanding the illustrated responsive process in this study imparts insight on the process of self-assertions and how a Latina woman may negotiate and navigate personal agency. Similarly, Case and Hunter (2012) pointed out that the “individual- and contextual-level process by which marginalized individuals respond to oppression in ways that mitigate its adverse effects (which they refer to as adaptive responding) is critical to well-being and, consequently, is a rapid growing area of scientific inquiry” (p. 257).

Incorporating machismo and marianismo as cultural objects into our therapeutic framework may increase a clinician’s awareness of possible cultural elements to explore and how they may impact identity. Creating a space for both clinician and client to open dialogue on these impactful cultural components, helping the client move past the rebellion to create a new self and new reality. Moving her towards becoming whole versus a broken self, helping in the creation of a new narrative and a new self, which raises the following question. How do we help second-generation Latina women form the new narrative as they are grappling with *quien sera* (who will I be)? With the inclusion and understanding of a Latina women’s story with machismo, we begin to understand the depth of this forming narrative, *quien sera*. 
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From this cultural perspective, we would recognize her socio-political, historical collective narrative as an element of her personal present and forming narrative. Dr. Abalos noted (discussion on October 26, 2013), “culture has to remain open to the political and historical, keeping open the possibility of creating again and again”. As clinicians taking a step back as the fundamental questions of their experience are being raised and assisting them in the process of finding answers to the question, *quien seré?* As Latina women are asking themselves what are the alternatives, we, as clinicians, should parallel that inquiry. What are the possible alternatives? And how are they, or how would they be incorporated into the healing process?

Both, Latina/o or Non-Latina/o clinicians, who have a limited or extensive knowledge of machismo, whether from personal experience or literature, are reminded that what is important is the client’s experience of machismo. The study illustrated the importance of incorporating the effect of culture into our work and highlighted an area that necessitates more attention regarding clinical practice with Latina women, and the Latino population as a whole.

**Research**

There is a need for additional research on the impact of machismo on development of Latina women, Latino men, and Latino families as a whole. Since this was the first study to explore the impact of machismo on the identity formation of second-generation Latina women, and it is limited by a small sample, additional research on the topic is necessary. Further research exploring the impact of machismo on Latina women at different developmental stages of the life span would impart further insight on
the process. Similarly, Ethier and Deaux (1994) pointed out, “across the life span, there are transitions that can have significant effects on self-definition” (p.243). True to Eriksonian principles on human development, socio-cultural context shouldn’t be marginalized to culture and gender. It should be inclusive of situational cues, developmental milestones, and other salient factors in the unique context of the individual.

Additionally, research exploring Latino men’s reaction/response, both internal and external, to the changing beliefs of Latina women regarding their roles and family structure would be beneficial to further understand what is happening, not just with the Latino man, but within Latino-American family systems. Although it wasn’t directly explored in this study, it should be stated Latino men are oppressed by machismo as well. Although, within the paradigm of machismo, Latino men are placed in a position of “power and authority”, it comes with similarly rigid behavioral expectations and required repressions. A few participants shared stories of their brothers not being allowed to cry when sad or disappointed, or their brother afraid to express fear. According to machista principles, Latino men are not to be emotional or emotionally expressive (with an accepted exception to anger). They are to be “men”, and that definition of what it means to be a man comes at the expense of their humanness.

The impact of the oppressive nature of machismo and how it fragments Latino men and Latina women, and confuses Latino children is an area that requires attention. The divisiveness it causes between the cultural masculine and culture feminine maintains a deep incoherence within the self for both, Latino men and Latina women. In turn, this
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internal incoherence manifests externally at an interpersonal level. The specificity of exploring the impact and affects of machismo and marianismo on Latina women and Latino men, and Latino families as whole is an area that requires appropriate attention by both, researchers and clinicians, to better serve the growing Latino population.

Limitations and Strengths of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of machismo on the identity formation of second-generation Latina women. In this sense, it provides a more intimate understanding of Latina women’s experience with machismo, a topic generally explored with men. The study is significant as it provides insight on the impact of machismo on Latina women’s development.

As a qualitative study the researcher was able to gather rich data, however there are several limitations to the study that need to be considered. First, due to the small sample size (n=12) and geographic location of recruitment (Northern New Jersey and New York) generalization to the broader population is limited. No data was gathered on the level of education or socio-economic status of the participant’s parents, which could be a variable to consider and explore how it correlates to the prevalence of machismo in a home. Additionally, as a result of snowball sampling, many of the participants may have known each other. Although the sample size was small, the diversity of the sample is an identified strength of the study.

Due to the sensitive nature of the context and lack of familiarity with the researcher, some participants may have been reserved with their responses. The participants and researcher only met one time and had no prior relationship with one
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another before conducting the interview. The ability to establish trust in such a brief encounter needs to be considered. Another limitation to consider when interpreting the findings is social desirability bias. All participants agreed to be part of this study and may have been inclined to respond to the researcher’s questions in a perceived desirable manner.

Lastly, researcher bias needs to be considered. In this study, the researcher was responsible for 1) the development of the study method, 2) development of the interview questions, 3) conducted the interviews with each participant, and 4) analyzed the data. Although various measures were taken to minimize researcher bias as noted in the methods section, researcher bias remains a limitation to be considered.

Conclusion

From the data, the researcher deduced the following definition of machismo. Machismo is a cultural, social construction endorsing traditional gender roles based on beliefs of male superiority and female subservience. The Latino family system, which incorporates machista principles (machismo) into their child-rearing practices, and as collective norm of behaviors and expectations of men/women and boys/girls, highlights the politics of gender and selfhood. Participants expressed they have been and are reactive and responsive to machismo. The participants’ narratives demonstrated machismo creates a clash (El Choque) between her self-concepts and her ascribed social identity. El Choque instigates a responsive process, which takes place both internally and externally. The participants’ narratives illustrated a presence of an alternative view(s) on
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family structure and personal roles, and speak to the need of an internal transformation within the Latina women and Latino men dyad.

This study represents the first attempt to contribute towards an identified gap in our knowledge base regarding second-generation Latina women in la familia, la comunidad, and identity development. Using a grounded theory approach, the study explored the impact of machismo on second-generation Latina women’s identity formation. It provides insight on Latina women’s perceptions of machismo and how it manifests in the Latino household, how these experiences have been integrated in her identity formation, impacting her self-concepts and her relationships with others and the need for an internal transformation within Latino women and Latino men.

Using a research-based framework to explain the impact of machismo on Latina women, the study provides evidence of the intricacies between machismo and Latina women’s development. The emergent theory proposes second-generation Latina women experience a clash, El Choque, between the social identities ascribed onto her by constituent elements of machismo and her self-concepts. The techniques used by Latina women to respond to El Choque consist of questioning the established order, increasing personal awareness, and confronting and rebelling against the machista principles in attempt to redefine her personal identity both internally and externally.

The study illustrates machismo is a cultural object that Latina women internalize in various ways affecting her view of her world and the ways she responds in her world. The proposed theory has implications for clinical work with the Latino population. It illustrates the effects of the politics of gender in relationships as well as the integration of
gender into personal and social identity. It also highlights areas pertaining to Latino family systems such as family dynamics, expectations and pressures, as well as how a Latina girl/woman navigates and grows within her socio-cultural context.

Due to the overall scarcity of inquiry on this topic within the field, the study truly highlights the need for further exploration of the impact of machismo and Latina women and girls. To the best of my knowledge this is the first study to directly explore the impact of machismo on the development of second-generation Latina women. From that position the main purpose and success of this study is in showing there is something going on here and it needs to be looked into further. This study highlights machismo as a cultural object and the various ways it may be internalized by Latina women; giving way for clinicians to explore a Latina woman’s relationship with the cultural masculine and better assist her in rewriting her narrative.

References

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APPENDIX 1: STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

Title of the Research Study: A Grounded Theory Approach to Exploring the Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women’s Identity Formation

Protocol Number:

Principal Investigator: Joretha Bourjolly, PhD., Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania 3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214, (215) 898-5524 Email: jerri@sp2.upenn.edu

Co-investigator: Marilyn Valenciano, Doctoral student, Clinical Social Work program

Emergency Contact: Dr. Bourjolly (215) 898-5524, Marilyn Valenciano (201) 450-6234

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This is not a form of treatment or therapy. It is not supposed to detect a disease or find something wrong. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate or not to participate there will be no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Before you make a decision you will need to know the purpose of the study, the possible risks and benefits of being in the study and what you will have to do if you decide to participate. The research investigator is going to talk with you about the study and give you this consent document to read. You do not have to make a decision now; you can take the consent document home and read it.

Please ask the researcher to explain anything you do not understand, including any language contained in this form. If you decide to participate a copy will be given to you.
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Keep this form, in it you will find contact information and answers to questions about the study. You may ask to have this form read to you.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to learn more about the relationship between machismo and its affect on the development of Latina women. This study will involve participating in a one-time interview where you will be asked to answer a few questions.

The study is being conducted as part of my dissertation research to earn my doctorate in Clinical Social Work from the School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania.

Why was I asked to participate in the study?

You are being asked to join this study for the following reasons:

1. You are a 2nd generation Latina woman
2. Between the ages of 19-22
3. Who has experience with machismo in her upbringing

How long will I be in the study? How many other people will be in the study?

The study will take place over a period of less than a year. Your participation in the study will be for about one hour. The researcher will interview you for approximately an hour. The researcher will ask you approximately 14 questions.

You will be one of 12 people in the study.

Where will the study take place?

You will be asked to come to meet with the researcher at a convenient location (such as a conference room of a local library or college) agreed upon by both you and the researcher. The location must provide enough privacy to conduct the interview without compromising audibility of the audio tape recording. The time of the meeting will also be agreed upon between you and the researcher.

What will I be asked to do?

After signing the consent form, the researcher will ask you demographic information and approximately 14 questions to answer. The researcher speaks and understands both, English and Spanish; you are encouraged to answer the questions in English and/or Spanish, depending on what comes natural to you. Upon concluding the interview, your involvement in the study is complete and nothing else will be asked of you, other than a possible contact to recheck the accuracy of the data recorded in the interview.

What are the risks?
One possible risk from being part of this study is that you may feel the questions are personal, and/or you may be uncomfortable answering them. At any given point during the interview you may decide not to answer and/or not to continue with the interview.

There is always a risk of loss of confidentiality when personal data are collected. This investigator takes appropriate steps to lesson this risk, including safeguarding your information in locked cabinets and not using your name and other information to identify you whenever possible.

**How will I benefit from the study?**

There is no benefit to you. However, your participation could help us understand the relationship between machismo and the development of Latina women, which can benefit you indirectly. In the future, this may help other people to further understand how machismo affects Latina women, and information may be useful in educational and therapeutic settings.

**What other choices do I have?**

Your alternative to being in the study is to not be in the study.

**What happens if I do not choose to join the research study?**

You may choose to join the study or you may choose not to join the study. Your participation is voluntary.

There is no penalty if you choose not to join the research study.

**When is the study over? Can I leave the study before it ends?**

The study is expected to end after all participants have completed all interviews and all the information has been collected. The study may be stopped without your consent for the following reasons:

- The PI feels it is best for your safety and/or health— you will be informed of the reasons why.
- You have not followed the study instructions
- The PI, the sponsor or the Office of Regulatory Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania can stop the study anytime

You have the right to drop out of the research study at anytime during your participation. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to do so.

**How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy be protected?**
All information about you in this study is confidential, except as may be required by law. Confidentiality will have to be broken if you express a current plan to harm yourself or others, or if you report that you have committed child abuse or neglect.

Information taken about you will be kept in locked cabinets. The research investigator will be the only person with access to these data. Furthermore, authorized representatives of the University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board (IRB), a committee charged with protecting the rights and welfare of research participants, may be provided access to research records that identify you by name. These files will only be used for this study. When information is taken out of these files, it will not have your name on it. Identifying data will be kept for seven years and then destroyed. All published reports will contain data reported in aggregate form (where no individual responses can be identified), and individual examples will be presented so that identification is impossible.

No information about you will be shared with anyone unless there is a clear danger to yourself and others. Information about intent to harm self or other or about child abuse will be reported, as required by law. If it comes to my attention, I am required by law to take action that will involve the loss of confidentiality.

As a participant in this research study, you give permission for the University of Pennsylvania to keep, preserve, publish, use or dispose of the results of this research study. In any publication, your identity will be kept confidential.

**Will I be paid for being in this study?**

To show our appreciation for your time, you will be given a $20 Starbucks card upon completion of our interview.

**Who can I call with questions, complaints or if I’m concerned about my rights as a research subject?**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your participation in this research study or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you should speak with the Principal Investigator listed on page one of this form. If a member of the research team cannot be reached or you want to talk to someone other than those working on the study, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.
APPENDIX 2: FACE SHEET

A Grounded Theory Approach to Exploring the Impact of Machismo on Second-Generation Latina Women’s Identity Formation

NAME: ________________________________________ AGE: __________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________

TELEPHONE: ___________________________ EMAIL: ________________________

MOTHER’S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: ____________________________________________

FATHER’S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: ____________________________________________

CHILDHOOD NEIGHBORHOOD: _____________________________________________

CHILDHOOD HOUSEHOLD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>AGE</th>
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HOW OFTEN DID YOU TRAVEL TO YOUR PARENTS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

LENGTH OF STAY: _____________________________________________________

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE

MACHISMO

1. Would you describe the neighborhood you grow up in?
   PROBE: Was it predominately Latino? Is your extended family
   in the US?

2. Would you describe the family structure of your childhood home?
   PROBE: Growing up, where there things you were not allowed to
   do because you were a girl? IF YES: What role did your mother
   play in this? What role did your father play in this? How did that
   affect you?

3. In your own words, how would you define machismo?
   PROBE: In your opinion, are there positive attributes to
   machismo? Are there negative ones?
4. How did machismo affect your family?
   PROBE: Your parents? Your siblings? Yourself?

5. Growing up, was there a particular person you would consider a machista (within your immediate family, extended family or community)? IF YES: Could you describe why? IF NO: Could you describe why?

6. Are there any significant family experiences that occurred while you were growing up (or recently) that exemplify machismo as you see it (other then the examples offered above)?

7. Do you ascribe to these roles?

8. How has machismo affected you through your life?
   PROBE: As a young child? An adolescent?

9. Recently, have you experienced or witness machismo in your family or community? IF YES: How does it affect you in your life (social, family, at work or other areas) IF NO: Would you explain why?

10. How has machismo affected your sense of self?

11. Through your experience with machismo, have you experienced any conflicts within yourself or with others (family members or significant others)? IF YES: Can you describe what that was like?

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS:

12. What do you think clinicians should know about working with Latino families?
13. What advice would you give clinicians about working with a young Latina?

14. Is there anything else you would like to share on the topic?