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DECONSTRUCTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE THROUGH THE CO-CONSTRUCTION AND
TELLING OF MEXICAN AMERICAN GENDER HISTORIES

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010

Urbana, Illinois

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Abstract

Feminist, sociocultural, and sex role socialization theories of rape suggest that gender role socialization, as defined by the gender role ideology imparted and gender role attitudes adopted, influence the incidence and impact of sexual violence. Such relationship has been found to exist across various ethnic populations, including Mexican Americans, but this literature is scant and the processes involved in the development of such a relationship remain latent. The current study utilized a Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology and life history methods to explore the relationship between four Mexican Americans' experiences of gender role socialization and their understandings of sexual violence. A family systems model, ecological perspective, and social cognitive theoretical framework were used to elicit and co-construct participants' experiences of gender role socialization. Participants were engaged in the production of this knowledge, which was represented as narratives illustrative of participants' gender histories. These narratives provide a detailed and intimate account of participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and reveal the interrelatedness of their experiences of gender with their understandings of sexual violence.

Participants' experiences of gender role socialization revealed their parents had adopted and modeled gender roles reflective of traditional Mexican gender role ideology (i.e., *machismo*, *marianismo*) and engaged in gender role socialization practices that encouraged them to adopt the same ideology and roles. Familial gender role socialization practices were found to be reinforced by other socializing agents (e.g., peers, media, K-12 school, church), and the impact of participants' experiences of migration and domestic violence on gender identity development were also noted. Despite their traditional gender role socialization, all four participants revealed they had transgressed appropriate gender behavior and expectations and were redefining their

notions of womanhood and manhood, thus challenging the prevalence, pervasiveness, and rigidity historically attributed to traditional Mexican gender role ideology in the existing literature. Although unique factors propelled each participant to subvert and redefine gender, they all attributed their endorsement of less traditional gender role attitudes and behavior to their pursuit of a college education and their exposure to different life experiences outside their communities.

Participants also engaged in an analysis of sexual violence (e.g., rape, sexual coercion, and consensual unwanted sexual behavior) and considered the influence of their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understandings of this construct. Overall, all four participants supported more feminist/less conservative views on sexual violence. They attributed their endorsement of less conservative views on sexual violence to their endorsement of less traditional gender role attitudes. They believed that had they endorsed more traditional gender role attitudes, their perspectives about sexual violence would be similar to those of their communities, which they described as more conservative.

Para las mujeres en mi vida que me han inspirado con su fortaleza y carácter. Y para aquellos hombres que desafían y redefinen su hombría. Para mi madre y mi esposo

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Chapter I

Introduction

Although no one is safe from sexual violence, it is women who experience the majority of sexual violence in our society, with statistics showing that 1 in 6 women are victims of a completed or attempted rape compared to 1 in 33 men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). More so, statistics have shown that it is predominately men who perpetrate sexual violence against women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). This gender disparity in the prevalence and perpetration of rape suggests that heterosexual expressions of sexual violence toward women should be further examined. Further, an emphasis on gender disparity supports the application of feminist and sociocultural theories of rape to such analysis.

Feminist and sociocultural theories of rape and supportive empirical evidence suggest that gender role socialization, as defined by the gender role ideology¹ imparted and gender role attitudes² adopted, influences the incidence and impact of sexual violence (e.g., Baslow, 1992; Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Bourque, 1989; Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Keita, & Russo, 1994; Morgan, Johnson, & Sigler, 2006; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; Rozée & Koss, 2001; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Truman, Toker, & Fischer, 1996; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). This relationship has been explored primarily among White³ populations. However, a few studies have considered gender role attitudes and their relationship to sexual violence among various ethnic populations (Carrillo, 2005; Fischer, 1987; Marín, 1996; Ramos Lira, Koss, & Russo, 1999; Torres-Pryor, 2003; Williams, 1984; Williams & Holmes, 1982). These studies

¹ Although ideologies can operate on an individual level (i.e., personal ideologies, personal beliefs about gender), in this study, the term “gender role ideology” will be used to refer to a cultural system (e.g., Mexican culture) of beliefs about appropriate gender norms, values, and behavior that is reproduced via the process of gender socialization.

² The term “attitude” is used in this study to connote a position, opinion, perspective, stance, viewpoint, or standpoint about a particular construct or idea (e.g., gender roles).

³ The terms “White,” “Caucasian,” “Anglo,” “mainstream,” and “majority” are used interchangeably in this study, in a manner consistent with the literature, to refer to non-Latina/o Whites.

suggest that the relationship between gender role constructs and sexual violence among Latina/os⁴, primarily Mexican Americans, needs to be further explored and addressed due to findings that contend gender role constructs can be more detrimental to the incidence and impact of sexual violence among this population than among other ethnic groups. The current study expands on previous research and considers the influence of Mexican Americans'⁵ experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understandings of sexual violence. Its findings provide a more contextualized and in-depth understanding of the relationship between gender role constructs and sexual violence in Mexican American communities.

Feminist and Sociocultural Theories of Rape

This study utilized feminist and sociocultural theories of rape in its examination of the relationship between gender role constructs and perceptions of sexual violence among Mexican Americans. Feminist and sociocultural theories of rape contend that rape is the product of a patriarchal society that grants men unmerited privilege and power and encourages them to use that privilege and power to enforce and maintain dominance over women (Bourque, 1989; Cowan & Campbell, 1995; Koss et al., 1994; Murnen et al., 2002). This system of gender stratification and inequality legitimizes men's attempts to control and subordinate women. Rape, or simply the menace of rape, becomes a pervasive method of social control against women. Such method of social control is maintained and legitimized through rape-supportive attitudes and myths propagated and reinforced by social institutions and transmitted across generations,

⁴ The terms "Latina/o" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably in this study, in a manner consistent with the literature, as pan-ethnic terms referring to various Latina/o subgroups.

⁵ The term "Mexican American" is used in this study to facilitate the readability of this paper. However, it is important to acknowledge that ethnic self-identification may vary for participants in this study as it may for any person of Mexican descent. Individuals may identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o, Chicana/o, Tejana/o, etc., despite their citizenship status. Geographical, sociopolitical, and other contextual factors influence how people self-identify.

primarily through the gender role socialization process (Baslow, 1992; Bourque, 1989; Koss et al., 1994; Murnen et al., 2002).

Embedded within such a system of gender stratification and inequality and critical to the legitimization and regulation of sexual violence are cultural norms (Bourque, 1989; Rozée, 1993; Truman et al., 1996). Cultural norms shape and support the stereotyped roles and scripts used to create and maintain the rape myths and rape-supportive attitudes integral to men's sexual aggression and coercive sexuality (Truman et al., 1996; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). These norms regulate, rather than prohibit, the amount of sexual aggression and the forms of sexual violence to be socially tolerated (Bourque, 1989; Rozée, 1993). This regulation legitimizes various forms of sexual violence (e.g., marital, acquaintance, and date rape) as extensions of socially condoned, normative sexual activity (Bourque, 1989; Rozée, 1993), blurring the lines between consensual, coercive, and nonconsensual sex. The legitimizing effects of these cultural norms inevitably result in the institutionalization of rape and creation of a rape culture (Rozée, 1993).

Feminist and sex role socialization theories of rape suggest that the gender role socialization process plays an instrumental role in the reproduction and expression of male dominance and rape (Bourque, 1989; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). More specifically, they suggest that men and women are socialized into roles that predispose gender interactions to adversarial dynamics that support the enforcement of male dominance through sexual aggression (Morgan et al., 2006). Consistent with a model of gender stratification and inequality, men tend to be socialized into the role of "aggressive seducer" whereas women are socialized into the powerless role of "passive prey" (Bourque, 1989, p. 16; Patton & Mannison, 1998; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). Masculinity is associated with "power, dominance, strength, virility, and superiority, and femininity with

submissiveness, passivity, weakness, and inferiority” (Baslow, 1992; Morgan et al., 2006; Patton & Mannison, 1998, p. 32). This socialization process results in attitudes about male sexual entitlement that compel men to coerce, and sometimes force, women into sex in order to fulfill the role socially prescribed to them (Morgan et al., 2006; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). It also encourages female acquiescence to unwanted sexual activity (Morgan et al., 2006).

Consequently, sex role socialization theory frames rape as “an extreme extension of traditional gender roles and male-female sexual interaction” (Simonson & Subich, 1999, p. 618), asserting a relationship between gender roles and sexual violence. However, the relationship between gender role socialization and sexual violence has not been directly examined in the literature. Rather, investigation has centered on the relationship between gender role constructs, primarily the gender role ideology adhered to and gender role attitudes endorsed, and sexual violence. This study contributes to the existing literature by directly exploring the relationship between gender role socialization and sexual violence.

Expanding Traditional Conceptualizations of Sexual Violence

The preponderance of the literature on sexual violence has focused on the construct of rape, and thus, the term sexual violence is often equated with rape. However, research has found that women experience “a continuum of sexually intrusive behaviors” (Lottes, 1991; Morgan et al., 2006; Patton & Mannison, 1998, p. 31). Some of these behaviors meet legal definitions of rape, but most of them are culturally and legally reframed as instances of normative heterosexual behavior (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Morgan et al., 2006; Muehlenhard & Schrag, 1991; Patton & Mannison, 1998), despite feminist contentions that they are examples of sexual violence (Lefley, Scott, Llabre, & Hicks, 1993). Such experiences of legitimized unwanted

sexual behavior include instances of normative (i.e., culturally condoned) rape, sexual coercion, and sexual compliance. These behaviors are produced, maintained, and normalized by the cultural norms embedded within our system of gender stratification and inequality (Marín, 1996; Morgan et al., 2006).

Therefore, it is imperative for feminist and sociocultural examinations of unwanted sexual behavior to extend their conceptualizations of sexual violence beyond legal and social definitions of rape and include in their analyses the broad spectrum of unwanted sexual activities imposed on women. To that end, the current investigation considers four types of unwanted sexual behavior (i.e., non-normative and normative rape, sexual coercion, and sexual compliance) when exploring the relationship between gender role constructs and sexual violence among Mexican Americans. These four types of unwanted sexual behavior are described below, from more extreme to more subtle forms of sexual violence towards women.

Non-normative and normative rape. Non-normative rape is equivalent to experiences of unwanted sexual activity that are not culturally or legally condoned but rather meet legal definitions of rape (Rozée, 1993). Although the exact wording of rape statutes varies from state to state, rape is usually legally defined as the “nonconsensual sexual penetration of an adolescent or adult obtained by physical force, by threat of bodily harm, or at such time when the victim is incapable of giving consent by virtue of mental illness, mental retardation, or intoxication” (Koss et al., 1994, p. 159).

By contrast, normative rape constitutes experiences of unwanted sexual contact occurring within culturally condoned contexts (e.g., within marriage or other relational contexts) that are not recognized as instances of sexual violence, despite the reported lack of female choice (Rozée, 1993). These instances of normative or socially condoned rape afford primacy to cultural norms

of appropriate female behavior rather than to the absence of female choice, which some feminist theorists suggest should be the fundamental factor in defining rape (Rozée, 1993).

Sexual coercion. The term *sexual coercion* is used “to describe any situation in which one party uses verbal or physical means (including administering drugs or alcohol to the other party either with or without her consent) to obtain sexual activity against freely given consent” (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 99). Important to this definition, and often times difficult to assess, is the concept of “freely given consent” (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004). Agreement or compliance to sexual activity does not necessarily indicate freely given consent if women are pressured by men into unwanted sexual activity (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004), into “behavior that is unpleasant and detrimental to their own dignity, autonomy, and self-interest” (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985, p. 87). Various forms of sexual coercion (e.g., physical, threatened physical, economic, status, psychological, verbal, interpersonal, and social forms of coercion; see Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Muehlenhard & Schrag, 1991; Patton & Mannison, 1998; Walker, 1997) illustrating a range of behaviors, from subtle to forceful (Marín, 1996), are used by men to pressure women into sexual compliance. The consequences of sexual coercion are similar to the outcomes of rape and include humiliation, reduced self-confidence and self-esteem, and other negative psychological consequences (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985).

The effectiveness of nonviolent forms of sexual coercion is such that the need for physical force is reduced (Gavey, 1992; Patton & Mannison, 1998). Women can be readily coerced simply through the enforcement of the gender roles and sexual scripts⁶ prescribed to them by a system of gender stratification and inequality that suggests to both men and women

⁶ Sexual scripts are cognitive frameworks or schemata that prescribe different sets of socially appropriate and expected attitudes and behaviors to men and women in sexually charged situations (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Baslow, 1992; Byers, 1996; Koss et al., 1994; Krahe, 2000; Lottes, 1991; Mahay, Laumann, & Michaels, 2001; Marín, 1996; Walker, 1997; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). They are acquired through a subset of gender role

that “consent...is not a meaningful concept” (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Byers, 1996; Gavey, 1992; Lottes, 1991; Marín, 1996; Patton & Mannison, 1998, p. 39; Walker, 1997). The normalization of nonviolent sexually coercive behaviors is such that neither men nor women consider their behaviors or sexual experiences to have been coercive or coerced (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Gavey, 1992), much less instances of sexual violence (Truman et al., 1996).

Sexual compliance. Sexual compliance is the act of consenting to unwanted sexual contact. It is defined as “willing or passive participation” in sexual behavior “when there is no desire to do so” (Morgan et al., 2006, p. 519). Research has found that gender norms lay the foundation to women’s sexual compliance (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Gavey, 1992; Krahe, 2000; Lewin, 1985; Lottes, 1991; Marín, 1996; Morgan et al., 2006; Muehlenhard & Schrag, 1991; Walker, 1997) and prime women to say “yes” and men to assume consent in sexually and non-sexually-charged situations (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008). The ideology of male supremacy and norm of male initiative, the ‘stroking norm’ for women (i.e., women should put men’s needs ahead of their own) and lack of positive female sexual experience norms, the concept of sexual precedence (i.e., previous sexual behavior considered to be automatic consent to future sexual behavior), and other relational elements considered important to the fulfillment of female identity (e.g., pleasing male partner, maintaining a heterosexual relationship) serve to socially pressure women into sexual compliance (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Gavey, 1992; Krahe, 2000; Lewin, 1985; Lottes, 1991; Marín, 1996; Morgan et al., 2006; Muehlenhard & Schrag, 1991; Walker, 1997).⁷ As a result, women come to consider unwanted sexual contact as “duty sex,” an “obligation,” a part of their social contract and role as

socialization (i.e., sexual socialization; Baslow, 1992; Byers, 1996; Krahe, 2000). These distinctly gendered sexual scripts have “profound consequences for men’s and women’s sexual experiences” (Mahay et al., 2001, p. 238).

⁷ Women also comply with unwanted sexual activity out of a desire to appear ‘normal’ and fear of being raped (Gavey, 1992; Marín, 1996).

women, and as something they are “supposed” to do even if they “don’t really want to,” “go along with” and want to “get...over and done with,” and “just let...happen” so they can “keep the peace,” (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985, p. 85; Gavey, 1992; Lewin, 1985, p. 184; Patton & Mannison, 1998, p. 36). More so, women “learn to view their accommodation as a quality of femininity,” thus normalizing sexual compliance (Patton & Mannison, 1998, p. 32). Despite its normalization, compliant sexual behavior has been found to have “a powerful effect on women’s psychological and physical health” (e.g., future sexual compliance, risky sexual behavior, increased risk of future sexual victimization, alcohol and drug use), similar to date rape (Walker, 1997, p. 157).⁸ However, women tend to minimize these negative effects and “[deflect] the notion of victimization” by contending the sexual behavior was “mutually negotiated and determined” or assuming personal responsibility “for failing either to say ‘no’ or to resist physically” (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008, pp. 393-394).

Considering the Relationship Between Gender Role Socialization and Negotiation

Gender role socialization is the process by which individuals learn the norms, values, and behavior deemed socially appropriate for their biological gender (Harro, 2000). Gender role ideology is the system of beliefs that establishes socially appropriate gender norms, values, and behavior. Such ideology guides and is reproduced by the process of gender role socialization. Individuals’ gender role behavior is expected to reflect the gender role ideology that was imparted to them during the gender role socialization process. However, sometimes there is a discrepancy between ideology and behavior that suggests individuals negotiate the messages

⁸ It is important to recognize, however, that agreement or compliance to unwanted sexual activity may be a compromise freely made within a relationship in which “two partners are on equal footing” and not as behavior conducive to or constituting sexual violence (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985). It is a woman’s dependency and powerlessness within a heterosexual relationship that reduces or limits her bargaining power and makes her feel she has little choice but to provide sex to her partner (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985).

received during socialization regarding appropriate gender behavior with their personal desires and interests, resulting in the behavior observed (Del Castillo, 1993). This process of negotiation is referred to in this study as gender role negotiation. This potential discrepancy between ideology and behavior suggests it is important to consider the relationship between individuals' experiences of gender role socialization and actual behavior when examining the impact of gender role constructs on perceptions of sexual violence.

It is particularly important to consider this relationship among Mexican Americans because research has found that “Mexican gender ideology... expresses cultural ideals of gender appropriate behavior which may or may not have correlations in actual behavior” (Del Castillo, 1993, p. 241). The relationship between Mexican American gender role socialization and gender behavior is typically presented as a simple and linear association whose consistent and pervasive function is the cultural (re)production and maintenance of gender roles historically believed to represent Mexican American constructions of masculinity and femininity (i.e., *machismo* and *marianismo*). However, multiple and consistent instances of transgressive gender behavior have been observed for decades in Mexican American communities in the United States, as well as in Mexico, that illustrate inconsistencies between individual (i.e., gender role attitudes), interpersonal (i.e., gender role behavior), and cultural, institutional, and/or ideological representations (i.e., gender role ideology) of gender roles among Mexican Americans (Del Castillo, 1993, 1996; Hirsch, 2002; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997). These discrepancies suggest that gender behavior does not always correspond to traditional gender role ideology or support the dominant ideology of male dominance imparted by gender role socialization. These discontinuities are typically misconstrued or overlooked in the literature and the impact of such discrepancy not assessed (Del Castillo, 1996).

It is therefore imperative to acquire an understanding of (a) Mexican American gender role socialization practices and ideology and the roles and behaviors they prescribe, (b) any discrepancies between gender role ideology and individual behavior, and (c) the social, political, cultural, and personal variables that create the contexts in which gender role socialization and ideology becomes transgressed, contested, and negotiated. The current study considers potential gender discontinuities in participants' lives by considering the congruency between their experiences of gender role socialization and actual gender behavior and by exploring the context and consequences of any gender transgressions and negotiations. Further, this study analyzes the potentially varying influences of participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understandings of sexual violence.

Gender Role Socialization Theories

An ecological family systems model and a social cognitive theoretical framework were utilized to co-construct and understand participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation in this investigation. An ecological family systems model was appropriate for this study because it suggests cultural norms, family structure, and situational demands provide "contextual conditions that promote or constrain parents' sex-typed treatment of girls and boys" (McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003, p. 130). Specifically, it contends that ethnicity is linked to parental gender role attitudes and may have "implications for specific dimensions of parents' gender socialization such as their child-rearing goals and expectations for their daughters versus their sons or the models of sex-typed behaviors and roles parents display" (McHale et al., 2003, p. 131). A family systems model considers the influence of the marriage and sibling subsystems on gender development, in addition to that of the parent-child dyad, because it posits that

children may acquire knowledge about appropriate gender roles and norms via their exposure to other dyadic relationships in the family (McHale et al., 2003). An ecological perspective considers the larger environments in which families are embedded since “the same kinds of activities and experiences may be differentially interpreted and may have quite different effects depending on the contexts in which they occur” (McHale et al., 2003, p. 144). This study considers the influence of various familial subsystems on participants’ experiences of gender role socialization as well as the larger contexts in which their families are embedded and the influence of those contexts on gender development.

Similarly, social cognitive theory considers both familial influence as well as the influence of broader sociocultural contexts on gender role socialization by considering gender development as “a process of cumulative experience” based on observational learning and modeling, direct tutelage, and enactive experience of behavior deemed socially appropriate for each gender (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Reid, Haritos, Kelly, & Holland, 1995, p. 97). These three modes of influence occur at two levels of gender role socialization. The first level of gender role socialization consists of the family (i.e., parents, siblings, relatives), which imparts messages, rules, norms, and expectations regarding appropriate gender roles and behavior (Harro, 2000). Social, educational, and occupational contexts and the media form the second level of socialization, reinforcing familial gender role socialization practices through pervasive and consistent messages regarding appropriate gender behavior (Harro, 2000).

Modeling is believed to be “one of the most pervasive and powerful means of transmitting values, attitudes, and patterns of thoughts and behavior,” with socializing agents (e.g., parents, siblings, peers, the media, and social, educational, and occupational contexts) serving as modeling influences that convey the rules and structures surrounding appropriate

gender behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 2004, p. 95; Harro, 2000). Direct tutelage refers to the direct instruction of appropriate gender behavior, an instruction based on shared cultural values that receive “widespread social support” at both levels of socialization (Bussey & Bandura, 2004, p. 97). The last mode of influence, enactive experience, contends that gender behavior results in evaluative social outcomes that influence individuals’ understanding and performance of appropriate gender behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). These social outcomes are “socially prescribed rather than intrinsic to the action, and include socially based consequences such as approval, praise, and reward for activities linked to the same gender, and disapproval, or even punishment, for those linked to the other gender” (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; p. 98). They serve as behavior regulators, providing incentives (i.e., reward) and disincentives (i.e., punishments) to produce appropriate gender behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). Children learn to predict social outcomes to their behavior by observing the social sanctions that are imposed on their own and others’ behavior and from the messages they receive from various socializing agents about the likely consequences of inappropriate behavior for their gender (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). This external regulation gradually shifts to self-sanctions and self-regulation of behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). This study considers the observational learning, modeling, direct tutelage, and enactive experiences that comprised participants’ experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation.

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of gender role socialization and negotiation on Mexican Americans’ understandings of sexual violence. The investigation is approached from an idiographic and contextual perspective that considers the complex intersections of cultural and ideological representations (i.e., gender role ideology) and individual and interpersonal manifestations (i.e., gender role attitudes and behavior) of Mexican

gender roles⁹. The study utilized a Chicana feminist methodology and followed life history methods to co-construct participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and comprehend the influence of those experiences on participants' understandings of sexual violence.

⁹ The term "Mexican" rather than "Mexican American" is used in this paper when discussing cultural values, gender role ideology, and gender roles because these constructs are believed to be indigenous to Mexico and Mexican culture and operating in the U.S. as a result of migration and the preservation of such constructs by Mexican Americans.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature on Latina/o gender role constructs and sexual violence and then surveys the broader literature in this area. An overview of the literature on Mexican gender roles is then provided, followed by a discussion of the available literature on Mexican American gender role socialization. The purpose of the current study is revisited at the end of the chapter.

The Relationship Between Latina/o Gender Role Constructs and Sexual Violence

Although the literature on Latina/os and sexual violence is scant (Marín, 1996; Ramos Lira et al., 1999; Torres-Pryor, 2003), a relationship between Latina/o gender role constructs and sexual violence has been noted and explored, albeit minimally and sporadically, in the available literature. Some of these studies examine the relationship between Latina/o gender role attitudes and rape while others consider the relationship between Latina/o gender roles and other forms of sexual violence, such as sexual coercion and unwanted consensual sex (i.e., sexual compliance).

Gender role attitudes and rape among Latina/os. Studies have found empirical evidence of a relationship between gender role attitudes and attitudes about rape (e.g., rape myth acceptance, victim blaming) among Latina/os. Williams and Holmes (1982; Williams, 1984) examined the relationship between sex role traditionality, women's liberation, male-female sexuality, and attitudes about rape among Anglo, Black, and Mexican American community samples. They found that Mexican Americans had the least feminist/most conservative attitudes about rape (Anglos had the most feminist/least conservative) and that Mexican American males had more conservative attitudes about rape than Mexican American women (Williams, 1984;

Williams & Holmes, 1982). Further, their findings revealed that attitudes that support traditional sex-role behavior for women were the strongest predictor of Mexican Americans' conservative attitudes about rape. In measuring victim impact across these three communities, the researchers found that Mexican American rape victims suffered the greatest degree of negative impact across the three groups (Blacks the least). They associated the greater victim impact with Mexican American community attitudes about rape (Williams & Holmes, 1982). This association suggests that sex-role traditionality may influence victim impact among Mexican Americans. Williams and Holmes (1982) concluded that attitudes about rape are significantly shaped by gender role expectations and attitudes about heterosexual sexual dynamics, with some of these attitudes supporting victim blame and rendering rape “an integral part of the dynamics of male-female interaction” (p. 166).

Fischer (1987) considered the relationship between attitudes toward women, attitudes about rape, and acculturation among Hispanic and majority (i.e., Anglo American or Caucasian) college students and found that Hispanic college students had more traditional attitudes toward women and were more accepting of date rape than majority students. Further, she found interaction effects between participant gender and level of acculturation (bicultural/bilingual versus assimilated)¹⁰ and their reported attitudes toward women and rape (Fischer, 1987). Specifically, she found that bicultural/bilingual Hispanic males were less likely to blame a male for forcible date rape than assimilated Hispanic males and that bicultural/bilingual Hispanic women were more accepting of date rape and had more traditional attitudes toward women than assimilated Hispanic women. However, her findings also revealed that assimilated Hispanic males held more traditional attitudes toward women than bicultural/bilingual Hispanic males

¹⁰ Fischer (1987) used the term “bicultural/bilingual” to refer to individuals who were less acculturated and the term “assimilated” to refer to individuals who were more acculturated to U.S. mainstream culture.

(Fischer, 1987). The researcher concluded that the exposure to more egalitarian sex roles in the dominant culture that occurs during acculturation might have a “liberating effect” on Hispanic women, but no payoff, or perhaps a negative payoff, for Hispanic males (p. 101).

Torres-Pryor (2003) investigated the relationship between rape myth acceptance (RMA), gender role attitudes, and acculturation among a sample of Latina/o college students and found a positive relationship between gender role traditionality, rape myth acceptance, and victim blame among this population. Moreover, she found gender role attitudes to be the most significant predictor of RMA among Latina/os (Torres-Pryor, 2003). A gender effect emerged that suggests Latina women hold less traditional (more feminist) gender role attitudes and are less accepting of rape myths than Latino men. According to Torres-Pryor (2003), this gender effect suggests that, once in college, Latina women begin to question traditional gender role ideology and become less accepting of traditional gender role attitudes than Latino males, who are “already accustomed to experiencing privilege with traditional Latino/a gender roles...so to experience increased independence in a college environment does not have any influence in changing their view of traditional gender role beliefs” (p. 131). In contrast, the researcher did not find a relationship between acculturation and gender role attitudes or between acculturation and rape myth acceptance, speculating that this was due, in part, to the lack of diversity in acculturation level among her participants (Torres-Pryor, 2003). Consequently, Torres-Pryor (2003) asserted that more research is needed to further explore the relationship between gender role attitudes, acculturation, and rape myth acceptance among Latina/os.

Latina/o gender roles and other forms of sexual violence. A relationship has also been found between Latina/o gender roles and other forms of sexual violence. Marín (1996) found that Latino men with more traditional gender role attitudes (e.g., men have uncontrollable sex

drives, women should be less knowledgeable about sex than men) engaged more frequently in sexually coercive behavior (e.g., forcefully insisting on having sex with an unwilling or uninterested female partner, lying) than men with less traditional attitudes and that Latinas with more traditional gender role attitudes had experienced more coercive behavior than women with less traditional attitudes. She suggested the “greater sexual coercion on the part of Latino men and greater acceptance of that coercion on the part of women” were due to Latino cultural norms that discourage sexual communication between men and women, proclaim all men as highly sexual, and minimize women’s sexual needs (e.g., only “bad” women are highly sexual; Marín, 1996; p. 168). She contended that men are compelled into sexually coercive behavior by the power differential that exists between Latino men and women and the expectation that men prove their manhood through penetration (Marín, 1996). Marín (1996) also found that acculturation had an effect on Latina/o sexual attitudes and behaviors, particularly among Latinas. According to Marín (1996), as Latina/os acculturate to mainstream U.S. culture and become English speaking, they begin to hold more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles, become more comfortable with sex, and become less sexually coercive and coerced. Latinas also begin to identify more experiences of unwanted sexual activity as sexual violence (Marín, 1996). Marín (1996) found that less acculturated Latino males are more likely to believe that it is culturally acceptable and expected for men to coerce women into sexual activity and are more likely to perpetrate and admit to having physically coerced their partner into sex.

Ramos Lira et al. (1999) found that traditional sexual scripts that promote token resistance, discourage sexual communication, and result in a lack of direct and expressed verbal consent to sexual activity were associated with the experiences of sexual coercion and compliance by Mexican immigrant women in the Southwest. Similarly, Carrillo (2005) found

that traditional gender roles and sexual scripts may encourage, maintain, and normalize sexual violence in Mexicano/Mexican American communities. More specifically, her findings indicated that gender roles and sexual scripts may mask male sexual coercion and female sexual compliance as consensual, normative sexual behavior (i.e., “just part of the relationship”) to the extent that neither men nor women recognize they are being sexually coercive/coerced (Carrillo, 2005). The researcher found that participants associated these gender roles and sexual scripts with the male dominance and entitlement propagated via the institutions of patriarchy and Catholicism (i.e., the system of gender stratification and inequality they believed to be prevalent in Mexican culture). Further, she found that women adopt these gender roles from women in their family and their community, thus creating an intergenerational gender socialization process that legitimizes and maintains sexual violence (Carrillo, 2005).

Although these findings suggest a relationship between gender role constructs (e.g., gender role attitudes and sexual scripts) and sexual violence among Latina/os, particularly Mexican Americans, the influence of gender role socialization (e.g., gender role ideology) and negotiation (e.g., actual gender behavior) on this relationship remain unexamined in the literature. The current study contributes to the literature by considering the impact of Mexican Americans’ experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understandings of sexual violence. Although acculturation is not one of the study’s focal areas, it considers the impact of a transnational context (i.e., the sociocultural, political, and migratory experiences between Mexico and the United States) on Mexican Americans’ experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and understandings of sexual violence by including both participants who had all of their schooling and upbringing in the U.S. as well as participants who had some of their early schooling and upbringing in Mexico.

The Relationship Between Gender Role Constructs and Sexual Violence

Similarly, empirical evidence supportive of a relationship between gender role constructs and sexual violence has been found in the broader literature (e.g., Burt, 1980; Good, Hepper, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & Wang, 1995; Mosher, 1991; Murnen et al., 2002; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Truman et al., 1996). Some studies have investigated the impact of gender role attitudes on rape (Burt, 1980; Simonson & Subich, 1999), with results consistent with the existing literature on Latina/o gender role attitudes and sexual violence. Other studies have investigated and found support for a relationship between men's adherence to mainstream and extreme forms of male gender role ideology and sexual violence (Good et al., 1995; Mosher, 1991; Murnen et al., 2002; Truman et al., 1996), which highlights the importance of the current study.

Gender role attitudes and rape. Research has found a positive relationship between sex role stereotyping and rape myth acceptance among men and women, with sex role stereotyping emerging as a significant predictor of RMA for both men and women (Burt, 1980). Since rape myth acceptance affects the breadth of rape definitions endorsed, greater RMA results in narrower definitions of rape that deny or reduce the perceived seriousness of rape and support victim blame (Burt, 1980). A positive and significant relationship has also been found between gender role traditionality and rape-supportive attitudes among men and women (Simonson & Subich, 1999). Specifically, Simonson and Subich (1999) found a relationship between gender role traditionality and perceptions about the seriousness and psychological consequences of four rape scenarios (e.g., stranger, date, acquaintance, and marital rape). Their findings indicated that a greater endorsement of traditional gender roles minimized the perceived seriousness and psychological consequences of rape whereas less gender role traditionality resulted in more

characterization of scenarios as rape, greater understanding of the seriousness of rape, and less victim blame.

Gender role ideology and sexual violence. Several studies have considered the relationship between masculine ideology and sexual violence (Good et al., 1995; Mosher, 1991; Murnen et al., 2002; Truman et al., 1996). Some of these studies have considered “extreme” forms of masculinity ideology, such as hypermasculinity (i.e., “extreme adherence to the masculine gender role;” “exaggerated sex-typed performance”), hostile masculinity (e.g., male dominance and control; hostility toward women), *machismo* (i.e., a “world view” that assumes ‘masculinity, virility, and physicality to be the ideal essence of real men’), and patriarchy ideology (i.e., gender stratification and inequality; male dominance and control; see Mosher, 1991, pp. 200-201; Murnen et al., 2002, p. 361). Others have considered more mainstream aspects of male gender role ideology, such as rationality (i.e., emotional restrictiveness), respect, status, self-reliance, antifemininity, homophobia, sexual objectification of women, and physical violence (Good et al., 1995; Saez, Casado, & Wade, 2009; Truman et al., 1996).

Extreme forms of masculinity. In his review of the literature, Mosher (1991) found that men who endorsed an ideology of *machismo* displayed a predominately “hostile-dominant” style in dating and sexual situations and that this interpersonal style was associated with a history of sexual aggression. Additionally, he found a relationship between the endorsement of *machismo* and sexual coercion, with “macho men” admitting to using multiple tactics to gain sexual access in dating situations, including verbal manipulation, drugs and alcohol, anger expression, threats, and sexual force (Mosher, 1991). According to Mosher (1991), “such aggressive behavior is consistent with a macho script emphasizing the use of power over women to gain coitus as a reward for and as an entitlement of being a hypermasculine man” (p. 231). In keeping with such

entitlement, “macho men” are reported to be more sexually callous and show less empathy towards victims of sexual violence (Mosher, 1991). Not surprisingly, the endorsement of a macho ideology has been shown in some studies to be the best predictor of sexual violence (Mosher, 1991).

Similarly, Murnen et al. (2002) found that extreme forms of masculine ideology, particularly those that endorse violence and hostility toward women (i.e., women deserve violence) and male dominance, were significantly associated with sexual violence, mainly past and future likelihood of sexual aggression. According to Murnen et al. (2002), these findings suggest that the more men endorse an extreme form of masculine ideology that is supportive of a patriarchy ideology, the greater the likelihood they will behave in a sexually aggressive manner toward women.

Masculinity ideology. Other studies have considered the relationship between sexual violence and more mainstream aspects of male gender ideology (Good et al., 1995; Truman et al., 1996). Both Good et al. (1995) and Truman et al. (1996) considered the influence of men’s subscription to culturally defined masculinity standards on rape supportive attitudes. Good et al. (1995) found masculinity ideology to be the most powerful and consistent predictor of rape supportive attitudes and RMA, and these findings suggested that men with more traditional masculine ideologies would be more likely to endorse rape myths (Good et al., 1995).

Similarly, Truman et al. (1996) found that men’s endorsement of more traditional gender roles, an indicator of a more traditional masculine ideology, was linked to a greater endorsement of rape supportive attitudes and RMA. Additionally, men’s endorsement of traditional attitudes toward women and women’s roles was found to be the most consistent predictor of men’s rape supportive attitudes. This is of importance since men’s rape myth acceptance and endorsement

of rape-supportive attitudes have been shown to be significantly associated to men's sexually aggressive attitudes and behaviors (i.e., attraction to, history of, and future likelihood of sexual aggression; Truman et al., 1996). Truman et al. (1996) suggested these traditional views toward women were reflective of male dominance and the subordination of women.

Similarly, gender role traditionality, callous sexual attitudes toward women, hostility towards women, hostile masculinity, and other forms of masculinity that emphasize "male dominance and female passivity, the sexual objectification of women, male ownership or control of female sexuality, and a pervasive hostility towards women" have all been found to be closely associated with sexual coercion (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 107; Muehlenhard & Schrag, 1991).

Feminine ideology. The literature is scant in terms of the relationship between feminine ideology and sexual violence. Some studies consider this relationship briefly and to supplement findings on the relationship between male gender role ideology and sexual violence, not as a focus of the study or review (Mosher, 1991; Murnen et al., 2002). For instance, Murnen et al. (2002) contended that the feminine gender role is supportive of sexual violence because it complements the male aggressive role. Further, they reported that more feminine women "respond less harshly to depictions of sexual coercion and ...tend to blame themselves more than less feminine women if they experienced sexual coercion" (Murnen et al., 2002; p. 372). Additionally, Mosher (1991) noted in his review of the literature that hyperfeminine women are more accepting of sexual violence than women who do not display hyperfemininity and that attraction to "macho men" is a very strong predictor of experiencing some form of sexual violence.

However, a couple of studies do consider the impact of female gender norms and expectations on female sexual compliance. Morgan et al. (2006) found that both men and women endorsed gender-specific reasons for women's consent to unwanted sexual behavior (e.g., to make their man happy, to maintain the relationship and "keep" boyfriend). According to Morgan et al. (2006), "these findings provide some support for the belief that gender socialization influences the decisions of women to willingly consent to unwanted sexual intercourse and influences the expectations of men for willing participation by women in unwanted sexual intercourse" (p. 521). Further, Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras (2008) found that gender norms "lay the foundation" for unwanted consensual sexual behavior. They contended that the socialization of women to be "responsive to and compliant with male sexual advances" coupled with the norm of sexual precedence result in sexual compliance (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, p. 391). Their findings further indicated that men use verbal persuasion and manipulation to "convince" women to consent to and engage in unwanted sexual behavior and that they "over[ride] the female body" and discount women's experiences of illness, fatigue, and pain to obtain sexual behavior (p. 392). According to the researchers, the women in their study disclosed "feeling obliged to satisfy their male partners' sexual wishes" (p. 394). Both of these studies provide insight as to the reasons women comply with unwanted sexual behavior and men's expectations of and participation in female sexual compliance.

The current study contributes to the literature by examining the impact of both male and female gender role ideology on sexual violence among Mexican Americans. Further, the majority of the existing literature only considers the influence of the endorsed gender role ideology on sexual violence through attitudinal indices and does not explore the acquisition and maintenance of such ideology (i.e., gender role socialization process) or its translation into

attitudes and behaviors that influence sexual violence (Murnen et al., 2002). The current study explores participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the influence of these gendered experiences on participants' understandings of sexual violence.

The Relationship Between Sexual Scripts and Sexual Violence

Consistent with the literature on Latina/o gender role constructs and sexual violence, a relationship has been found in the broader literature between sexual scripts and unwanted sexual contact. The literature suggests traditional sexual scripts promote the sexual miscommunication, token resistance (i.e., women say “no” to sex when they mean “yes” and thus men should persist in their sexual advances), and sexual compliance that maintain sexual inequality and male dominance (Abbey, 1991; Gavey, 1992; Koss et al., 1994; Krahe, 2000; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991) and “pave the ground” for male sexual coercion and aggression towards women (Koss et al., 1994; Krahe, 2000, p. 274). More specifically, the literature has found a relationship between traditional sexual scripts, rape-supportive attitudes, and sexually aggressive behavior (Krahe, 2000) that suggests traditional sexual scripts contribute to and legitimize unwanted sexual experiences (Abbey, 1991; Baslow, 1991; Byers, 1996; Koss et al., 1994; Krahe, 2000; Littleton & Axsom, 2003; Lewin, 1985; Lottes, 1991; Patton & Mannison, 1998, Warshaw & Parrot, 1991).

The relationship between traditional sexual scripts and sexual violence tends to go unnoticed in male-female sexual encounters because the elements in these scripts that promote sexual violence (e.g., male persistence and female token resistance) are normalized and legitimized to the extent that “many instances of forced sex are not defined as rape” (Littleton & Axsom, 2003, p. 466) but rather accepted as part of normative sexuality. Traditional sexual

scripts, therefore, do not only prescribe appropriate sexual behavior and contexts, but, through those prescriptions, also influence how sexual assault is conceptualized by men and women (Littleton & Axsom, 2003) as well as by the larger contexts of community and culture.

Behaviors that meet the definition of sexual coercion and rape are often seen as normative because they fit traditional sexual scripts rather than individuals' concept of rape (Littleton & Axsom, 2003). This allows men to reframe behavior illustrative of sexual coercion or rape as appropriate and expected strategies used to overcome what they believe to be women's feigned sexual reluctance (Littleton & Axsom, 2003). Similarly, women do not conceptualize these experiences as sexual violence because they contain elements of traditional sexual scripts rather than traditional rape scripts (Littleton & Axsom, 2003).

Noting the shift from traditional dating to more casual sexual encounters among college students, Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, and Backstrom (2009) introduced the idea of the hook-up¹¹ script and explored whether college women considered sexual violence to be a potential outcome of a "bad hook-up." They elicited both bad hook-up and rape scripts from participants and found that more than half of the bad hook-up scripts involved an alcohol-facilitated hook-up, unwanted sexual activity, and negative psychological and social consequences (e.g., shame, embarrassment, regret, bad reputation). However, the majority of participants did not regard sexual coercion or rape as potential outcomes of these bad hook-ups, because they "did not regard hook-up contexts as typical contexts in which rapes occur" (Littleton et al., 2009, p. 801).

The literature that considers the relationship between sexual scripts and sexual violence is scant. Similarly, the influence of the processes of gender and sexual socialization on this relationship is left unexamined in the literature. The current study contributes to the literature by

¹¹ Littleton et al. (2009) defined "hook-up" as "a spontaneous sexual encounter, with or without sexual intercourse, between two individuals with no prior romantic relationship" (p. 793).

considering the influence of the process of sexual socialization and of traditional sexual scripts on participants' understandings of sexual violence.

Mexican Gender Roles: Considering Ideological and Behavioral Representations

Central to this study is an understanding of Mexican gender roles and their impact on individuals' understandings of sexual violence. However, an understanding of Mexican gender roles may be more complex than posited by much of the literature due to claims that ideological representations of Mexican gender roles may not match actual gender behavior (Del Castillo, 1993; Del Castillo, 1996). It was therefore imperative for this study to consider and understand the possible complexity surrounding participants' experiences of gender role socialization (i.e., ideology) and actual gender behavior and their impact on Mexican Americans' understandings of sexual violence. This section introduces the constructs believed to represent or illustrate traditional Mexican gender roles and considers some of the literature that challenges these gender roles as the sole representations of masculinity and femininity among Mexican Americans.

Traditional Mexican gender role ideology. Machismo and marianismo have been historically posited to be the sole representations of Mexican American notions of masculinity and femininity. Moreover, these constructs have been presented in most of the literature as a set of rigid and pervasive gender roles that serve to maintain and legitimize the male dominance and highly patriarchal structure believed to be inherent in Mexican culture (Falicov, 1998; Niemann, 2001; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997). These constructs thus merit consideration, whether as ideological constructs or representations of actual gender behavior,

particularly in terms of their potential impact on Mexican Americans' understandings of sexual violence.

Machismo, or the cult of manliness and virility, has come to represent the archetype of Mexican American masculinity (Falicov, 1998; Gutmann, 2000; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002). Mexican American men are expected to display a set of behavioral characteristics that have been associated with *machismo* and believed to be inherent in all Mexican American men such as toughness, aggressiveness, fearlessness, aloofness, possessiveness, emotional restrictiveness, arrogance, strength, autonomy, bravery, jealousy, authoritarianism, stoicism, sexism, sexual prowess and virility, promiscuity, and the proclivity to oppress and abuse women (Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, & Newcomb, 2000; Arcinega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Casas, Turner, & Ruiz de Esparza, 2001; Espín, 1997; Falicov, 1998; Gutmann, 2000; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001; Saez et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2002; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). Men are expected to be “dominant and knowledgeable in sexual relationships with women” and display unbridled passion and sexual desire, with sexual promiscuity a cultural indicator of manhood (Marín, 1996). Further, the positions that *machismo* bestows on men within the domestic sphere (e.g., head of family, economic provider, disciplinarian, protector, and decision maker) grant them power and authority over women and establish male dominance and patriarchal values within familial structures (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Casas et al., 2001; Niemann, 2001, 2004; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Saez et al., 2009).

Marianismo (i.e., Mary-ism), or the cult of the Virgin Mary, has been assigned to Mexican American women as a complementary role to *machismo* (Falicov, 1998; Niemann, 2004). Central to this female archetype is the binary opposition of virgin/mother-*puta*/whore that is used to establish and enforce a set of behavioral characteristics that ascribe to women the

status of *mujer decente* (i.e., “good” woman; Niemann, 2004) and that serves to maintain and legitimize patriarchal values and male dominance (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Falicov, 1998; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997). These behavioral characteristics include submission, self-sacrifice, nurturance, dependence, suffering, passivity, domesticity, religiosity, humility, modesty, sexual purity, commitment to family, respect for and deference to authority, acceptance of men’s public and private behavior, and lack of knowledge or enjoyment of sex (Arredondo, 2002; Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Espín, 1997; Falicov, 1998; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001, 2004; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997; Torres et al., 2002). The roles of wife and mother that *marianismo* decrees for women further maintain and legitimize a patriarchal structure steeped in male dominance and privilege (Niemann, 2001; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997).

Mexican American women are expected to maintain their virginity until marriage and serve as sexual gatekeepers, restraining men’s sexual drives and advancements towards them (Marín, 1996). Further, *marianismo* proscribes to women sexual scripts that establish sex as an activity they should engage in for procreation rather than for pleasure and a duty that must be endured and not refused, thereby demanding women’s sexual submission and availability to men (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Falicov, 1998). This illustrates a double bind for women for they are expected to please and serve men, but in doing so, “they risk losing their virginity and status as a ‘good’ woman” and deemed a *mala mujer* (i.e., a “bad” woman, self-centered, temptress, seducer, whore, “emasculator,” traitor; Falicov, 1998; Marín, 1996, p. 163; Niemann, 2001, 2004, p. 62). Women who violate any of the edicts established by *marianismo* risk being

relegated to the *puta*/whore category, regardless of the sexual or asexual nature of their transgression (Falicov, 1998; Niemann, 2001).

Challenging machismo and marianismo. Despite the consistent presentation of machismo and marianismo as the uncontested and sole set of gender roles among Mexican Americans, for decades, assumptions regarding the one-dimensionality, innateness, pervasiveness, and rigidity of these roles have been challenged (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Casas, Wagenheim, Banchemo, & Mendoza-Romero, 1995; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Niemann, 2004; Valentine & Mosley, 2000). Positive qualities historically associated with the construct of machismo, such as courage, honor, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness, have been typically overridden by scholars and emphasis placed on the sensationalized characteristics that give the term machismo a negative connotation and one-dimensionality (Abreu et al., 2000; Arcinega et al., 2008; Casas et al., 2001; Flores, Eyre, & Millstein, 1998; Niemann, 2004; Pavich, 1986; Saez et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2002; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). It has not been until recently that scholars have begun to explore Latino masculinities more fully, including the construct of machismo (Beattie, 2002). Research has already begun to dispel the notion that machismo is a one-dimensional construct. Arcinega et al. (2008) found that machismo is a bi-dimensional construct with positive qualities associated with the construct of “caballerismo” (i.e., an ethical code of chivalry that focuses on “social responsibility and an emotional connectedness”) and negative characteristics associated with the construct of “traditional machismo” (i.e., hypermasculinity, male dominance, p. 20).

The assumption that *machismo* and *marianismo* are innate to Mexican American men and women also has been consistently challenged. Researchers maintain that *machismo* has never been a Mexican phenomenon or a construct that is more intrinsic among Latino males (Abreu et

al., 2000; Casas et al., 1995; Félix-Ortiz, Abreu, Briano, Bowen, 2001; Torres et al., 2002).

Niemann (2004) contended that “the good versus bad dichotomies for descriptors of women exist in society at large and within other ethnic and racial groups” and not just for Mexican American women (p. 63). Further, Arredondo (2002) argued that *marianismo* is not unique to Mexican American women, but that many women are socialized according to edicts similar to those of *marianismo*.

Research also has found that traditional gender roles may not be as pervasive among Mexican Americans as previously assumed (Niemann, 2001; Valentine & Mosley, 2000). There are varying perspectives regarding the pervasiveness of *machismo* among Mexican American men, ranging from *machismo* as pervasive and integral to Mexican culture, to less ingrained and determining, to simply a stereotypical myth (Casas et al., 2001; Casas et al., 1995). Similarly, the pervasiveness of *marianismo* among Mexican American women has been challenged due to the diversity of gender role attitudes among Latina women (Espín, 1997; Niemann, 2001). Some of these attitudes are traditional, whereas others are modern or a blend of traditional and modern attitudes, which sometimes creates tensions for women, on an intrapsychic and interpersonal level (Espín, 1997). The prevalence of *machismo* and *marianismo* is believed to be associated with a greater adherence to traditional values (Espín, 1997) and on the decline due to various factors, including acculturation to mainstream U.S. culture, increasing levels of education, modernity, and changing economic opportunities that benefit women and influence gender dynamics, particularly within the household (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Casas et al., 1995; Casas et al., 2001; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Valentine & Mosley, 2000).

Not surprisingly then, gender roles among Mexican American men and women have been found to be more flexible than originally assumed (Niemann, 2004), particularly within the

domestic sphere (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Research suggests that Mexican American families are not “characterized by a uniformly extreme type of patriarchy, although patriarchal ideologies and divisions of gender certainly endure” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, p. 187). Rather, a continuum of family arrangements has been documented among Mexican Americans including traditional patriarchal households dominated by men, female-dominated households with more acquiescent men, more egalitarian households in which men and women share decision-making power and in which there is greater equality and opportunity for women than imparted by traditional gender roles, and other family arrangements that blend traditional and egalitarian values, which sometimes lead to personal and interpersonal contradictions in many families (Del Castillo, 1996; Falicov, 1998; Lazur & Majors, 1995; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Torres et al., 2002).

Some of these changes are due to economic trends that have required more women to enter the work force, a move into the public sphere that has provided women with the economic power and voice to negotiate household roles and dynamics (Del Castillo, 1996; Gutmann, 1997b; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996). Varying levels of education and acculturation may also account for some of these changes (Leaper & Valin, 1996), with studies finding less endorsement and adherence to traditional gender role attitudes among more acculturated Mexican Americans, particularly more acculturated Mexican American women (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Phinney & Flores, 2002; Rivadeneyra & Ward, 2005; Valentine & Mosley, 2000). These changes have resulted in a less rigid division of labor, with men adopting more domestic roles, including a more active fatherhood (Del Castillo, 1996; Gutmann, 1997b).

Thus, Mexican American families should not be unquestionably characterized as male-dominated or as following a set of rigid gender roles that maintain patriarchal structures and male dominance (Del Castillo, 1996). Promoting such a rigid and limiting view of Mexican

Americans' gendered experiences only contributes to the "cultural freezing" that underlies the establishment of *machismo* and *marianismo* as static constructions of Mexican notions of masculinity and femininity (Russel y Rodriguez, 1997). This study therefore considers participants' experiences of gender role socialization (i.e., ideology) as well as their personal constructions of masculinity and femininity and explores any notions that challenged traditional gender role ideology. Additionally, the impact of varying transnational contexts (Mexico and/or U.S.) on participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation (e.g., do they endorse and/or adhere to the ideology that was imparted on them) is also considered, thus exploring the pervasiveness and rigidity of traditional gender role ideology in Mexico vis-à-vis the United States as experienced by participants. This contextualization provides additional insight into participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the potential influence of these experiences on their understandings of sexual violence.

Mexican American Gender Role Socialization

The foundation of the current study is the relationship between gender role socialization and sexual violence asserted in feminist and sociocultural theories of rape; thus an understanding of Mexican American gender role socialization practices is imperative to this study. The above discussion regarding potential discrepancies between the ideology imparted to Mexican American men and women through gender role socialization practices and actual gender behavior further demands an understanding of this mechanism.

However, the literature on Mexican American gender role socialization practices is almost nonexistent (Reid et al., 1995). Literature exists on Mexican gender roles and expectations, but very few studies consider how gender roles are developed or encouraged in

children (Reid et al., 1995) or how Mexican American parents “‘translate’ culturally based beliefs about gender into specific parenting practices... [and] attempt to teach their children what it means to be a woman or a man” (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004, p. 288). There is also scant literature available on the influence of other socializing agents (e.g., siblings, peers, school, community, media, mainstream and Mexican culture) on the enculturation of Mexican American men and women into ideologically prescribed gender roles. This section will consider the limited literature on parental gender role socialization practices and the socializing influence of cultural institutions (e.g., the media and the cultural tradition of the *quinceañera*-- a tradition similar, yet not culturally equivalent, to the mainstream concept of a sweet sixteen party) on Mexican Americans. Sexual socialization practices will also be included in this discussion since sexual scripts are a subset of gender roles and are important when considering the relationship between gender role constructs and sexual violence, as discussed earlier in this paper. However, the literature regarding Mexican American sexual socialization practices is also scant and focuses primarily on the sexual socialization of Mexican American women (Baumeister, Flores, & Marín, 1995; Guzmán, Arruda, & Feria, 2006; Marín, 1996; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001; Romo, Lefkowitz, Sigman, & Au, 2002).

Parental gender and sexual socialization practices. A multiplicity of sources and institutions (i.e., parents, peers, school, community, media, and culture) are responsible, whether inadvertently or not, for maintaining and reproducing traditional gender role ideology and socialization processes among men and women (Harro, 2000). Parents constitute the first level of gender role socialization, imparting messages, rules, and expectations regarding appropriate gender behavior (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Harro, 2000). Research has found that Mexican American parents engage in differential socialization practices that (a) grant an unequal

distribution of privilege and freedom to boys (e.g., few, if any, household responsibilities; served first at dinner table; attended to by mother and sisters; allowed to “come and go as [they] please” and without a chaperone; allowed to date at a younger age), (b) enforce stereotypically feminine behavior on girls (e.g., required to act “feminine” and “proper,” perform household duties, put others’ needs first, live at home until married, not engage in “masculine” behavior), and (c) curtail girls’ freedom and activities (e.g., strict curfew; Arredondo, 2002; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Hurtado, 2003, p. 43; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), thus reinforcing traditional gender roles. Gallegos-Castillo (2006) contends that young Mexican American women “are socialized to adopt a strong work ethic and contribute to the household economy in specific ways by taking care of household tasks such as ironing, cooking, cleaning, and child rearing” (p. 46). However, “the social reproductive work young women perform...usually goes unacknowledged and is undervalued and unrecognized both inside and outside the family social unit” (p. 46).

Raffaelli and Ontai (2001) have found that it is the same-sex parent who engages in more socialization of traditional gender-appropriate behavior than the cross-sex parent. Parental gender role attitudes have been found to consistently predict gender role socialization practices, with both maternal and paternal gender role traditionality associated with the encouragement of stereotypical feminine behavior in girls, whereas only maternal gender role traditionality has been linked to the encouragement of stereotypical masculine behavior in boys.

Research suggests that parents influence children’s sexual development through direct communication (Guzmán et al., 2006; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001), social control, and “emotional qualities of the relationship” (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001, p. 296). Although the exact manner in which this mechanism operates is unknown, research suggests that family socialization affects the formation of sexual scripts (i.e., guidelines for sexual interaction and behavior) and that

culture plays a large role in this process since it shapes parental attitudes and values regarding sexuality (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). Despite disagreement as to the ideological versus behavioral nature of traditional Mexican gender roles, several cultural values appear to impact parental sexual socialization practices, particularly the sexual socialization of Mexican American women (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). These cultural values include *familismo* (i.e., the importance of family), *respeto* (i.e., respect for elders and men of the family), and the importance of virginity (based on religious edicts that place a high value on female chastity, which is safeguarded by the family to gain and maintain honor).

Cultural norms that promote female reticence and lack of sexual knowledge impact parental sexual socialization of girls and result in Mexican American parents being more reluctant to communicate with their daughters about sexuality than parents of other ethnic groups and Latino subgroups (Baumeister et al., 1995; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001; Romo et al., 2002). This differential sexual socialization results in Mexican American women being less knowledgeable about their own bodies and the basic physiological aspects of sexuality than non-Latinas (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001; Romo et al., 2002). Parental discomfort with sexuality and with their own sexual experiences as well as fear of appearing condoning of sexual behavior also preclude them from talking to their children about sex (Hurtado, 2003; Marín, 1996).

However, in terms of female sexual socialization, parents, primarily mothers, do engage in extensive communication about (a) appropriate female behavior, with such communication including direct and indirect messages regarding the behaviors of “good” versus “bad” girls, (b) dating norms and rules (e.g., no makeup or revealing clothes, rules about age when dating occurs, group/chaperoned dates versus one-on-one dates, at public or social gatherings where parents and relatives are present), (c) delaying sexual activity and the importance of virginity

(including the myth that using tampons threatens virginity), and (d) the moral aspects and dangers of sexual activity (e.g., pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections; Guzmán et al., 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). Important to this communication are parental concerns regarding the violation of traditional courtship and dating norms and potential negative outcomes of sexual behavior (i.e., pregnancy), that can bring disgrace, shame, or embarrassment to the family (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001).

Cultural institutions and traditions as socializing agents. Cultural institutions and traditions, such as the media (e.g., television) and cultural rites of passage into adulthood (e.g., the quinceañera), comprise a second level of gender role socialization that reinforces traditional gender role ideology and parental gender role socialization practices (Harro, 2000). There is a dearth of information on the influence of these agents on the gender and sexual socialization of Mexican Americans. However, the available studies suggest that these agents particularly influence the gender and sexual socialization of Mexican American women.

Research suggests that television influences gender role development by shaping and conveying cultural norms, with both mainstream and Spanish-language television exposing Mexican Americans to images of traditional gender roles (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). Television viewing has been found to influence gender role attitudes among Mexican American girls, with research contending that Mexican American girls who (a) watch more television, particularly more Spanish-language soap operas, talk shows, and prime time comedies and more English-language talk shows,¹² (b) view television to acquire social or cultural knowledge, and (c) attribute greater realism to media representations of men and women, hold more traditional gender role attitudes and are more likely to try to adhere to traditional gender roles than their

¹² The impact of other type of programming (e.g., MTV and other youth oriented television shows) on the gender and sexual socialization of Mexican Americans is unknown.

counterparts (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). This association was more likely to be found among Mexican American girls with a lower acculturation level to mainstream U.S. culture (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). This research found no association between television viewing and gender role attitudes among Mexican American boys (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). Rivadeneira and Ward (2005) speculated that such relationship was absent because “most boys at this age are already quite traditional in their ideas about gender...perhaps as a result of their accumulated gender training or of their status in the gender hierarchy, [thus] there is less room available for possible media influence” (pp. 471-472). More research is therefore needed on the media’s influence on gender role attitudes and behaviors among Mexican American men and women.

Cultural traditions may also reinforce and reenact traditional gender roles. However, research in this area is almost nonexistent, with a few studies considering the influence of the *quinceañera* on the gender and sexual socialization of Mexican American girls. The *quinceañera* is a traditional religious ceremony that marks a young woman’s passage from girlhood to *señorita* (i.e., young lady), signaling her availability for marriage (Cantú, 1999; Davalos, 1996; Hurtado, 2003; Hyams, 2006)¹³. In her new status of *señorita*, Mexican American girls are afforded a few additional privileges (e.g., permission to wear heels and makeup; for some, permission to date) but no “significant freedom;” however, they are expected to follow the gendered expectations set forth and instructed by the Catholic Church (e.g., virtue, sexual purity, self-sacrifice, subservience, commitment to family). Research suggests that “through the *quinceañera*, Catholic priests provide instruction to parents on how to educate their daughters about gender roles, ‘female’ behavior, and sexuality,” that is, instruction on how to

¹³ Not all Mexican American girls have a *quinceañera*. Various factors or circumstances (i.e., socioeconomic, political, religious, personal, etc.) may influence a family’s or girl’s decision not to have a *quinceañera*.

structure a girl's sexual identity (Davalos, 1996, p. 5). This rite of passage "begins the process of sexual awareness" (Davalos, 1996, p. 7). However, such awareness means that a "girl comes to experience herself as a sexual being, but not as a person who engages in sexual intercourse (or becomes pregnant)" (Davalos, 1996, p. 7; Hyams, 2006). In fact, "when a young girl 'becomes a woman,' the maintenance of sexual purity necessitates an increase in internal and external control over her social interactions, spatial mobility, appearance, and bodily comportment" (Hyams, 2006, p. 98). Further, a girl's heterosexual identity is reinforced and constructed through the *quinceañera*, as is her personal relationship with La Virgen de Guadalupe (i.e., Virgin Mary) and the qualities ascribed to her (Davalos, 1996).

Research has found that Mexican American girls believe boys do not require such a celebration since they have always been more privileged and had those privileges from an earlier age (Cantú, 1999), suggesting an awareness among Mexican American girls of the differential gender and sexual socialization and treatment they experience. There is no religious ceremony or rite of passage akin to the *quinceañera* for Mexican American boys; however, research is needed to further explore the influence of other cultural institutions or traditions that may influence the gender and sexual socialization of Mexican American men and women.

This study explores the influence of various socializing agents on the gender and sexual socialization experiences of participants, thus contributing to the literature in this area. Further, the qualitative nature of this study facilitates an understanding of the messages Mexican American parents communicate to their children regarding dating and sexuality and of the influence these messages have on individuals' actual behavior (Romo et al., 2002).

Purpose of This Study

This study directly explores the relationship between Mexican American experiences of gender role socialization and their understandings of sexual violence. It uncovers and co-constructs Mexican American experiences of gender role socialization and identifies the gender role ideology imparted. Further, it examines the relationship between gender role socialization (i.e., ideology) and actual gender behavior and explores the contexts and consequences of participants' subversion and redefinition of gender. The study also considers the role of participants' multiple contexts and identities, particularly transnational contexts, on the interconnections between their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and understandings of sexual violence. Such an examination requires participants to become intimately involved in the co-construction and analysis of their experiences, which includes considering the multiple socializing agents and contexts that influenced their experiences of gender role socialization, the decision-making process and outcome of their experiences of gender transgression and negotiation, and the impact of these gendered experiences on their understandings of sexual violence. The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests knowledge in all of these areas is lacking, thus supporting the need for this study.

The use of qualitative methods facilitates an understanding of participants' experiences as well as the processes by which they constructed and attributed meaning to such experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Further, these methods allow for an understanding, contextualization, and interpretation of constructs that are multidimensional, idiosyncratic, variable, and/or sensitive (e.g., gender roles, sexual scripts, gender and sexual behavior, and sexual violence) from the perspective of group members and insiders (Baker, 2004; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999; Peshkin, 1988). Qualitative methods have been found to be

culturally appropriate for this population and these research topics and have been widely used to explore Mexican gender roles, particularly among women (e.g., Amuchástegui, 1999; Baker, 2004; Castañeda & Zavella, 2003; Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Faulkner, 2003, Flores et al., 1998; González-López, 1999; Hirsch, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996; Villarruel, 1998; Zavella, 1997, 2003; Zavella & Castañeda, 2005), and to a lesser extent, Mexican American experiences of gender and sexual socialization (Cantú, 1999; Davalos, 1996; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Hyams, 2006; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001, 2004) and understandings of sexual violence (Carrillo, 2005; Ramos Lira et al., 1999). The co-construction of participants' gendered experiences, the inclusion of participants as co-constructors of this knowledge, and the feminist and sociocultural theories of rape at the core of this study demanded the use of life history methods and a Chicana feminist methodological framework described in the following chapter.

Chapter III

Research Methods

Life History Methods

This is a qualitative study that explores Mexican Americans' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and considers the impact of such experiences on their understandings of sexual violence. Life history methods were utilized in this study to reconstruct gendered aspects of participants' lives (e.g., experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation) and understand the meaning of those experiences in relation to sexual violence and other cultural and social phenomena (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Tierney, 2000). These methods were used to recreate the past and give meaning to and understand the present (Tierney, 2000). The life histories (i.e., accounts of participants' lives) that were co-constructed reflect lives as gendered and are referred to in this study as gender histories. These gender histories expose (a) participants' assumptions, values, attitudes, and scripts around gender and sexuality, (b) the inconsistencies between proscribed social scripts and individual social behavior, and (c) the tensions between conformity and resistance, desire and obligation (Caughey, 2006), that participants' struggle with and which provide a deeper understanding of participants' conceptualizations of sexual violence.

The life history methods employed are congruent with the feminist and sociocultural frameworks that underlie this study in that they consider the impact of social, cultural, political, familial, and historical contexts on the lives and phenomena studied and recognize the complex and interlinked nature of those influences (Caughey, 2006; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Tierney, 2000). Similarly, they consider the impact of participants' social identities on their

understanding of the world and their place in it (Angrosino, 2007; Caughey, 2006), including their perceptions and experiences of sexual violence. Further, these methods acknowledge the underrepresented lives and experiences of Mexican American men and women and engage them as active agents in the telling and review of their stories and thus as co-constructors of the “conversational space” in which their stories were produced and negotiated (Angrosino, 2007; Cole & Knowles, 2001). The level of co-construction achieved in this study was bounded by the research context and relationship. In response to researcher questions, participants revealed gendered aspects of their lives (e.g., experiences, stories, messages received about gender) and their reflections on the relationship between these gendered experiences and their understandings of sexual violence. In subsequent interviews, participants had opportunities to review, revise, and re-construct aspects of these stories. After data collection was completed, the researcher alone constructed the narratives representing the gender socialization histories, understandings, and behaviors (including transgressions) of each participant in this research study.

A Chicana Feminist Methodological Framework

A Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology were utilized to frame this study. This framework is congruent with life history methods in both theory and praxis. Theoretical similarities between life history methods and a Chicana feminist methodological framework will be presented next. Congruencies in their application will be highlighted throughout the methods section of this chapter.

Chicana feminist epistemology. A Chicana feminist epistemology places Mexican Americans in the foreground as agents and constructors of knowledge and thus problematizes or challenges dominant discourses on the nature, status, and production of knowledge as well as

historical and ideological representations of Mexican Americans (Delgado Bernal, 1998). The framework is grounded in the lives and experiences of Mexican Americans and involves them in “analyzing how their lives are being interpreted, documented, and reported” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 555). By selecting and employing research questions, methodological frameworks, and methods that provide participants with a voice and sense of agency and that acknowledge and address the contexts, identities, and experiences salient to participants (e.g., migration, generational status, language, race/ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality), such knowledge can be constructed (Delgado Bernal, 1998). The ways in which this knowledge is constructed and grounded in the lives and experiences of Mexican Americans support the co-construction of gender histories and analysis of their potential impact on participants’ understandings of sexual violence in their communities.

Further, this epistemological framework was utilized because it values the voice and role of the researcher in the research process, as do life history methods (Caughey, 2006; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Johnson, 2002). Specifically, a Chicana feminist epistemology “arises out of a unique social and cultural history, and demonstrates that our experiences as Mexican women are legitimate, appropriate, and effective in designing, conducting, and analyzing educational research” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 563). An integral part of a Chicana feminist epistemology is the concept of cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Cultural intuition “acknowledges the unique viewpoints that many Chicana scholars bring to the research process” and enables us to understand the subtle meanings of the data (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 555).¹⁴ It emerges from the researcher’s (a) personal background and experiences (e.g., social identities, contexts, and

¹⁴ Feminist research contends that “utilization of the self is fundamental to qualitative work” (Olesen, 2000; p. 229) and that a researcher’s personal experience is an asset to the research undertaken (Reinharz, 1992). These perspectives support the Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology I employed in this study, and they translate into the concept of cultural intuition discussed above.

experiences), (b) knowledge of the existing literature, both academic (e.g., theoretical articles and empirical studies) and non-academic (e.g., biographies, newspapers, magazines, and other public and personal documents) that can provide concepts and relationships against which the data can be compared as well as suggest ways of generating and interpreting data, (c) professional experience in a particular field and/or with a particular population, and (d) engagement in the analytical research process, with more engagement with the data leading to more insight and understanding, particularly if participants are included in the interpretation of the data and construction of knowledge regarding their lives and experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

Chicana feminist methodology. González's (1998, 1999, 2001) Chicana feminist *trenzas* (i.e., braiding) methodology was employed because it supports the epistemological framework and research methods used in the study. It is an indigenous, holistic, and culturally relevant methodology that supports and strengthens the production of knowledge by Mexican Americans about their own lives and experiences and through their own voices (González, 1999, 2001). It acknowledges the influence of social contexts and identities (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, language, migration, and immigration) on Mexican Americans' lives and experiences, the impact of "multiple identities and realities, histories, contestations, and ambiguities in the shaping of values, practices, and institutions; experienced through family-community membership and class and collective interactions in a changing political economy" (González, 2001, p. 645). This methodology involves a process of gathering, combing, and braiding knowledge (González, 2001). The braiding that occurs is a weaving together or integration of Mexican Americans' stories, experiences, and identities with the researcher's cultural and academic knowledge and the active engagement and voices of both participants and

the researcher (González, 1998, 2001). It is a braiding of identities, theories, and practices from a feminist and social justice perspective (González, 2001).

Researcher Standpoint, Subjectivity, and Reflexivity

The epistemological and methodological frameworks of this study demand that I situate myself in the research and acknowledge the theoretical perspectives, social identities, and personal and professional experiences I bring to this study (Caughey, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 1998). To that end, I formally situate myself in this study as a feminist, heterosexual, bilingual, bicultural, Tejana, Mexican American woman.

The cultural intuition I bring to this study includes (a) my own experiences of gender socialization and negotiation, as shaped by the sociopolitical and cultural contexts along the Mexican-US border, where I was raised, (b) my knowledge of the academic literature on Mexican American experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the relationship between these experiences and sexual violence, (c) my knowledge of non-academic literature produced and distributed in Mexico and reflective of Mexican pop culture and of current sociopolitical, economic, and cultural issues and dynamics influencing Mexican constructions and representations of gender, and (d) my experience facilitating dialogues around gender and sexual violence with Latina/o college students. My cultural intuition influenced my methodological and philosophical approach to conducting this study at multiple points throughout the research process, from designing the study to gathering, combing, and braiding the emergent data.

I am aware, however, that my cultural intuition does not automatically render me an insider among participants of my own ethnic subgroup (Delgado Bernal, 1998), particularly due

to varying sociopolitical, cultural, historical, and geographical experiences and realities. Similarly, I am aware that sharing attributes and/or experiences with participants does not imply I have full access to the knowledge of that population (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Olesen, 2000). Thus, I was careful not to assume that my experiences, values, and perspectives were reflective of participants' realities (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & McCormack-Steinmetz, 1996) or that I was more knowledgeable of the meaning of participants' experiences, feelings, or values. However, it is possible that this ethnic commonality "enhanced rapport, willingness to disclose, and the validity and reliability of the data provided" and increased participants' trust and motivation to complete the research process (Marín & Marín, 1991, p. 53).

Additionally, I am aware that as the researcher in this study I am in a position of power and privilege vis-à-vis participants. To decrease such power differential and develop a more open, honest, and collaborative relationship with participants, I invited them to become involved in the research process and act as co-constructors of the data (e.g., experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the influence of those experiences on their understanding of sexual violence). Such a relationship entailed demystifying the research process and engaging in member-checking to discuss and negotiate the data and meaning-making that emerged during the research process. I treated them as experts of their own experiences and adopted the role of facilitator rather than expert.

Thus, the use of the self in qualitative research comes with responsibility. Feminist frameworks contend that we need to be reflexive of the influence of our subjectivities on our research (Olesen, 2000). "Being reflexive in research means engaging in an ongoing process of reflecting ideas and experiences back on oneself as an explicit acknowledgement of one's locatedness in the research" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 42; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). It also

means “acknowledging the critical role we play in creating, interpreting, and theorizing research data” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). This entails making our decision-making process and logic explicit throughout the research process (Olesen, 2000). To address issues of subjectivity and reflexivity and their potential impact on the trustworthiness of this study’s findings, I engaged in exercises of reflexivity and maintained a reflexivity journal in which I reflected on the research process and on how I was gathering, combing, and braiding the emergent data (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The details of such reflexivity exercises are described at the end of this chapter when discussing the data analysis process.

Participants

Two men and two women were selected to participate in this study based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) self identification as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o, or Chicana/o, (b) self identification as heterosexual, (c) basic critical thinking skills, (d) basic storytelling skills, (e) interest in the research process, (f) commitment to participate in five interviews, and (g) consent to having the interviews audio-taped. One male and one female participant were required to have had some schooling or upbringing in Mexico while the other two were required to have had all of their schooling and upbringing in the United States.

Since the main focus of the study is to understand the influence of Mexican culture on experiences of gender socialization and negotiation and understandings of sexual violence, this study only included individuals who self identified as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o, or Chicana/o. To further understand the influence of geographical, sociocultural, and migratory (i.e., transnational) contexts on Mexican Americans’ experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation, the study included two participants who had some schooling or upbringing in

Mexico and two who had all of their schooling and upbringing solely in the U.S. Further, since this study examines heterosexual expressions of sexual violence (i.e., sexual violence toward women by men) and considers how participants' own sexual experiences and negotiations map onto the heterosexual dynamics they identify as contributing to this subcategory of sexual violence, only individuals who self identified as heterosexual were included in this study. Lastly, individuals who possessed basic critical thinking skills and storytelling abilities and were interested in engaging in the research process were favored for inclusion since these criteria are important to the life history methods (Caughey, 2006) and the Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology (Delgado Bernal, 1998; González, 1999) employed in this study.

Data Collection Methods

In-depth interviews and journaling were the two methods of data collection used in this study to engage participants in the co-construction and analysis of their gender histories and understandings of sexual violence. Both of these methods are innate to life history research (Cole & Knowles, 2001), and the use of interview methods has also been employed successfully in Chicana feminist research.

In-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were used in this study to access participants' experiences of gender socialization and negotiation as well as their perspectives on sexual violence (Reinharz, 1992). They were also used to engage participants in analyzing the potential impact, meaning, and relationships among these experiences and perspectives (Weiss, 1994). The interviews followed a semi-structured, conversational format congruent with the life history methods and Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology employed in this research. Specifically, a conversational format was used to elicit the “recollections and reconstructions of

elements of the participant's life" necessary for the construction of participant's gender histories (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 35). Such format allowed participants' voices and ways of knowing to more easily emerge, which is vital to a Chicana feminist framework (Delgado Bernal, 1998). A "discursive space" for "intentional meaning making, reflexivity, and genuine interaction around topics that are at once intensely personal yet vibrantly interesting to both parties" was constructed in collaboration with participants (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 75; Zavella, 2003, p. 230). A vital element of this discursive space was language. The interviews were conducted primarily in English, but participants freely engaged in code-switching and used Spanish words or phrases to ascribe certain meanings to their experiences and channel the messages the messages they received from their parents and extended families.

Journaling. Participants engaged in journal writing throughout the data collection process. They were provided with open-ended prompts at the end of each interview to assist them in further reflecting about the topics and experiences discussed in the interviews and/or about the research process. Journaling was utilized as a data collection method to further engage participants in reflexivity that could enrich emerging interview data, provide a different format through which new data could emerge, and verify or confirm preliminary analyses. The use of journaling in this study is consistent with the use of journals in life history research as artifacts or documents that may "enrich insights and clarify questions" during the research process (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 86). Journaling also is congruent with the Chicana feminist framework employed in this study since it serves as another vehicle through which participants can give voice to their experiences and perspectives on the topics studied as well as on the research process.

Measures

Screening form. A brief screening form was created to assess if individuals interested in the study met the inclusion criteria (see Appendix A). The screening form included questions regarding individuals' ethnic identification, sexual orientation, locale of upbringing and/or schooling, interest in the study and research process, availability for five interviews and five weeks of journaling, and consent to audiotape interviews. To assess basic storytelling and critical thinking skills (e.g., ability to reflect, analyze, make associations, and consider multiple viewpoints), individuals were asked to narrate a story about an interesting incident or event that had occurred in their family. Individuals' ages and information about family composition was also obtained.

Interview guide. The interview guide used in this study (see Appendix B) was developed following procedures for life history interviews outlined by Cole and Knowles (2001) and Johnson (2002) and according to the Chicana feminist notion of cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Five in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. The first three interviews elicited contextual and experiential information regarding participants' experiences of gender socialization and negotiation. Specifically, the first interview explored participants' familial context in terms of family composition and history and parental gender roles and behavior. The second interview explored the influence of various socializing agents on participants' experiences of gender socialization and their application and/or negotiation of such socialization, illustrating, for each participant, the nature of the relationship between the gender role ideology imparted and their actual gender behavior. The subsequent interview followed a similar format and explored a subset of gender socialization – sexual norms and expectations. It considered participants' experiences of sexual socialization and their application and/or

negotiation of prescribed sexual norms and expectations. The last two interviews explored participants' understandings of sexual violence. More specifically, these interviews considered (a) how participants defined and conceptualized various forms of sexual violence, including rape, sexual coercion, and sexual compliance, (b) participants' perceptions of their own and community reactions to hypothetical and/or real incidents of sexual violence in their communities, and (c) participants' endorsement of rape mythology (e.g., attribution of responsibility, deservingness, and credibility; trivialization).

Journal guide. The journal guide developed for this study (See Appendix C) consisted of five sets of journal prompts that mapped onto the topics discussed in each interview. Prompts were provided to participants at the end of each interview. These prompts were provided to participants to encourage them to reflect further on the study topics and experiences discussed in that interview as well as engage them in a more critical analysis of their experiences.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from a mid-western university. The study was advertised through two university units that had access to potential participants (i.e., the university's Latina/o cultural house and Latina/Latino Studies Program). Flyers were posted and distributed at these sites, and information about the study was disseminated electronically through the newsletters, listservs, and Latina/o registered student organizations to which these sites had access (see Appendix D). Recruitment materials encouraged prospective participants to contact the researcher via email for more information about the study. I provided interested individuals with additional information about the study and communicated the need for a brief phone screening. A date and time was arranged for the screening.

Prior to beginning the phone screening, I informed individuals about the confidential and voluntary nature of the screening and obtained verbal consent to continue. I then assessed if individuals met the study's inclusion criteria. If individuals (a) did not identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o or Chicana/o, (b) did not identify as heterosexual, (c) could not participate in all five interviews, or (d) did not consent to having the interviews audio-taped, I discontinued the screening and informed them they were ineligible for the study. Those who met the four criteria were asked to share more about their interest in the study and about their upbringing, and they were asked to narrate a story about an interesting incident or event that had occurred in their family. The information and dynamics that emerged from such conversation helped determine if they met the remaining three criteria of (a) basic critical thinking skills (e.g., ability to reflect, analyze, make associations, and consider multiple viewpoints), (b) basic storytelling skills, and (c) interest or willingness to engage in the research process as well as (d) the locale of their upbringing and/or schooling. Individuals who completed the screening were informed that others still needed to be screened and that only the two men and two women who were best matched in terms of key variables would be selected for the study.

Individuals who possessed basic critical thinking and storytelling skills and were interested or willing to engage in the research process were favored for inclusion in the study. The four individuals who met all seven inclusion criteria most satisfactorily and best matched their counterpart (e.g., in terms of age) were selected for the study. Individuals who were not selected for the study were contacted and informed they had not been selected. A subset of these individuals who were not selected for the study but satisfactorily met the inclusion criteria were asked if they would like to be placed on a waiting list in case an opening emerged and another participant was needed. Selected individuals were invited to participate in the study. They were

informed that their participation would entail five interviews and five weeks of journaling and that they would be compensated for each interview as well as for completing all five interviews and five weeks of journaling.

All of the interviews were conducted on campus. Interviews were recorded using both a digital and a regular tape recorder. Interviews lasted 1.5-2 hours and were scheduled on a weekly basis with each participant. Prior to beginning the first interview, participants were given more information about the study, including information about the confidential and voluntary nature of their participation and their right to refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of the benefits to which they were otherwise entitled (e.g., financial compensation). They were asked to provide informed consent and were given a copy of the consent form for their records (see Appendix E). Participants were informed that the remaining four interviews would be covered under this initial consent agreement, but that they could ask additional questions concerning the study, their role in the study, and/or their rights at any time. I also informed them that a copy of the consent form would be available at each interview. I discussed with participants the journaling and research processes. I then invited participants to answer questions from the interview guide.

At the beginning of each interview, I picked up participants' journal entries for the previous week. During each interview, I asked participants for feedback on the accuracy and completeness of my interpretations of the data that was emerging (i.e., member checking) and engaged them in an on-going analysis of our interviews. Participant engagement in on-going member checking and analysis during data collection is consistent with life history methods (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Johnson, 2002) and a Chicana feminist epistemology and methodology (Delgado Bernal, 1998). I also asked questions I had about the previous interview and/or set of

journal entries and asked participants if they had any questions or comments they would like to address. At the end of each interview, I provided participants with that week's journal prompts and provided them with \$15 as compensation for their participation. At the end of the last interview, participants received an additional \$15 for completing the study, a total of \$90 for their participation in the study.

At the end of each interview, I checked-in with participants to assess and process any discomfort or emotional distress resulting from the interview. A similar check-in occurred at the beginning of each interview to process any feelings or thoughts that could have surfaced for participants during the previous week. I had developed a protocol to assess the level of participants' distress and risk of imminent danger to self and others. Further, I had a referral information form with available counseling services on campus and in the community (see Appendix F) and a set of self-help brochures available at every interview. However, all four participants denied experiencing any discomfort or emotional distress during these check-ins. Participants were provided with this referral information at the end of data collection.

Data Management and Storage

A code was assigned to each individual who consented to a screening interview. This code was used to label all data (i.e., digital files, audiotapes, journals) and documents related to each participant. The interviews were recorded using both a digital and a manual tape recorder. Thus, the interviews were in digital format (on a hard drive used solely for this study) and on audiotape. Digital files and audiotapes were only labeled with the participant's code and date of interview. To reduce the possibility of audio recordings containing any identifying information,

participants were asked not to provide any names during the interview and to only identify locations/settings that would be important to understanding the context of their experiences.

Interview data remained largely in audio form. Only quotes that helped explain or illustrate the study's findings were transcribed into written form. They do not include any information that could identify participants or the settings or incidents they discussed in the interviews. Additionally, participants were asked not to include any identifying information (e.g., names, locations, settings) in their journals, including their name. Any identifiable information was blacked out of the journals. Similarly, any identifying information on documents related to participants was blacked out, if not needed.

A file was created for each participant at the onset of data collection (Caughey, 2006; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Participant files contain the audiotapes of each interview, participant journals, researcher reflexivity notes and analytic memos for that participant, and other related documents (e.g., screening form). An index was created to catalog each item in the file, with date. The files are only identifiable by participant code and are stored under double lock (i.e., in a locked cabinet, in a private, locked office with limited access). Documents with identifiable information (e.g., code sheet, informed consent form) are stored in a locked cabinet, in a separate location from participant files to avoid any possibility of the data being traced to an identifiable source. Identifiable information will be destroyed at the completion of this study.

Data Analysis

A voice-centered relational approach (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) was utilized to analyze the data. This approach attends to participants' multilayered voices, stories, and perspectives,

and considers participants within the context of relationships as well as within broader social, political, cultural, and structural contexts. Further, it “respects the role of the researcher and indeed the necessity of the researcher having her own voice and perspective in this process” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 135). This approach is congruent with the life history methods and Chicana feminist framework employed in this study and was used in conjunction with the Chicana feminist *trenzas* methodology (González, 1998, 1999, 2001).

A *trenzas* methodology gives primacy to participants’ voices and the multiple contexts, identities, and realities that have shaped their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, it values the inclusion of participants in the construction of knowledge about their own lives and experiences. This methodology entails the braiding of participants’ stories, experiences, and perspectives with the researcher’s cultural and academic knowledge and the active engagement and voices of participants and researcher. These braids of knowledge (i.e., participants’ gender histories) consider the intersection of participants’ gender identities and experiences with other social identities they identify as salient (e.g., ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion) from a feminist and social justice perspective.

Data analysis was an ongoing process of immersion in the data that included (a) reflecting and asking questions of the data, (b) writing analytic and reflexive memos (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Rossman & Rallis, 1998), (c) engaging participants in the analytic process and in the interpretation of the emerging data, and (d) the braiding of the data into participant gender histories. Interview data were analyzed using a tape-based approach (i.e., interviews were not transcribed; Angrosino, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 1998) that entailed various “listenings” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) of the data. A tape-based approach recreated the context of the

interviews (González, 1999), which led to a deeper understanding of the tone and dynamics informing the data, and thus facilitated a voice-centered relational approach to data analysis.

Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) procedures for a voice-centered relational approach to data analysis were utilized, resulting in two listenings of the data. During the first listening of the data, I listened for participants' overall stories of gender role socialization, current gender attitudes and behavior, and understandings of sexual violence and noted any themes, recurring images, words, metaphors, and contradictions in their stories. I also listened for myself in the data, particularly my assumptions, biases, values, and emotional and intellectual responses to participants, and considered how those variables influenced my interpretation of the data. During the second listening of the data, I listened for what Mauthner and Doucet (1998) termed the voice of the "I" and noted (a) how participants perceived themselves (b) the multiple and sometimes contradictory voices, views, and perspectives present in their dialogue, and (c) their reflexivity and decision-making around their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and understandings of sexual violence. I also listened for participants' interpersonal relationships with family, friends, romantic partners, and the broader social networks in which they existed and navigated as well as for the broader social, cultural, historical, and political contexts and structures in which their experiences occurred and which impacted their interpretation of such experiences.

I used these listenings of the data and my cultural intuition (i.e., cultural and academic knowledge and engagement in the research process) to make meaning of participants' experiences and perspectives (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1998; González, 1999). Experiences and perspectives that appeared to be salient to participants, re-emerged in interviews and journals, and impacted participants' gender histories and/or understandings of sexual

violence were identified (Ely et al., 1996). I considered the connectedness and interrelatedness of these experiences and perspectives to participants' social contexts and identities and braided those strands together to allow for a "broader and more contextualized interpretation" of the data (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 117). I then braided into the emerging knowledge, or gender histories, some of the cultural and academic knowledge (i.e., interdisciplinary literature) I bring to the study. Journal data were analyzed concurrently and in a similar fashion. These data underwent various readings and were braided with the narratives emerging from the interview data. This process of gathering (through interviews and journals), combing (by multiple listenings and readings of the data), and braiding the data commenced with the first interview and continued until the narratives were finalized.

This was a participatory data analysis process in which participants were engaged in the production of knowledge regarding their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and perspectives of sexual violence (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Reinharz, 1992). During each interview, I shared with participants what I identified as emerging braids of knowledge and asked for their feedback on the accuracy and completeness of these interpretations (i.e., member checking). I also engaged them in further interpretation of the data. Their feedback, interpretation of the data, and engagement in the research process were braided into their narratives. Their engagement in the process allowed participants to have a voice in the production of knowledge (i.e., the study's findings), thus contributing to the findings' trustworthiness and the monitoring of my subjectivity (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

Also important to trustworthiness and to this process of gathering, combing, and braiding the data was my engagement in writing analytic and reflexive memos. Analytic memos were utilized during the combing of the data to note recurring ideas, images, words, contradictions,

and perspectives (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 1998) that may have had meaning for participants in relation to the study topics and foci as well as to record questions that emerged from the data and needed clarification from participants. Analytic memos were also used to document my impressions of how I believed the data were interconnected and my process of braiding the data. I also made note in these memos of quotes that could be transcribed and used as supporting data in the textual representation of the findings (González, 1999; Rossman & Rallis, 1998; Weiss, 1994). These analytic memos traced how I was understanding, interpreting, and braiding the data.

The processes behind these methodological decisions were explored through ongoing exercises in reflexivity and the writing of reflexive memos. The data we gather and analyze is the result of “actively listening to participants’ stories, asking questions and leading [them] down certain paths and not others, making decisions about which issues to follow up, and which to ignore, and choosing where to probe...guided by our initial research agenda and questions, what each respondent said to us, and our interpretations and understandings of their words” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 124). It was therefore important that I document my assumptions and subjectivity during the research process and reflected on how they could be impacting my process of gathering, combing, and braiding the data.

I reflected on my interviews with participants and recorded any observations, reactions, questions, or issues I had about the content and/or process of each interview in a reflexivity journal, both after the interview and while listening to the data (Caughey, 2006; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Johnson, 2002). More specifically, during these exercises of reflexivity, I (a) listened for myself in the data (e.g., assumptions, biases, values), (b) located myself socially in relation to participants, (c) attended to my emotional and intellectual responses to participants,

their experiences, and perspectives, and (d) examined how my interests, assumptions, and biases could be affecting my understanding, interpretation, and representation of participants, their experiences, and perspectives, particularly in terms of my theoretical frameworks (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). These exercises in reflexivity helped me develop a deeper understanding of participants, the research process, and, myself, and, in this manner, contributed to the trustworthiness of this study and its findings.

Data Quality

Two criteria (e.g., credibility and transferability) were used to establish trustworthiness of the study's data. The strategies employed to establish credibility included: (a) triangulation, (b) prolonged engagement, (c) member checks, (d) rich data, and (e) the declaration and clarification of researcher biases. Multiple data collection methods (e.g., interviews and journaling) and multiple-session interviews were used to triangulate and corroborate emerging data (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Ely et al., 1991; Glesne, 1999; Maxwell, 1996). Multiple-session interviews are believed to have increased the validity of the data because they provided participants with additional time to think about their feelings, reactions, and perspectives regarding the study and address any inconsistencies or elaborate on certain points at subsequent stages of the interviewing process. A longer interviewing process resulted in prolonged engagement with participants (i.e., ten hours). Although this time period is short compared to other qualitative studies (e.g., ethnographies) that require weeks, months, or even years of engagement, it is a longer period of engagement than the time allowed by the typical one-interview study. This extended period of engagement allowed for a more trusting research relationship to develop, which may have allowed participants to be more candid and

comprehensive in their responses (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Ely et al., 1991; Glesne, 1999). Member checks were employed to share, confirm/disconfirm, and further develop interpretations of the emerging data in collaboration with participants in an attempt to avoid misinterpretations of the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and perspectives (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Ely et al., 1991; Glesne, 1999; Maxwell, 1996). Rich data, in the form of extensive quotes embedded in participant narratives, were used to further contribute to the study's credibility as they allowed the reader to listen to participants' voices in the narration of their gender histories (Maxwell, 1996). Lastly, a reflexivity journal was utilized to reflect upon my subjectivity and the potential influence of my values on the conduction and conclusions of this study, thereby declaring, clarifying, and monitoring my biases (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999; Maxwell, 1996).

Rich, thick descriptive accounts of participants' demographics, sociocultural contexts, and experiences are provided to allow the reader to assess the transferability of the study's findings to other people and settings based on shared characteristics (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Creswell, 1998). Additionally, evidence of transferability is provided through the cross-case analysis conducted, which illustrated the various themes that existed across all four participants as well as by participant gender and experiences of domestic violence.

Representation of Knowledge

The findings of this study are presented as the gender histories or narratives. These narratives are social constructions or examples of "situated knowledge" (Zavella, 1997, 2003) based on participants' memories and reflections about their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the influence of those experiences on their past and current

understandings of sexual violence. My voice is interwoven with theirs to create the following representations of their lives as gendered. Pseudonyms protect their confidentiality. However, the narratives retain their voices. Their stories are showcased in the following chapter.

Chapter IV

Findings

This chapter presents the co-constructed gender histories of the study's four participants - Leticia, Gerardo, Fernando, and Monica. These narratives provide a detailed and intimate account of these participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation. They also reveal the interrelatedness of their experiences of gender with their understandings of sexual violence. Each participant's gender history narrates a unique story about gender and its influence on that person's perspectives about sexual violence. Prior to narrating these stories, the participant selection process is outlined and the four selected participants are introduced via brief sketches.

Participant Selection Process

Thirty-six men and women indicated interest in this study. Twenty-two participants were screened for the four participant slots available. Originally, the preponderance of interest was from women who met the criteria for female participant with schooling and/or upbringing in the United States. After eight women met eligibility, recruitment focused on women who had some schooling and/or upbringing in Mexico. Five women were screened and found eligible. With only two interested men, the focus of recruitment then shifted to men. Again, the preponderance of interest was from men who met the criteria for male participant with schooling and/or upbringing in the United States. After six men met eligibility, recruitment focused on men who had some schooling and/or upbringing in Mexico. Three men were screened and found eligible. Recruitment was focused on a particular set of individuals by modifying the flyers posted and announcements included in the e-newsletters and other email communications sent to students by

the two university units assisting in participant recruitment. Of the fourteen men and women who were not screened, eight were not screened because they expressed interest in the study after the study's participants had been selected; three were not screened because they did not have any schooling and/or upbringing in Mexico, which were the participants needed at the moment they indicated interest in the study; and the last three were not screened because the information they provided in their initial expression of interest suggested they were not eligible for the study (e.g., one individual was Puerto Rican; another individual was Mexican-Irish, which would have added another layer of cultural difference not present among the other three participants, whom had two Mexican parents; the third individual was residing out of state, which would have changed the researcher-participant dynamics and research process).

Since twenty-two individuals met the original eligibility requirements for the four available participant slots, additional variables were considered, such as (a) having a sibling of the opposite biological sex to whom participants' gender socialization and negotiation could be compared, (b) having a much younger sibling of the same biological sex, to whom participants' gender socialization and negotiation could be compared, (c) having developed better rapport during the screening (e.g., better interpersonal skills and critical thinking skills), (d) having no prior relationship with the researcher, and (e) having best matched their opposite-gender counterpart in the study. I did have a prior professional relationship with one of the participants (Monica); however, I did not know much about her personal life. She was selected for the study because she best matched her male counterpart on the remaining variables, and it was assessed the match between participants was more salient than the potential impact of my prior relationship with her. The following are brief sketches of the four individuals who were selected and included in this study.

Participant Sketches

Leticia is a 19-year-old, heterosexual, Mexican American identified female who was born in the United States to an intact family with several older brothers. She had all her schooling and upbringing in the United States. Although she and her family moved several times as she was growing up and she was exposed to communities that were diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and class, she considers her original neighborhood, which was predominately Mexican American, to be her community due to the cultural and familial ties and meaning-making that occurs in that locale.

Gerardo is a 22 year-old, heterosexual, Mexican American identified male who was born in the United States to an intact family with an older sister. He had all his schooling and upbringing in the United States and lived in a predominately Mexican American community until leaving home for college. There was domestic violence and parental substance abuse in his family while he was growing up.

Fernando is a 25 year-old, heterosexual, Mexican identified male who was born in the United States to an intact family with a younger sister and a younger brother. When he was two-years-old, Fernando, his sister, and parents moved to Mexico because his parents wanted to raise him and his sister “at home.” They returned to the United States when Fernando was 8-years-old so he and his sister could receive schooling in the U.S. They lived in a predominately Mexican American community where Fernando lived until he left home for college. However, he spent all his summers in Mexico until his late teens.

Monica is a 20-year-old, heterosexual, Chicana identified female who was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at age 6. She comes from an intact family with two younger sisters and a younger brother. She lived in a predominately Mexican American

community until leaving home for college. She witnessed domestic violence and parental substance abuse in the family and experienced several instances of sexual violence (e.g., child sexual abuse and sexual harassment) while growing up. Instances of domestic violence continue in her home, and she has continued receiving unwanted sexual attention from men.

Telling the Stories That Deconstruct Sexual Violence

The remainder of this chapter narrates the gender histories of Leticia, Gerardo, Fernando, and Monica. These gender histories reveal the intricacies and intimacies of these participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the influence of those experiences on their understandings of sexual violence. The narratives are listed in the following order to portray the different stages in which participants are located in terms of gender identity development and a more feminist (i.e., less conservative) understanding of sexual violence. However, these locations are somewhat arbitrary and based on the narrative that was co-constructed and the author's assessment. The stories could easily be coupled by gender, migration status (i.e., had some schooling and/or upbringing in Mexico), or experience of domestic violence in the home. Regardless of their order of presentation, these gender histories allow us to witness these participants' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and commence the deconstruction of sexual violence.¹⁵

Leticia

Leticia's story is that of identity formation, of a woman struggling to redefine gender within the context of family, race, and class. She wrestles to manage the backlash of resisting

¹⁵ The term "deconstruction" is used in this study to refer to the critical and comprehensive analysis of participants' understandings of sexual violence. Such analysis is pursued to gain further insight into the origins and complexities of participants' understandings of sexual violence and potential relationship with participants' gender histories.

familial and cultural expectations of whom she should be, yet proceeds in pursuit of her goals. Her understanding of sexual violence illustrates traditional and nontraditional perspectives reflective of the “different worlds” she navigates – home and college.

Family composition and history. Leticia is a 19-year-old, heterosexual, Mexican-American identified female in her sophomore year in college majoring in the natural sciences. She comes from an intact family in which she is the youngest and only female out of several children. Leticia’s parents were born and raised in a small town in Mexico, and both had to assume gender roles early in life. A few years after Leticia’s maternal grandparents married, her grandfather started coming to the United States to work and would visit the family only once a year. Leticia’s mother, the oldest of many children, had to be “the responsible one” and take care of her siblings. Leticia reflected on how her mother had “no childhood” and was only allowed to obtain a fourth grade education. Her grandmother was “strict and mean,” and Leticia wondered if her mother had suffered any emotional abuse or neglect, or even sexual abuse, as a child. Leticia’s father was the fourth child of many children and began working at age 8 to help his mother and his siblings after his father “abandoned” the family. He and Leticia’s mother dated as adolescents until she moved with her family to another town. His commitment to his mother and siblings brought him to the United States at age 18 to work. When he returned to Mexico a few years later, he and Leticia’s mother reunited and soon married. Her father was 22 and her mother was 18-years-old when they migrated to the United States in pursuit of employment. Leticia shared that her parents lived in a house with other immigrants for two months after they migrated and then with his father’s family on the west coast for a short time. They then moved to and settled in a metropolitan city in the Midwest. Leticia commented that the migration process was difficult for her mother because she had no support system, yet it

allowed her to become more independent (e.g., learned to drive). Her mother's parents and siblings soon migrated to the same city to be close to her, reuniting the family. Leticia's father only has a few siblings in the area, with whom he is not close, and the rest reside in other parts of the country.

Parental gender roles and dynamics. Leticia reflected on how the gender roles her parents assumed as children served as models for the roles they assumed in their marriage and as parents. She did not recall her parents ever displaying any affection towards each other, but "always arguing." However, she concluded that "for the most part, they like each other and enjoy each other's company." She indicated her mother had always been a homemaker, responsible for household duties (e.g., cooking, cleaning, washing, and ironing), money management, and the parenting and disciplining of the children. She recalled her mother attempted twice to join the work force, but was discouraged by her father because he considered the additional income to be minimal. Leticia noted that her mother puts others' needs before her own and "takes care of everyone." She also defers to the men in the family by "serving" them and not leaving the home without Leticia's father. However, Leticia asserted her mother is "happy with her occupation of caring for the family" and that "she really fits into what her culture, her society, the Mexican culture has said a woman is supposed to be." She asserted that it is her mother who "wears the pants" in the family (i.e., power, control) and commands respect. She indicated her mother was not "submissive," but in fact censored what her father said. Leticia described her mother as "stoic" and "very reserved." She noted that her mother "holds everything in" and is not emotionally expressive, and thus lacks an understanding of "the emotional and psychological needs of the family." Tearfully, Leticia expressed disappointment that she had never been "emotionally close" to her mother.

She recalled her father was never at home much while she was growing up, always working in construction. She described him as the “breadwinner” and “head of the family.” He did not perform any chores “associated with women,” like cooking and childrearing, but did perform other chores “traditionally for males,” such as yard work. He waited for the meal to be ready and ate first and expected the men in the family to work while the women married and were homemakers. Leticia considered him a “gentleman” that was respectful of her mother’s role in the family, a “traditional male” that embodied the positive aspects of machismo. Leticia reflected on how her father did not talk or interact much with her or her brothers growing up and regretted their relationship “never grew” because he was physically and emotionally absent. His absence was so pronounced that Leticia recalled her second oldest brother assuming her father’s role and rigidly emphasizing the importance of money, savings, and exercise.

According to Leticia, the gender roles her parents displayed were reflective of traditional Mexican gender roles. She described their gender roles as “pretty much dichotomous,” particularly when compared to gender roles in the United States, which she saw as more fluid, flexible, “overlapping,” and “open to different possibilities.” Leticia commented, “They don’t like change. They like having a dichotomy. It’s what they know and believe they should do. That’s the way it’s supposed to be.”

Early experiences with issues of race, class, and gender. In pursuit of employment, Leticia and her family moved several times while she was growing up. Moving to different neighborhoods and schools exposed Leticia to different ethnic groups and social classes, and she became aware at a young age of different systems of privilege and oppression and the intersection of racial and class issues. However, the constant moving also resulted in a lack of stability and no lasting friendships. This isolation was compounded by family members’

physical and/or emotional absence and lack of playmates her own age, leaving Leticia to rely on television and books for companionship.

Leticia recalled that until the age of 7 she lived in a “humble” neighborhood, populated predominately by “minorities,” and that she received a free lunch at school. She remembered the family’s first move at age 8 and her attending a predominately White school where she “only felt comfortable hanging out with minorities.” During that time, her family would get together with extended family at her grandmother’s house every weekend, take family vacations, and frequently attend *quinceañeras* and parties.

It was at this age that Leticia recalled her earliest memories of gender role socialization. She remarked, “I have always been directly and indirectly told what was the role of the woman. The ultimate goal is to get married and have children.”

During family gatherings my older family members always made it clear that the job of the woman was to stay at home and take care of the kids. Many of my aunts [and mother] would criticize women for leaving their children in the care of strangers. A woman who did not cook or stay at home was not a good mother.

Leticia recalled that at this age her mother and aunts were her role models, and the importance of housekeeping and childrearing was clearly highlighted, while education was discouraged.

Growing up, I think I was heavily influenced by the way they portrayed gender roles. I do remember wanting dolls and pretending to be a mom. Also, I really wanted to go through puberty like my older cousins so that I could have a boyfriend and ultimately get married. I did not think too much about school, and I imagined myself working at a company as a secretary. I grew up as middle class and all the people that I knew worked in stores or banks. The highest career that I saw was being a teacher, but I did not want to do that because it required college and that was termed in my family as “hard.”

The division of tasks she observed between her parents was reinforced by her extended family along with a division of space within the home. She commented that “when it came to family events, the women always had their social interactions in the kitchen, remaining close to the food, while the men were in the living room usually enjoying a sporting event.” She

observed that other women in the family had the same restrictions placed on their freedom as her mother.

Women were not allowed to go anywhere other than the grocery store or run errands without her husband. If one of my aunts (married to my uncles) would go and have fun with her friends, it was looked down upon. The couple was only allowed to have fun together. The most important and only duty of the woman was to be with family.

Leticia's understanding of gender would soon be complicated by early experiences with boys and sexuality and an increasing tension in her relationship with her mother.

Early experiences with boys and sexuality, increasing tension with mom.

Unbeknownst to her family, at the age of 8, Leticia had her first boyfriend with whom she would "holds hands and stuff." This childhood relationship became the onset of a pattern of serial, short term monogamous dating that continued into adulthood, with Leticia never dating the same person longer than six months. A couple of years later, Leticia learned about sex from her friends, who learned about sex from older siblings and cousins. To which she exclaimed with surprise, "What happens?!" Her knowledge about sex increased as she and her friends began visiting online chat rooms in the sixth grade that had discussions about sex. She remembered, "This one had the most descriptive sexual things on there. I was just like, 'Oh, my god.' There'd be three or four friends. It was like a contest about who could write the most erotic things." In seventh grade, she learned at school "where babies come from," but recalled the emphasis was on reproductive health and not sex or protection.

During this time, Leticia indicated her neighborhood started to change and became comprised of "mostly minorities" (African American). She remarked such transition was "weird because it was such a change," but began making friends with African American girls in her class. Additionally, her relationship with her mother began to be more conflictive, with Leticia feeling her mother "criticized" her and provided "no support or positive reinforcement." She

expressed disappointment in her mother not teaching her how to cook or clean because she would become impatient and “critical” of Leticia. She recalled, “I got scolded if I did not keep up with the expectations she believed were for women.” These expectations included: “look your best” and “be presentable” and clean, wear a dress to school but no makeup or shorts, close your legs, be a lady, do not talk or “hang out” with boys, and do not argue with people. She recalled her aunts would provide her with positive feedback when she met these expectations, “I would always get praised for acting like a woman. For instance, my aunt would always praise me when I would cook for myself and told me that if I kept it up, I would be ready when I get married.”

Beginnings of transgressive behavior. Another family move led Leticia to a high school that was predominately White, upper middle class. This high school represented a turning point for Leticia. She recalled, “As I grew older and met with students that had high expectations in life, I came to realize that I could also accomplish the same goals.” When she learned her friends were planning on applying to college, she wondered if she should plan for a college education as well. Leticia intuited her family would not be supportive of her pursuing a college education because she believed they did not value education but preferred she go into the workforce early (e.g., work in a bank or as a secretary), start making money, and get married. Additionally, she indicated that she was not expected to go away to college because “she [was] a girl.” She remarked, “My mother and the people around me did not have a positive attitude toward education. It was a thing that women who went against the norm did and it was not respected.” Further, Leticia believed her mother’s expectations were based on what other girls in the family and community were doing (e.g., Leticia’s cousin, her mother’s friends’ daughters). Leticia decided to go to college, despite her parents’ expectations, and began to prepare herself

for college by enrolling in an honors program, maintaining a 4.0 GPA, and attending a summer program at a Midwestern research I university, where she was recruited. Leticia was unable to reflect on why her parents allowed her to make those choices, simply stating, “I do have freedom when I am determined to do something.” Leticia related that her pursuit of an education resulted in her living in “two different worlds” and needing to adopt different roles and persona while at home and school.

Her academic pursuits also resulted in a backlash at school from other Mexican American students and led to her immersion with White students in the school. She recalled, “During my first year of high school, I was separated into honors courses so I kind of separated from people of my ethnicity. The other Mexicans did ridicule me at times for being in ‘smart’ classes but I really paid no mind.” Further, she experienced differential gender treatment from teachers and was discouraged from taking certain classes (e.g. auto mechanics, math, science) for fear they were “harder for girls to understand.” Similarly, Leticia was discouraged from pursuing a career in the sciences because it was a “difficult path” and she would lack a support system. Still, Leticia continued to pursue her academic goals.

High school did not only impact Leticia’s academic future, but it also prompted her to start questioning and challenging gender messages she had received from her family. She reflected on how she had “bought into” those messages for so many years because she had been told “that’s how it’s supposed to be.” Leticia believed it was the exposure to distinct ideas about education and gender and the instruction in critical thinking that high school provided that prompted a shift in her understanding of gender.

“Wait, why does it have to be that way?” I kind of questioned it...My school was good about you thinking about yourself. I had a lot of different classes promoting self thinking and with that I started forming my own opinions. My mom didn’t like it... “You and your ideas.” From then on I kept thinking, “Wait, why does it have to be like that?”

She also recalled the impact of her relationship with her best friend's mother, with whom she felt a special connection because they were both first generation Mexican American females and had similar experiences with their parents, especially their mothers. Leticia reflected on the generational and educational differences between her best friend's parents (college educated, first generation) and her own (fourth grade education to none, immigrants) and on how her role model shifted from her mother and aunts to her best friend's mother, from a homemaker to a career woman with a family. Leticia reported challenging her parents about the roles they enacted, citing the differences she observed in other people's families. Her parents responded "that's how it's supposed to be" and attempted to dissuade her from going to her best friend's house or "hanging out with girls who didn't meet their expectation of femininity because they [were] putting ideas in [her] head." Leticia noted the close relationship she witnessed between her best friend and her best friend's mother. She softly stated, "They share everything." With sadness, Leticia reflected that such closeness was not possible between her and her mother because she felt she could not confide in her mother for fear "she [would] hold it against [her] later on in the future."

Entering womanhood and navigating gendered messages from family. As Leticia entered womanhood, as marked by her fifteenth birthday, she continued to be critical of the gender messages she received from family and struggled to navigate certain situations as she attempted to negotiate or transgress these messages. One of these situations involved the celebration of her entrance into womanhood with a *quinceañera*.

The young lady of the family turning fifteen was supposed to have a *quinceañera* and that was a mark of one's womanhood and also if the family was affluent enough to have one. She [mother] wanted me to have a fifteenth birthday party. I was, "I don't want one," but she felt pressured because I was the only girl. She felt pressure from family...I'm like, "I don't want one. I don't want one." I don't feel connected...I didn't see the value to them...

One of the reasons Leticia did not want a *quinceañera* was because she had “no Mexican friends or cousins [her] age, just Black and White friends,” and thus did not have people to comprise her “court of honor.” Leticia indicated that despite not wanting a *quinceañera* her mother “forced [her] to have one.” She remarked, “I really appreciate that she did that for me because it was a nice thing to do and all my friends came and they thought it was so cool...but it was not something I wanted....It cost so much money and the benefits didn’t exceed the cost.” Leticia indicated the celebration “didn’t mean anything” to her nor did she consider it a rite of passage.

However, Leticia acknowledged that turning fifteen did give her more freedom in the home (e.g., curfew) and that such a celebration made a difference to her mother in regards to what Leticia was allowed and expected to do. Leticia noticed a shift in the gender messages she received from her mother, particularly a new preoccupation with appearance. The messages she received from her mother included: wear make-up, “dress up,” “fix your hair,” and “look pretty.” She recalled her mother constantly asking her, “Why aren’t you dressing up? Why don’t you fix your hair? Why don’t you look pretty?” Leticia acknowledged having struggled with her mother’s gender messages and criticism of her appearance. She stated, “I did go through a phase when I did kind of go, ‘maybe I should wear a dress or whatever,’ but I didn’t feel comfortable, but she liked it...After that stage, I didn’t care how I looked. I just wore whatever.” Leticia was unable to reflect on what allowed her to transgress that expected behavior, citing an interest in soccer and other things that did not allow her to focus on appearance.

The additional freedom Leticia experienced did not include having a boyfriend. Leticia indicated her mother made it clear that “dating was not allowed,” but she believed her mother’s “no dating” rules were “ridiculous” and “didn’t count.” Leticia commented, “You need to live. She doesn’t think that. You’ve got to learn through experiences. So, no, they don’t count.”

Although her mother did not provide any specific messages about dating, Leticia assumed her mother expected “women to be respectful and proper and not out at certain hours,” to engage in an “old traditional type of dating” that is “very platonic” and has no physical contact, and for “the point of dating [to be] marriage.” Leticia believed those were the messages her mother had received from her mother and by which she had abided. Further, Leticia imagined her mother’s ideal man for her to be “Hispanic and in the workforce,” even if that allowed only for a high school versus a college education.

Although Leticia’s entrance into womanhood had been celebrated publicly, there were no discussions at home about Leticia’s body changing. She learned that information in seventh grade in a sex education course that solely focused on reproductive health (no information about sex or birth control). Leticia reflected on her mother’s reaction to Leticia’s body changing and said, “Your body changing and having your menstrual was very taboo. She [mother] feared me growing up...so she didn’t want me to talk about it, just, ‘Here’s the maxi pad.’ Even shopping for bras was uncomfortable and awkward.” Leticia associated her mother’s discomfort in discussing the topic to her mother being criticized as an adolescent for disposing of feminine pads incorrectly.

There were no particular messages regarding virginity or birth control except for occasional messages that proclaimed the importance of “waiting until marriage,” which Leticia attributed to religious edicts and the potential for negative consequences (i.e., pregnancy).

The main message was to wait until marriage. Usually, people used protection but this was not discussed openly. In this case, secrecy was the best way to deal with sexual relations. When it came to women, it was proper that the woman still be a virgin until marriage. Most families wanted their son to marry a virgin. Women who were openly sexually active were referred to as promiscuous. So in events of sexual desires, the Mexican American culture maintains that women should wait or there could be terrible consequences. These consequences could be seen in Spanish soap operas where the woman who decides not to wait suffers more.

Leticia recalled her family talking about girls in the extended family and community who became pregnant out of wedlock and inferring from their comments that “you’re not a good person if you do it, you didn’t do it the right way, you’re “seen differently” by others (e.g., not responsible, not worthy of respect), and “end up struggling.”

Although her mother did not provide Leticia with messages about sex, she did provide numerous messages centered on personal safety, which Leticia believed were “too extreme,” such as “be very cautious of men,” “don’t talk to boys,” and “don’t ever let boys touch you.” However, her mother typically did not explain or talk in depth about these messages. Leticia acknowledged her mother “knows the dangers, the extremes of what may happen, and doesn’t want that happening to [her],” yet she felt her mother was hypervigilant about these issues. She attributed such hypervigilance to her mother watching shows on sexual violence, in particular a Spanish series titled *Mujer: Casos de la vida real* that appeared on television three times a day and depicted many of the unspoken struggles women face, including sexual violence. Leticia too watched this show and began to base her understanding of sexual violence on the images portrayed in the stories depicted, particularly stories about stranger and statutory rape, child sexual abuse, and incest. However, despite watching the show in the home, her family did not openly talk about sexual violence because “it was taboo to talk about it ‘cause it’s taboo to talk about sex and that’s a component of it.” Leticia indicated sexual violence was not discussed at school either and that she never heard of an incidence of sexual violence in her school or community. She stated, “I don’t know. Maybe it’s where I live, the quiet suburbs.”

Due to his absence in the home, Leticia did not recall her father giving her many gendered messages besides “When are you going to learn to cook so you can serve me food?” Beyond placing an emphasis on her learning and performing female chores (e.g., cook, iron),

Leticia indicated his messages centered on hard work, self-respect, and her demanding respect from others. Leticia considered her father to be more supportive of her desire to pursue formal education and flexible about dating than her mother. She recalled a conversation with her father while in the car when she was 17-years-old: “Can I start dating?” “Well, I was young once, and I know that you do need to do it. Whenever you’re ready, it’s ok.” She appreciated him giving her control over this decision and being flexible concerning the goal of dating (exploring relationships versus marriage). She believed her father expected any man she dated to be hard-working, respect her, provide for her in the future, and not drink too much.

Similarly, Leticia indicated her brothers did not provide her with “much advice” because “they were not in [her] life much.” Some of their messages centered on female chores and self-respect, but they also provided messages that she considered empowering and caring. Such messages included: “be careful who [you] hang out with, who influences [you],” “take care of [yourself],” and “be [your] own person.” They also provided a few messages about potential mates that ranged from her finding someone who could financially support her to finding someone with whom she was compatible and could have a “respectful” relationship. Their overall message was “be careful who you choose to have a relationship with, be wise.” Although they sometimes suggested she wear more “conservative” clothes, Leticia indicated they did not provide any messages about sex or protection because it would have been “too taboo” and “weird,” and because they saw her as “a little nerd that won’t do anything” instead of a sexual being.

As Leticia became older, she was given additional messages about sex by a sister-in-law and her brother’s girlfriend. The former provided messages consistent with those given to Leticia by her mother, such as “wait until marriage,” “go the right way,” and “respect your

mother's advice." The latter shared with Leticia her sexual experiences and decision making process and encouraged her to "wait until ready" and "be careful," but to "make [her] own decisions." Leticia considered her conversation with her brother's girlfriend sexually empowering.

In her teens, she also became increasingly aware of her mother's differential treatment toward her brothers.

My mom did not pressure my brothers to clean up after themselves as she did with me. They did whatever they wanted...They were lazy bums on the couch watching TV, not washing the dishes, and leaving stuff out, being gross, and not showering, just stuff like that is what they thought or believed a male should act like.

Her brothers were not required to do any chores, yet enjoyed more freedoms (e.g., no curfew) while Leticia was required to complete chores and either not allowed to go out or required to follow a strict curfew. Leticia denied her brothers received any gendered messages from her parents. However, her brothers were expected to fulfill the roles of provider and gentleman that their father embodied. Her mother also "cautioned them about dating random girls" and unintended pregnancies. When Leticia addressed with her parents this differential treatment, they simply replied, "They're guys, they can do that." She remarked it was "never up for debate."

Gendered messages from peers and institutions and underlying racial and class issues. The messages Leticia received from peers about gender focused on appearance and relationships. According to Leticia, emphasis was placed on "the way you look," "being presentable," buying expensive things, getting your nails done, doing your makeup, looking "pretty," and being thin. This look was based on what her friends saw on television (e.g., Mexican soap operas, American dramas like "The O.C.") and magazines (e.g., Cosmo). Leticia reflected on the psychological function that clothes and shopping served for her friends and,

stated, “Having stuff makes you feel better, makes you attractive, and boosts your confidence.” She also reflected on the class issues inherent in judging others on an appearance and identity dependent on “symbols of wealth and success,” such as expensive purses and shoes.

The emphasis on appearance was associated with “getting a boyfriend.” According to Leticia, all her friends wanted a boyfriend and believed they needed to look and act a certain way to get one. Leticia reported that the messages she received from friends about romantic relationships varied based on ethnicity, extrapolating those messages as representative of those ethnic groups. She indicated her Mexican American friends focused on “getting and keeping a boyfriend” with the intent of marriage and financial support. Leticia remarked Mexican American women need “to act loyal” so their men stay and commented, “The men in their lives have a lot of control issues, of what a woman is supposed to be...they [women] have a lot of pressure to be a certain way and pressure to devote a lot of their time to them [men]. They’re [men] very needy.” These comments seemed to resonate with a dating experience Leticia had when she 16-years-old and she dated a 19-year-old man from Mexico for four months.

He would be like, “Are you going to cook me food?” and send me text messages. I’m like, “Hell no. Who do you think I am?” Little things like that. I don’t even know if he was kidding, but I’m like, “You don’t kid about that.” The way I am, the way that I say that I’m not traditional. He should have known that would piss me off.

There would be certain things that really irritated us [Leticia and her best friend] because we were more Americanized, and they [boyfriends] were all born in Mexico, and then they came here. They were a certain way, and they expected us to be a certain way, and then we’d get mad, or they’d get mad because there’d be such conflict in culture.”

This dating relationship illustrated Leticia’s early attempts to challenge gender and cultural expectations within romantic relationships and navigate the conflict resulting from differing gender and relationship expectations. This experience seemed to have impacted her perception of dating amongst Mexican (Americans). Conversely, Leticia believed her Black friends dated

for fun and simply focused on “temporary” relationships, on “getting men and playing with them.” She reported they “acted bitchy” so their men would stay and described their behavior as “liberal.” Leticia considered her White friends to be midway these two extremes, wanting a boyfriend “for support and companionship,” but not necessarily marriage. She indicated they “acted fun” so their men would stay and were content “going dutch” and establishing more egalitarian relationships. Leticia commented she was drawn to the relationship model she associated with her White friends. She did not want a relationship with “drama” that would increase the stress level of “an already busy and complicated life.” In regards to sex, Leticia reported she received distinct messages from her friends, including “do it when you’re ready,” “do it after marriage,” “it satisfies a need,” and “it is an indication that you are more connected.” She indicated they openly talked about sex, including protection, and that the couple of her friends who were still virgins “[did not] judge or preach virginity.”

Leticia struggled with the association made by her peers between appearance and relationships and stated, “I knew that to fit in and be in relationships with people of the opposite sex, I needed to act very feminine and follow society’s norms.” She, however, decided to resist peers’ messages regarding appearance, for which she experienced some backlash, with Leticia commenting, “They would call me simple. They would call me plain, but I didn’t really care.”

The messages Leticia received from peers were reinforced by those she received from the media, which also focused on appearance and relationships. When considering media messages, Leticia discriminated between messages she received from Mexican versus American mainstream media. She indicated Mexican *telenovelas* (soap operas) emphasized the importance of marriage and motherhood for women and encouraged them to look for *un buen muchacho*, a good young man, who was handsome and rich, to marry. They portrayed first love as true love

and transcending of class differences, and they reinforced the importance of virginity and the utility of sex for procreation. Further, *telenovelas* portrayed women as “vulnerable and weak” and relationships as stressful and painful. Leticia commented that in *telenovelas* “your relationship with a person takes over your life. That’s like 99% of your life. It tells teenage girls that you have to find someone. You have to try hard to find and keep the first person you connect with.”

In terms of American media, Leticia recalled how the Disney channel portrayed “the girl as always pretty, chasing after a man, vulnerable and flirtatious, but not too much.” She reflected on how the underlying messages for women were that they had to be “perfect” and look a certain way, marry, and “be happily ever after.” However, she acknowledged that not all American media emphasized marriage, with some media suggesting women find a man with money and spend it while other media messages suggested women “please men” and “transform” themselves into what men want (e.g., nerdy girl changes to attract man). She was able to discern that some media portrayed relationships as respectful and egalitarian while other media (e.g., reality shows) depicted unhealthy relationships (e.g., men as abusive and disrespectful and women as desperate for a man). She considered the latter to be portrayals of “relationships gone wrong” and examples of “what you don’t want.” Leticia noted that other forms of media, such as magazines, ads, videogames, and music (e.g., R&B, rap) emphasized sex, and although they empowered women sexually (e.g., wait until ready, protect yourself, please yourself), they also sexualized women and reinforced the message that to keep a man women needed to sexually please them.

Leticia reflected on the influential power of the media on her friends (they wanted to marry someone rich and dress like people on TV) as well as her struggles to resist those messages.

Most of the songs contain very sexual content, and people think that this is what people want and need. This can cause behavior modification in people. I know that when I listen to the music, I wonder if I should change so that I would be better liked by others.

In many of the movies that I viewed, the woman was always the one that was pursued and the woman was the one that was the vulnerable and weak one. I do remember times when I would watch them and I did believe I was weak too. There were times when I would act like the people did in the movies. I would dress up and had some weird feeling or need to impress members of the opposite sex. Television, especially Mexican culture television, was very influential in my idea of what a woman should be....

She expressed frustration with the media for not depicting how to develop a healthy relationship and confessed she relied on the media rather than real-life experience when attempting to build relationships with others. Leticia indicated she read novels to understand characters' motives and decision making and consider their application to her own life. She identified independent, smart, successful female characters trying to balance career and love in shows such as Grey's Anatomy and Sex and the City as her role models.

The emphasis on appearance and relationships was even present in church, which further created conflicting feelings for Leticia about adopting or rejecting these messages. She indicated church was the place "where you find men" and women dress "provocatively" when they go to church to attract "the single men in the back." She commented that "all those little wandering eyes" made her feel uncomfortable during service.

So when I'm in church I feel uncomfortable, and I'm like, "Should I be doing that?" Because it's a really strong message. "Should I be doing that? Should I be dressing up like that? What do I want to represent?" But most of the time I just act myself and go in whatever makes me feel comfortable.

Leticia reflected on how the Catholic Church promotes traditional gender roles and rites. She noted the church portrayed men as the providers, as “always right,” “strong,” and “powerful,” while women were portrayed as “weak” and “vulnerable” and were encouraged to stay at home, care for the children, and always place husband and family first. Leticia asserted the church discouraged divorce because it “[broke] up the family” and encouraged women to “work through the hard times,” promoting a backlash on women who proceeded with divorce. Such backlash included victim blame (e.g., couldn’t keep her man, “whore,” “not a good woman”) and disrespect, while men were never blamed. She observed that the church promoted marriage by encouraging couples to attend church together and formalize their union at an early age, with Leticia noting that young families (18-19 year-old women with children) were often seen in service. Additionally, the church discouraged premarital sex, particularly for women, casting it as a “sin” for which they needed to repent, usually through marriage. Use of contraception after marriage was also discouraged. Leticia indicated this ideology was given through Bible stories and priests’ counsel.

Higher education and developing awareness about sexual violence. When Leticia entered college, her self-imposed isolation from other Latina/os continued, and she reported having no Latina/o friends. College represented another move and situation in which she was required to make new friends. The emphasis on appearance and relationships among her peers, old and new, continued in college; however, such messages became more pronounced through their dispersal on Facebook. Leticia indicated that this new disseminating vehicle allowed her and her peers to view and display “symbols of appearance and status” (e.g., new outfits, what people bought) as well as witness “couples doing stuff together and wonder if maybe you should have a relationship too.” Further, the pictures on Facebook provided guidelines for “what

women should look and act like,” most of which sexualized women and socialized them into the college drinking culture. Leticia recalled some of the messages she received that encouraged alcohol use: “You need to drink to have fun.” “You need to drink to meet new people.” “Drinking is a release from stress.” “It’s a reward.” However, Leticia noted this created a double bind for women, since it was “okay for women to drink but don’t over do it, don’t get sick, pass out, go to the ER, or sleep with people.” The same vehicle that encouraged sexuality and drinking amongst women was used to chastise women by calling them “sluts” and “whores.”

Leticia indicated she became more critical of the role of alcohol and sexual behavior after taking a rape education class required of all freshmen. She recalled learning about the law and her rights, different rape scenarios, and the role of alcohol in facilitating sexual violence against women. She denied knowledge of any reports of sexual assault on campus, but asserted alcohol-facilitated rape was the most common form of sexual violence on campus. Leticia shared she knew many women who “woke up after a night of drinking and did not remember what happened,” but knew they had been sexually active. She indicated these women did not label such experiences as rape because they did not associate those experiences with images of rape. Leticia reflected, “The word rape is so powerful. You think of rape you think of such trauma...and this type of rape is not that serious to them...They play it off as not being so serious.” She indicated women would only consider such experiences as rape if they felt they had been “forced” or “violated.” Leticia associated some of the women’s reluctance to label and report these experiences as rape to the presence of alcohol in these scenarios. “Women don’t report it because they were intoxicated. They don’t know their rights. They feel that if they report it the guy maybe wasn’t at fault because he was drunk too. They feel equal in guilt.” However, Leticia asserted that women cannot consent to sex when intoxicated and that these

experiences do constitute rape. She commented that men tend to have a higher alcohol tolerance than women and thus “can have one beer and use it as an excuse to rape” and not consider their behavior as constituting sexual violence.

Leticia remarked she had more awareness about sexual violence due to the exposure to this topic once at college. She recalled not discussing or learning about the topic prior to college and acknowledged how Spanish television had influenced her perspectives on sexual violence growing up. Leticia wondered, “What about people who don’t go to college? Maybe they need it [rape education] the most...They still have the mentality that it’s taboo and maybe they don’t say anything.”

From the rape education class and other workshops Leticia attended to increase her awareness on this topic, she developed nontraditional perspectives about sexual violence. For example, she identified an association between negative body image and potential sexual victimization. Leticia explained that negative comments directed at a woman’s body (e.g., size and shape of body parts, how you look) and suggestions that “she do this or that to look better” can result in a woman not feeling comfortable with her body or sexuality and lead to more severe forms of sexual violence.

When you hear these comments, your self-esteem lowers, and you can put yourself in more vulnerable situations where you can be exposed to sexual violence. You think you’re not good enough, and you start dating worse people because you don’t think you’re good enough, and they violate you in other ways and it just keeps going.

She also identified the comments “if you don’t sleep with me, then I’ll go find somebody else, sleep with someone else, break up with you,” “you’re not good enough” and “why you being like this?” as sexually coercive. Leticia was able to differentiate between physical and emotional forms of sexual coercion and believed the function of such threats was to “force someone to have sex with you.” She also acknowledged that sexual harassment can occur in multiple settings

(e.g., work, school, bar), but exclaimed “it’s more shocking when it happens in institutions where you are supposed to feel safe (e.g., schools, companies, church, government) and then you don’t.” She commented that the function of sexual harassment is “to make you uncomfortable in your sexuality.” Leticia asserted that it was the responsibility of these institutions to raise awareness about sexual violence, set apart time and space for discussion on these topics, and create a safe environment. She believed the mandate should come from the top down and be mandatory, until such discussions become normalized into the general discourse.

Further, Leticia was able to be critical of some of the media and cultural messages she received about sexual violence. She identified the consistent presence of token resistance in the media (e.g., movies, TV shows), which she believed perpetuated the idea of a sexual “game” in which women deny wanting to engage in sexual behavior when they really want to and secretly wish to be pursued and “taken advantage of” by men. Leticia associated this token resistance with the misreading of sexual cues and the rape myth that women secretly want to be raped. She was adamant women were not to be blamed for the sexual violence perpetrated against them despite reputation, dress, drinking, or location. She indicated the latter were just excuses men use for rape, yet nothing merited women being forced or coerced into sexual activity. Leticia also acknowledged images in the media that reinforced male entitlement and traditional gender roles, the silencing and minimizing of women’s experiences of sexual violence, and the social fear and denial of this issue.

Leticia commented Mexican media presents “the most gruesome, atrocious things” that lead people to believe those are the only experiences that represent unwanted sexual contact and that “lesser things” or more “subtle things” do not constitute sexual violence. She believed the images presented by Mexican media influenced her community’s perspectives on sexual

violence, reinforcing rape myths and “more extreme” types of sexual violence (e.g., child sexual abuse, incest). Leticia indicated television shows provide women the following messages about sexual violence, which were the messages her mother provided her:

From the shows, being a woman, you have to be more careful. You can't be in a room alone with men, even a stepfather, because they may try to do something. It's more responsibility on the woman to take care of herself. You need to be careful.

Additionally, Leticia believed Mexican gender roles affected her community's perceptions about blame and responsibility. “It's both culture and gender roles.” Leticia indicated if a woman adheres to traditional gender roles (in terms of how she was dressed and where she was) and is assaulted she is more likely to be believed, but if she breaks traditional roles, she is more likely to be blamed (asked for it, deserved it). However, she noted that only “extreme” forms of sexual violence and stranger rape would promote victim credibility if she followed gender norms.

Leticia reflected on how she does not adhere to these cultural perceptions of sexual violence and that most Mexican Americans back home would not agree with her perspectives.

Traditional notions of sexual violence and the impact of the media. Although Leticia contended she did not adhere to cultural perceptions about sexual violence, she did endorse traditional notions of sexual violence, which suggests Leticia struggles to resist some of the media messages she received growing up and endorses both traditional and non-traditional perceptions of sexual violence. Leticia's identification of stranger rape as representative of sexual violence and labeling of incest and child sexual abuse as “extreme cases” of sexual violence reveal the impact of the media on her perspectives on sexual violence. She admitted adhering to these media perspectives despite the statistics she was exposed to in the workshops on sexual violence she had attended (e.g., acquaintance rape is the most predominant form of rape) and having no knowledge of a stranger rape at home or campus. Leticia indicated stranger

rape was simply “easier to believe” and had more credibility. Her disregard for statistical evidence presented to her at workshops she had attended to gain awareness about sexual violence and her inability to reject media images that presented rape myths appear to be inconsistent with her otherwise rational presentation, which illustrates the power of the media and how it has shaped her perspectives on sexual violence.

Leticia similarly endorsed various rape myths regarding reasons for various forms of sexual violence (e.g., alcohol-facilitated rape, statutory rape, child sexual abuse, incest) such as men cannot control their sexuality (particularly if intoxicated), “they don’t think they’re doing anything wrong” (lack of awareness, law not enforced), “they’re desperate,” “they think they’re in love,” and “they’re mentally ill.” She indicated that only in “extreme cases” (e.g., child sexual abuse and incest) “men want to feel superior. They feel they were wronged in some way or not competent and thus need to make someone else feel less. They want to feel power and have a skewed view of how to obtain self-worth.” Leticia asserted that in other countries (e.g., polygamous cultures), sexual violence is used by men to have power and control over women, but not in the United States because “in this society everyone is mostly equal. Women have freedom.” This comment suggested a lack of awareness and analysis in terms of gender inequality in the United States, which is inconsistent with the systems perspectives she utilized to consider issues of class and race. Leticia appeared to have a lack of awareness about the presence of sexism in our society and its impact on her, despite noting various instances of differential treatment based on gender. The lack of systems analysis was also present when considering sexual compliance, which Leticia considered to be simply social pressure from Mexican culture and the Catholic Church, rather than a form of sexual violence perpetuated at an institutional level.

Her perceptions of the perpetrator (e.g., he's a "monster," "beast with no heart," "twisted person who is not well but has something wrong with him") and her belief that a small percentage of women lie about rape to "get attention," "for revenge," or because they are "immature" (based on movies where the girl is rejected and "cries rape") revealed additional endorsement of rape myths and media impact. Additionally, she was more idealistic about family and community reactions toward sexual violence, believing survivors of sexual violence receive more support (e.g., compassion, belief, sympathy, empathy, emotional support) than is typically the case.

Continued struggles, moving forward. Leticia also continues to struggle to redefine gender and negotiate social norms and "elements of femininity" with "personal interests." She indicated struggling with fears such as, "When will I get married? When will be the right time? What if I can't find a man?" She contended that motherhood is "not the most important thing," not her goal, yet later expressed concern that her "biological clock is ticking." Although Leticia could identify the traits she desired in the ideal mate (e.g., positive, encouraging, responsible, respectful, open-minded, egalitarian, and comfortable transgressing social norms, including gender) and the relationship model she wanted to pursue (e.g., her perception of a White relationship model of compatibility, companionship, support, communication, negotiation, equality, balance, trust, respect) and has dated men of various ethnicities (e.g., Mexican, African American, White, Indian), she has not yet had a "serious" relationship. Leticia explained that most of her previous relationships were really friendships that provided her with companionship but lacked passion and a sexual connection. She commented, with frustration, "I either don't feel that connection, or the sexual spark is there but I don't like the person for who the person is."

The specific nature of the difficulties Leticia encountered in establishing a “real” relationship was unclear.

Her struggles defining a gender identity extrapolated to her sexuality. Leticia appeared to adhere to more conservative views about sex and was wary about engaging in sexual behavior for fear she was “not ready” and that such behavior would make her feel “guilty” or “disgusting,” “second-guess” herself, and/or incur negative consequences (physical and emotional). She indicated there was no negotiation of sexual behavior but it was always “up to [her]” and how comfortable she felt with that person. Her sexual decisions appeared to be value-based and rejecting of media messages.

Based on the influence of my family, I have come to have more respect for my body, and I would not consider rushing into a sexual relationship. In addition, television has also warned us of what could happen if one is not ready. For those extremes, I have managed to think about how to act during those situations. I am more cautious and careful but I do not let those completely influence my decisions. When it comes to the influence of my friends, I have noticed that they rely on magazines like *Cosmopolitan* to direct their sexual actions to ultimately please and keep their men.

There are times where I have friends that may be considered promiscuous by some and I think of how my life could be if I behaved in that way but it does not resonate with my values and beliefs. I have always managed to prioritize my values and morals and use them to guide my decisions.

However, Leticia expressed concern about her ability to voice her needs or discomfort in sexual situations due to low self-efficacy in sexually charged situations and fear of hurting her partner’s feelings. The latter may be related to traditional gender roles, including conflict avoidance.

Interestingly, Leticia's adherence to conservative views about sex is incongruent with the non-traditional sexual attitudes she endorsed for others. This incongruence between attitudes and behaviors may be the result of a mix of traditional gender role socialization combined with more liberal, feminist attitudes she gained from her education.

Adding to Leticia's struggles to define herself are the "criticism" and "judgment" she continues to experience from her mother and others for pursuing a career. She sadly recalled her mother telling her, "I didn't know you would be like this." Leticia indicated she did not understand the meaning of her mother's comment and reflected, "Like it was a bad thing that I turned out the way that I did." She allowed herself to be nostalgic for a moment and considered the expectations and roles she has rejected or negotiated thus far:

I do feel at times a bit sad that it is not that way, but it's not because I really want it that way but because that's what I think is expected, and I feel like I've failed to meet that expectation. I do think sometimes that I am almost twenty years old and it's not like I thought it would be. When I get those thoughts, I try to think positively about my life and see the opportunities that exist.

She noted the guilt imparted on her by her mother. "My mom tells me about me leaving them for the whole summer that I don't care about them. I don't want to be with them." She also noted her reaction to others' comments:

"You left your mom alone." So, these people put that guilt on me, which I kind of brush off because they don't know my situation. They live in this world where everything is one way. It's not their fault they're that way, but I'm just thinking, "You don't know how things are and how things work."

Leticia indicated she did not argue with people when they chastised her for not succumbing to gender roles and expectations, but simply ignored their comments, changed the conversation, and continued with her goals. She acknowledged this "conflict avoidance" was a gender-related "trait" she had "learned" from her mother (e.g., girls don't argue with people) and reflected on the struggle to be more assertive:

You have to stand up for yourself, and one of the things I have to work on is self-confidence and assertiveness, being able to tell them, "No, you're making it seem this way, but..." but I don't want to come off as arrogant. I try in a way to make them understand, but it's hard.

It appeared Leticia suppressed her affect and used rationality as a coping mechanism in dealing with the backlash of gender resistance and negotiation. Her struggles were not only in terms of navigating this backlash but also the two worlds she felt were inherently different from each other – school and home.

It's weird when I go home. It's like I have to be a different person. Here, I'm focused on my academics. I'm focused on getting everything done. I don't think about my appearance. I don't think about that. I don't think that's important at all, but then I go back home and that's all people look at. You do work your 40 hours a week, but when you do interact with people, that's what they judge you on, on your appearance. How well you are is based on how many clothes you have, how many outfits you have, how expensive your purse is. It's the symbols, all of them, that show that you are wealthy or successful or happy.

Leticia indicated it was difficult to have relationships with people back home because their lives were so different. She sadly noted the “loss of connection” with them and commented, “Home is not stimulating any more.” However, Leticia noted there has been a shift in her father's role in the household. After he lost his job, he was unable to fulfill the role of provider and began to spend time with his grandchild and participate in caretaking and child-rearing activities.

According to Leticia, he now has a different appreciation for these roles, which he traditionally associated with women. Perhaps her father will join her in redefining gender.

In summary. Leticia's gender history illustrates a tension between the desire to belong and the desire to define oneself. It narrates a woman's journey towards self discovery and definition and exposes the complexity of identity development by revealing some of the intersections between gender, race/ethnicity, and class issues. Leticia, in the narrative and in her presentation, shifted from vulnerable and emotional to rational and detached as she shared her struggles to redefine gender and cope with the backlash. Her level of self-awareness was at times superficial, particularly in terms of her ethnic identity formation and the impact of sexism and gender inequality on her life. However, she did have a social consciousness about racial and

class issues. Similarly, Leticia's story exposed some areas of incongruence such as a mismatch between sexual attitudes and behavior and the resistance and rejection of media messages concerning gender but not sexual violence. The nature of such incongruence remains latent. The impact and power of media messages in promoting rape mythology and shaping perceptions about sexual violence were evident, with Leticia's understanding of sexual violence revealing both traditional and non-traditional perspectives, despite her growing awareness on this issue. Leticia's pursuit of her career goals and her own definition of gender has contributed to her developing a less traditional understanding of sexual violence. Her decision to embark alone on this journey reveals her courage, resilience, and strength.

Gerardo

Gerardo's story is that of a man struggling with multiple binaries: the embrace and rejection of a father's gender expectations, the public and private personas of manhood, and feminist and traditional attitudes about gender and sexual violence. These struggles may represent the cultural shift many Mexican American males experience in transitioning to less traditional understandings of manhood and sexual violence.

Family composition and history. Gerardo is a 22 year-old, heterosexual, Mexican American identified male in his senior year in college majoring in mathematics. Gerardo comes from an intact family of four and has an older sister. His parents were born and raised in the "same little town" in Mexico and belonged to large families. His father completed third grade. His mother completed a middle school education. They met, fell in love, married, and migrated to the United States, where they gave birth to Gerardo's sister. His father was 21 and his mother 18 years of age. Their migration stories reveal hardship, about which his mother has always

been silent. Gerardo's father migrated first and had to survive a few days in the desert without food or water. He then "set it up" so Gerardo's mother could "come through." They chose to live in a specific metropolitan city in the Midwest because they both had family there. They lived for a few years with Gerardo's paternal uncle in a part of the city that was predominately Mexican. That was Gerardo's first home.

Parental gender roles and dynamics. Gerardo's earliest recollection of his parents was gendered. He remembered them in roles he considered to be "traditional Mexican gender roles." Gerardo described his father as a "stubborn, Mexican man," a "macho" who was "proud," "confrontational," and "set in his ways." He was the disciplinarian, the one who "laid down the law," and was "very strict." Gerardo believed that central to his father's perception of manhood was the archetype of man as provider. This definition of manhood proved to be a source of struggle for his father as he was never able to have a stable job. Gerardo reflected on the anger and "powerlessness" his father experienced for not fulfilling this provider role and thus not feeling he was "the man of the family." Having to accept Gerardo's mother entrance into the workforce to help provide for the family was another source of contention, since Gerardo's father believed a wife should stay at home and take care of the house and family.

He expected his wife to cook, clean, and lay out his clothes for him...This was the mentality he was accustomed to or pretty much forced upon, maybe from his interactions growing up...There were probably other families in which the women probably didn't work in Mexico, probably just the men, and they'll come home, and all the women probably be housewives. So I guess that's the way he grew up and that's the way he probably expected things to be.

According to Gerardo, his father considered this unexpected reversal of roles as something "negative," and "instead of being proud of [Gerardo's mother]," accused her of "thinking more highly about herself" and the family of no longer respecting him. Gerardo recalled how his father erroneously believed his mother now had the power in the home because she was "the

provider,” unaware of the power and authority he still commanded “by the way he spoke and acted.”

My mom’s personality is not very aggressive. She’s not very dominant, so she doesn’t want to be seen as the powerful person in the relationship or in the family. She just does what she has to do and that’s it...My dad’s attitude, and the way he is, still makes him the powerful figure, but he doesn’t see that, so that’s probably why...it makes him want to show it more...Whenever we ask for something, he puts his foot down, or makes it known that he’s saying no or he’s saying yes. He makes it more public, showing, “Yeah, I’m the one with the power.”

Gerardo believed “*machista*” or sexist attitudes coupled with an association of women working or having power as being “American” contributed to his father’s aversive reaction to his mother entering the workforce. He recalled his father saying, “*Me cae gordo cuando la mujer le dice a un hombre que hacer.*”¹⁶ Gerardo believed his father felt threatened by women in power because he erroneously equated their power with his disempowerment, basing such association on his misunderstanding of “American” gender dynamics.

I think Mexican males they see women in power and they see that as being very threatening... they see their wives having jobs, and they see that as themselves losing power, which why can’t it be both? I think that’s more of an American way. Actually, a lot of times my dad mentioned growing up that “Oh, oh, what? You’re American now? We’re Mexican. We’re not an American family...” He always associated the woman working or the woman having some kind of power as being American, and he didn’t want that. He made that perfectly clear...He said how women hit their husbands, that that’s the American way. He associated them with having so much power that they actually go and hit their husbands...He thought that was so degrading for the man...He thought just because the women had more power that meant that men had no control over their families.

His father’s concerns about the impact of American culture on familial gender roles appeared to be unfounded for Gerardo declared his family to be a “Mexican family,” in which “the male’s on top, and then the female, and then the children...a hierarchy.” He commented, “[This hierarchy] is expected, especially for Mexican families that grew up in Mexico, like my parents did.”

¹⁶ I hate it when a woman tells a man what to do.

Other early images of his father included those of domestic violence and alcoholism. Gerardo recalled how his father would “disrespect” and “beat up” his mother and how he was “drunk on weekends and when he came home from work.” Those would be images Gerardo would continue to see throughout his childhood and into adolescence. His father would struggle with sobriety for years. He would also struggle with a gambling problem.

Gerardo’s portrayal of his father only highlighted negative aspects associated with machismo and presented him as one-dimensional, yet he indicated that despite his shortcomings his mother, sister, and he considered his father to be a “great father” because he and his sister had “turned out great.” Gerardo acknowledged his father had shared in the parenting and had attempted to be his “friend.” There appeared to be sadness and longing in Gerardo for a closer relationship with his father.

The words Gerardo used to describe his mother were “quiet,” “non-confrontational,” “flexible,” and “lenient.” Although she assumed many “traditional” roles, such as responsibility for all household chores and money management, Gerardo believed his mother was more flexible than his father in terms of gender roles. He commented his mother had never expected she would work outside the family, but had assumed that responsibility “because of finances,” because her family needed her to assume that role. Further, Gerardo suggested that even if his mother “does not agree with her duties and roles, that is what she expected her life to be like.” He indicated both sides of the family respected her “for all she had done and had been through.”

Gerardo indicated a lack of communication between his parents, which resulted in his father becoming upset when things were “not to his liking,” as well as a lack of affection between them. He recalled how, when drunk, his father would say they only stayed together for the children. However, Gerardo observed his father would cook or clean maybe once a week to

show appreciation for Gerardo's mother and acknowledge how hard she worked. He would also show "love and care" towards her by occasionally "joking around." With sadness, Gerardo shared that "[they] all did not spend too much time together as a family, not even for dinner."

Seeds of manhood and heterosexuality, struggles with poverty and domestic violence. Gendered messages and differential treatment towards Gerardo and his sister can be traced to the age of 5. Gerardo recalled being aware at this young age that there was a difference between him and his sister and the behaviors and activities considered appropriate for each. He disclosed experiencing feelings of embarrassment and shame for secretly engaging in some of the activities that were forbidden to him.

I'd be playing with her dolls, with her, not by myself, but we were both conscious that I shouldn't be doing that, I shouldn't be playing with her, because when my parents were around, I would put them aside, or she'd pretend I wasn't playing around with her, and I would pretend to do something else. I don't know where that thought came from...It was probably my parents, where they were clearly saying, "Don't play with that. Don't play with the dolls. That's for your sister."

Gerardo recognized the gender messages his parents provided were primarily directed toward him, and their preoccupation was that he abide by appropriate gender behavior, and not his sister. He recalled, "They never had a problem with her racing. They never had a problem with her shooting basketball. They never really worried about her...They were worried about my actions." He believed such obsession with his behavior, even at such a young age, centered on his parents wanting to dissuade him from any activities that could "promote" homosexuality. Gerardo recalled a particular incident, "I was playing hopscotch, and they stopped me from playing hopscotch for some odd reason. 'Don't play hopscotch because boys don't do that,' and now, I know. I'm assuming they were worried about homosexuality taking place."

As Gerardo grew older, he became aware of some of class issues with which his family struggled. He noted that during that time "a lot of problems were caused by money." Gerardo

shared that his father, aunts, and uncles were “fighting” over his grandparents’ inheritance and that financial issues were also being experienced in their single-income home. Gerardo recalled:

I was very little...No more than the third grade...and I looked at the fridge and there’s no food. Immediately I start crying for my mom. I start crying, and then my mom says, “Why are you crying?” My dad was there too, and I tell them, “Because we got no food. We gotta make money so we can get food.” I’m a little kid here, saying, “We’re poor. We don’t got any food.” Why would a like kid be worried about food? It grew more into a concept of “We don’t have any food, therefore we’re poor.”

He commented his parents were concerned about his distress over the lack of food in the home and somehow managed to have food in the home from that moment on, yet their struggles with money would continue. Gerardo too was astounded at his awareness and level of distress about class issues at such a young age.

By the age of 9, Gerardo and his father had “connected over baseball.” He recalled his father “pushed [him] hard” to do his best and used this time to provide Gerardo with direct tutelage on how to properly display manhood, on what men should and should not do.

He would be really hard, and I wouldn’t be able to take criticism that hard that quickly at a small age. So sometimes I would start crying, and it was always this statement, “*Los hombres no lloran*.¹⁷ Stop crying, *¿porque estás llorando?*”¹⁸ But I was a little kid...I don’t know if by him saying that he was indirectly saying, “Stop crying because you look like a girl...” Actually, he used that same statement in many other ways, like, “*Los hombres no ‘action.’ Los hombres no hacen ‘x’.* *Los hombres no son metiches.*”¹⁹ By him saying that, this indirectly says that women are, so by them being *metiches*,²⁰ you shouldn’t be. You got to be the complete opposite at all times of what women do or say...If the women are the ones doing the housework, you shouldn’t be the one doing it...If you bring in the money, then the women shouldn’t...it’s more of an opposite reaction.

These messages revealed a binary model of gender that cast men and women into opposite and mutually exclusive roles. Gerardo reported that the other messages he received from his father during this time were aimed at discouraging behaviors his father associated with homosexuality.

¹⁷ Men don’t cry.

¹⁸ Why are you crying?

¹⁹ Men don’t “action.” Men don’t do “x.” Men are not meddlers.”

²⁰ meddlers

Whenever I would go with my dad to different places he would constantly try to change some of my mannerisms. For example, he would always mention something about the way I walked...He would tell me, "Walk this way, walk a certain way." He would change the way I walked...He would show me the "correct" way a man should walk, and this new walk consisted of taking longer steps, with more of a stiff back, more masculine, more manly of a walk, and I didn't know why...He would never directly associate this with sexuality but he did directly associate it with gender. It seems that he has an ideology about how males should act including in the most minute of things. It may be that by trying to tell me how a male should act or talk, he would indirectly tell me how a straight male should act. It seems like most of the things he would make me aware of can be closely associated with actions that homosexual males demonstrate...He was indirectly telling me, "You know what, that's not the way you walk. If you walk like that, you're considered to be something else."

Additionally, Gerardo believed his parents took great measures to protect him from images or information in the media about homosexuality. He remembered them quickly changing the channel if they deemed what was being portrayed on television to be inappropriate.

Around the same time, Gerardo began receiving messages from peers that encouraged displays of manhood, particularly strength (i.e., violence) and fearlessness. His friends asserted that Gerardo needed to "prove" himself by "hitting a kid" and cautioned Gerardo that any refusal to do so would be seen as an indication of fear.

He came up to me and said, "Go hit this kid. Go hit him. If you're strong, if you're not scared, then you'll do it." And that's what I did. I went and hit him. I felt bad for him. I never wanted to do it, but for some reason I did it, and it's weird how at that point you being scared is something you don't want to be associated with.

Perhaps it was this incident that encouraged Gerardo to fearlessly take on a stronger and more formidable opponent – his father.

He was beating my mom. I ran up, just yelling, and I was up in his face. I was ready to swing, and he backed away and didn't do anything, and ever since then, once he knew that I would fight him...he stopped doing that. He never laid a hand on my mom.

The domestic violence in the home ended when Gerardo was 11-years-old, after he threatened to fight his father. He had neutralized violence with the threat of violence. He had "proven"

himself once again. However, despite this altercation, Gerardo loved his father and would become upset when others made negative comments about him.

I remember when I was 12 or 13 years old and they'd [maternal grandparents] come tell me, "Oh, tell your dad to get a job, tell your dad to do this," and I remember I used to start crying. I was like, "Why are you talking that way about my dad?" and she'd [grandmother] go, "Yeah, I know it hurts but you got to know that that is the way it is."

Gerardo witnessed the backlash his father experienced for not assuming the provider role in the family and surmised from these comments the reason for his father's conflictive relationship with his mother's family. The anger he sometimes expressed towards his father was replaced in that moment with compassion.

Differential gender socialization, beginnings of gender transgressions. When he was 15-years-old, Gerardo started dating, "secretly." He noted "[his] parents didn't ask and [he] didn't tell." That first relationship lasted a couple of months. He reported his father never gave him "the sex talk," perhaps because he assumed Gerardo had been provided that information at school. Indeed, Gerardo had received basic sex education in the sixth grade, with emphasis placed on "taking care of yourself and being safe." However, Gerardo believed his father's discomfort was related to sex not being a topic talked about in Mexican culture. Gerardo reflected on the discomfort his father displayed when providing any message about sex and recalled him quickly saying "*ten cuidado*"²¹ and the word "condom." The few messages his father provided Gerardo about dating impressed upon him that he should date a girl who appears "respectful" in the public eye and does not have a "reputation" or "image" of being "easy." According to Gerardo, his father considered girls who were "too out there," "loud" or "independent" as being "loose" or "easy." His mother too commented to him that "independent" women can cause "trouble" whereas women who "let things go" are "good girls."

²¹ Be careful

Gerardo's father also discouraged him from becoming involved with girls who have boyfriends because of "the problems that can bring" as well as marrying someone with whom he's had a sexual relationship because "it's not fun, it's not worth it to be with a girl that you've had many times already." His father would share stories of "the many girls he had dated in Mexico," but in a "joking manner" instead of providing instruction on how to develop and maintain relationships with women. Gerardo noted the heterosexuality assumed in his father's messages. He commented "there was no question I would date a woman, the question was the race." He indicated his parents wanted him to date Mexican or Latina girls, White girls were acceptable, but no Black girls.

Teaching Gerardo how to groom and establish a certain "look" was an area in which his father displayed more comfort and self-efficacy. He impressed upon Gerardo that men should have a certain "look," which included the "more masculine" walk he had taught Gerardo at an early age, Tejana hat and boots, and a mustache. Gerardo reflected on how he attempted to display the appearance markers his father associated with being "*macho*" and the ridicule he received from his friends for such portrayal.

He goes, "Don't ever cut off your mustache because that's being manly. It's what defines you as a Mexican male...." Then after freshman year, all my friends were like, "Why don't you cut it off?" and I would tell them that reason. They would start laughing, even my Mexican friends, "Man, that's so stupid."

As he attempted to discern the gender messages he was receiving from his father, Gerardo noted that the differential treatment from his father toward him and his sister had shifted and larger restrictions were placed on his sister once she entered womanhood. Some of his father's messages to his sister emphasized the importance of her knowing how to cook and clean so she could fulfill her duties as a wife and mother, which were tasks he expected Gerardo's

mother to teach her. He prohibited her from participating in any sports because that would require her coming home late, of which he disapproved.

When she would come home late...my dad would mention, “*¿Qué es eso, por qué vienes a la casa tan tarde?*”²² What will people think? That you’re over there working the streets.” Insinuating that prostitution is the image you present by coming back that late...“Oh you’re just showing yourself off...” He implied that the way people would view her would be in a negative way and that was what he was preventing from happening.

Gerardo indicated his father believed any negative evaluation made about Gerardo’s sister would “bring shame to the family.” He stated, “That was always a big thing. I think it’s more of a Mexican thing...You got to always avoid it...Bringing shame would be very disrespectful. It would be bad.” More so, Gerardo’s father believed his daughter’s behavior would reflect poorly on him and question his ability to “control” his family, particularly the women in his family.

It’s all about the image he presented, because, indirectly, if people thought that, they’ll say, “Oh, that’s the way he runs his family.” Indirectly, they’ll talk about him as well. So he’s the one who runs things, so therefore what she does is going to be reflective of him, so if it’s negative, it’ll reflect negative of him as well. “*¿Qué va a decir la gente?*”²³ That I let you guys run all over me...*No, las mujeres no deben de estar afuera en la calle tan tarde.*²⁴”

To avoid public shaming or embarrassment, he attempted to control some of her behaviors and required she ask for permission before going out with friends, enforced a strict curfew, and prohibited her from wearing make-up and dating.

Gerardo noted his father was more lenient on him despite being a couple of years younger than his sister. He reflected on how he had no curfew, was not required to ask permission before going out, and was not expected to perform household chores. He remarked that the latter (i.e., lack of household responsibilities) was not imperative to his ability to fulfill

²² What is this? Why are you coming home so late?

²³ What will people say?

²⁴ No, women should not be out on the street that late.

“the husband role.” Gerardo interpreted this differential treatment from a cultural standpoint that linked ethnicity and gender roles:

It is obvious that different cultures have different customs. One of the main differences among Mexican customs and the customs in the United States would have to be the roles that are expected among members of the family, especially the females. My father...would keep telling my sister why she didn't help with the everyday chores my mother had to do. Yet he would never tell me to help out with those same chores. Just by that statement he had expectations for both of us. He expected my sister to follow somewhat along my mother's footsteps and learn the basic housewife tasks.

His sister was also aware of this differential treatment and voiced the double standard and her discontent to their father to no avail.

Although Gerardo and his sister had received constant messages as children intended to socialize them into traditional gender roles, during adolescence, they both began to transgress such expectations and adopt roles in the family that Gerardo believed were associated more with the opposite gender. Gerardo described his sister as “the rebellious one.” He remarked she was “not the traditional Latina” but more independent and strong. He indicated she never wanted to learn nor did she do household chores and “didn't see herself as being a housewife but having a career.” Gerardo commented she was trying to be “a different Latina.” In her efforts to transgress expectations, she sometimes “disrespected and defied [her mother's] authority.” Gerardo noted his sister never experienced any backlash from his mother or grandparents for her gender resistance and instead his mother “covered up for her.” However, he indicated his mother sometimes “joked with her about how she'd get married if she couldn't cook.” In contrast, Gerardo described himself as “the responsible one,” as his mother's ally and protector.

I would see how my mom would stay home and cry, about my dad not being home or my sister treating her the same way, like leaving or whatever. My sister was very rebellious. So I would see my mom being hurt by both of them. So I guess I became more sympathetic towards her, and... I wouldn't want to do the same things to hurt her.

He noted the many conversations he had with his sister about her “being more responsible” and attributed their different “personalities” to different educational experiences. He attended a magnet high school while she went to a public school. Gerardo also transgressed gender expectations by performing household chores, bragging that he cooked better than his sister.

Amidst this gender socialization, Gerardo’s family continued to struggle with his father’s drinking. Gerardo recalled some of the conversations he had with his father in which he urged him to stop drinking.

Actually I specifically remember when I was in high school, 15 or 16, and I had told him, “Are you seriously not going to stop drinking? I’m your son. Your son is telling you, is pleading with you to stop drinking. You wouldn’t do that for me?” He goes, “No, my parents are the only people who could tell me what to do, and since they’re dead now, there’s nobody to tell me what to do. Not you, your sister, or your mom.” That hurt me a lot.

His father would stop drinking a few years later when Gerardo was 20 years old due to alcohol-related medical issues that “scared him” (close to having a stroke) rather than regard for the family.

I pleaded with him so many times, me, my sister, my mom, and, no, not one of those things worked, ever, up until the point where a doctor had to tell him, “You know, you’re about to die.”...Oh, so, he didn’t realize that he was hurting us, my sister and my mom? No, he didn’t think about that.

Gerardo reflected on how those moments and others like them created a divide between him and his father that impacted his perceptions of his father and of manhood and resulted in him seeking alternative expressions of masculinity.

Socializing messages from peers and media, intersections with father. Although Gerardo initially pursued baseball to connect with his father, baseball became very central to his identity as an adolescent. When not in school, he spent most of his time with his teammates playing ball. Amidst this camaraderie, messages about appropriate gender behavior were given

and enforced. The expectation that young men “prove” their masculinity continued and through the use of violence and competition (e.g., chugging beer). According to Gerardo, any refusal to participate in stunts believed to establish manhood was rebuffed with statements like “Are you gay?” and “I smell pussy” that associated such refusal with being “weak,” “afraid,” gay and feminine. Gerardo reflected on how he and his friends policed and pressured each other to comply with expected gender behavior by associating a lack of compliance to femininity and homosexuality. He recalled not wanting to “appear gay” or “be associated with women” through activities or mannerisms.

“Don’t yell like a little girl. Don’t look a certain way.” There are these typical associations with homosexuality and their actions....That’s always in the back of your head, “Don’t do things that identify you in a certain way. Don’t do things that identify you as a girl.”

Similarly, there was an emphasis on proving heterosexuality by being “a player.”

Gerardo remarked there were no set expectations at that age. It did not matter what they “did” with a girl (e.g., talk to her, get her number, perception she left with you). The message was simply: “try to get something, whatever you can.” However, Gerardo asserted that dating was seen negatively, and his friends would “joke around” and say to anyone who was dating, “You’re done. You can’t do anything any more.” Gerardo commented he and his friends would sometimes talk about relationships, about what they “should and shouldn’t do,” but such conversations typically occurred when drinking. He reflected on how alcohol allowed men to have certain conversations or to express themselves to others as he had witnessed his father do.

He held everything in. I think that’s why he used alcoholism, as a method to let everything out. It was always very frightening knowing my dad was out drinking. I’d be frightened just waiting for my father to come home, because I’d know when he came home drunk, he’d let everything out...yell at us...get mad at us for what had happened.

The last message Gerardo received from peers and which he employed with his father was an “I don’t care” attitude, pretending nothing bothers you.

The messages Gerardo received from his peers were consistent with those he received from the media. According to Gerardo, many of the shows he watched as an adolescent (e.g., American wrestling, Power Rangers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Mexican black and white cowboy movies with Pedro Infante) suggested men prove their manhood through violence, the seduction of women, adoption of an “I don’t care” attitude, and by being “dominant” and “in control.” Gerardo reflected that Mexican media, in particular soap operas and movies, depicted women as “helpless” and dependent on men to “rescue, save, and/or seduce them” while American media portrayed women in a more positive way, as “strong,” “independent,” and as having more power and agency over their lives. Gerardo noted the sexualization and objectification of women in both sets of media. However, he believed American media oversexualized men and women and suggested “American men got sex whenever they wanted” and women always complied.

Gerardo admitted he relied on American media (e.g., dramas, reality shows) for guidance about appropriate and expected dating behaviors (e.g., be respectful, go to the movies, and hold hands). He also relied on *Men’s Health*, “the guy’s version of Cosmo,” and internet porn to learn how to sexually please women. He explained, “All guys use porn to learn about sex. We have this understanding that that’s what everybody does.”

In discussing the impact of the media on his understanding of gender, Gerardo revealed music was salient to his father’s expression of masculinity. Gerardo recalled his father instructing him to only listen to certain types of music (e.g., *corridos*, *tejano*, *rancheras*), avoid music in English, and avoid any music in Spanish that was “sentimental.” However, Gerardo

noted that certain music genres, coupled with alcohol, were used by men, including his father, to release emotion while retaining their manhood.

I am sure that if my father heard a “love” song or a song that demonstrates that the male is soft or weak towards the woman, he would not like the song. He would not like it because a “man” is not supposed to seem weak towards a woman. That would be unacceptable at all times. However there is an exception to that. Certain *rancheras* do talk about their wives and how they did wrong to the guy. These songs are okay to like or sing when men are drunk. It seems that it’s okay for Mexican males to show their emotions publicly when they are intoxicated. If these emotions are shown at any other time, it is disgraceful.

Many times when he [father] would come home drunk he’d just start blasting the music, something like Vicente Fernandez, and he’d sit there, and he would start singing, and all his feelings and honesty came out, what he really felt.

Gerardo reflected on how he disobeyed his father and listened to rap music in English and other music genres in Spanish of which his father disapproved (e.g., *banda, conjunto*).

However, he shared having occasionally complied with his father’s requests to obtain his approval.

There was actually this one song that had this *ranchera* beat to it. I would purely demonstrate that I liked it to my parents or whenever my dad was around. Maybe I hoped that he’d be proud of me or be happy that I was listening to this type of music instead of something else.

Additionally, Gerardo noted the relationship between music and the establishment of heterosexuality amongst his peers and the pressure for him to publicly deny his endorsement of music genres that could call into question his heterosexuality.

It was always considered that to like NSYNC and Backstreet Boys was to be gay, to be like, “Oh, no, guys don’t like that.” But I’ll admit, I did like some of their songs. I wasn’t completely like, “Oh my God, Oh my God” [in high pitched voice] like some of the girls, no, it was never like that, but there were some songs that were catchy... When I was at school, I would blatantly deny it, “No, never liked it. Never will.” And I would always make fun of it. I kept that barrier, that whole expectation of how I should be, “I’m a male. I shouldn’t be liking this type of music, so therefore I will show all these people I don’t like it.”

This pressure to comply with gender expectations would lead Gerardo to develop two personas during college as the dissonance between his personal attitudes and beliefs and societal expectations grew.

Developing a male stance and juggling two personas. Once at college, Gerardo continued to receive the same type of messages from peers that emphasized desirable gender behavior and refuted any dissent with threats of associations with femininity and homosexuality. He recalled that one of the messages highlighted asserted “men should be in control” or at the very least “act like they’re in control” and “do whatever they want.” This perception of control became more imperative if men were in relationships (with women). Gerardo noted men needed to show other men they were not “whooped” or “tied down” by their girlfriends, that they were not “weak” and being “dictated and controlled” by their women.

They have an expectation that the man should be in control at all times. If you show that it’s not like that, then you’re a fag. For example, if they think I’m not going out because she doesn’t want me to go out, they say, “Oh, you’re a fag. You let her be in control.” They have expectations about how things should be in relationships...If there’s anything that can be seen as female or not in control, you don’t want to be associated with it.

Women were important to this male presentation with Gerardo stating women were expected, and sometimes directly instructed, not to “degrade” their man or act like she’s “got him like that” or that she is in control of him.

The policing that began in high school continued into young adulthood as did the comments that pressured them into compliance such as, “What? Are you gay or something?” or “Don’t yell like a little girl.” He reflected that no one would interrupt or challenge the language, jokes, or comments used by the group, and if someone did, they’d “jump on him,” “laugh it off,” but not take it “seriously.”

Everybody knows that we're playing around when we're drinking or talking about it or make jokes like that... We don't say it with a mean purpose so therefore we don't have a need to be outspoken about it and say, "Hey, let's not do that," because we don't mean it.

According to Gerardo, these messages and behaviors constitute a "male stance." He asserted that the way men appear to other men is important, and therefore they feel compelled to put on a different persona when around other men. He explained, "We all do that. We all change the way we act and the way we appear to be when we're with other men, not women." Gerardo reflected on how this male stance was consistent with the stance his father displayed and which he wanted to abandon because it was incongruent with his idea of manhood, which he asserted was more egalitarian and non-traditional. He confessed he struggled to satisfy the gender norms prescribed to him and be true to his own attitudes and beliefs about manhood and gender.

Gerardo disclosed navigating such incongruence by having a public and a private persona. He indicated assuming a public persona with male peers in which he conformed to gender norms and policed other men to avoid having his sexuality questioned. However, Gerardo assumed a private persona with women (e.g., girlfriend, mother, sister) in which he was able to endorse more egalitarian and non-traditional gender role attitudes and behaviors and be more critical and aware of gender role dynamics. He reflected that he could be his "true" self with women because they were "more accepting" and less judgmental and critical than men. Although he indicated it was easy to switch personas when only in one space, Gerardo admitted it was difficult to juggle both when the public and private met. He stated, "It's hard to balance between the two – show my girlfriend affection in public, but not too much that my friends will say, 'Ahh, stop being so lovey-dovey like that.' It's hard to do both at the same time."

Despite Gerardo's denial of a tension between his two gender role personas, some of his attitudes about women and relationships suggested he had internalized some of the socializing messages he had received. The most evident struggle was around issues of power and control. Gerardo asserted that although the power differential between men and women should be lower, men should have slightly more power in a relationship.

It seems that everywhere we look the man is expected to be the dominant one...I don't think the power difference should be that great, but I would think the male, I don't know why I think that way, the male should have a slight say over everybody else in the family but then again it should be equal...In public or in society, if they see the man have this slight power...it's considered the norm. It's expected. If it's the other way, and the woman has more control, or it's just equal, everybody will look at the guy and say, "Oh, you're weak..." The woman is not looked down upon because the male seems to have a little more control. So I guess that's why I don't want to put myself in that situation, where I don't want to make it seem in public that she controls me or has power in our relationship.

Further, he alleged it was women's responsibility to help their men maintain a public persona and thus should avoid doing anything that could disrupt it. He perceived women as having the power to diminish men's "image" while affirming men could not similarly injure women's reputation.

The woman should know not to disrespect the guy knowing that guys have more expectations of things they should be. They should be conscious of that and be able to recognize, "Oh, if I do something, it's going to have this consequence..." Avoid uncomfortable situations for the guy.

He contended that despite this power differential in public the relationship could be "equal" in private. Gerardo was able to acknowledge this double standard. He struggled to understand his internal conflict around issues of power and control.

So in the end, I am in a crossroad. Should I portray the relationship of a male in clear "power" or a male in an equal relationship where members of my own Mexican family would consider it as a degrading idea? Again, this is something where I should have multiple personas or personalities to portray in different situations or to different people.

The tensions between Gerardo's public and private personas and the impact of his gender role socialization would become more evident as he began to define his role within dating relationships and further develop his understanding of gender and sexual violence.

Sprouts of gender socialization, awareness, and re-definition of gender. Although Gerardo had dated during his teens, he indicated his "first real relationship" was in college. It lasted two years and was followed by another long-term relationship. Gerardo recounted both relationships were facilitated by alcohol and originated in the same manner. He would start by kissing the woman's neck, and if there was no refusal (e.g., she did not push him away), he considered it a positive response and moved to the next sexual behavior. He disclosed he "pushed" his first girlfriend until she "drew the line" as to the behavior she would engage in, "backed off for a while," and then tried again to see if she would continue to refuse. His narration of his approach appears illustrative of the token resistance referenced in the literature (see literature review).

She would tell me once, and obviously I respected it, but then after a while, after a period of time, I would try, and I could just tell if she'll push me away or not. That's how I would know. Again, I guess that's my way, just try to push a little bit and see if she'll push me away. If not, that means she'll agree with it.

Gerardo acknowledged there was no formal verbal consent or negotiation of sexual behavior with his first girlfriend, but indicated with certainty that the behavior they engaged in was mutually desired. He recalled sexual intimacy developed differently with his second girlfriend, with her initiating such intimacy and sex then becoming the expected outcome of any intimate moment. He denied having conversations about sex with either girlfriend although he remembered the first asked if she was pleasing him sexually and the second "joked" about a Cosmo article. Gerardo reflected on how he had never asked if he was pleasing them.

More of the dissonance between Gerardo's perceived and actual self were evident in his attitudes towards women and sex, which were reminiscent of the messages he received from his father and peers. Gerardo indicated a woman should not be too "extravagant," "loud," "talkative," or "independent" or always "getting drunk and acting crazy" because these were indicators she was "too easy." Neither should she "disrespect her man in public." According to Gerardo, a woman should be "respectful," "reserved," and "act in a decent manner." He acknowledged these were messages he internalized from his father and with which he agreed. Gerardo also reported beliefs that men should be the ones to initiate sexual behavior in public, have the higher sex drive, engage in sex at an earlier age, and engage in casual sex. He admitted that if women engaged in those behaviors he would wonder if they were "too out there," "too flirtatious," "sluts" or "whores." He also shared that he expected women to engage in token resistance, as he reported witnessing on TV. Gerardo acknowledged he had internalized the messages he had received around sexual socialization and followed gender-appropriate sexual behavior and roles. He "blamed" his father and Mexican culture for "exposing [him] to these norms." As he became aware of the impact of his gender and sexual socialization on his attitudes toward women, Gerardo struggled with his self-image.

I'm not sexist. At least I didn't think I was sexist. I guess I'm blaming society for the way I think about things... I'm having double standards about things that I shouldn't... I always saw myself as being understanding in relationships and always the good guy...I'm not as good as I thought I was.

Gerardo acknowledged some of the incongruence between his perceived and actual self and indicated a desire to "be better." To that end, Gerardo reported he was attempting to redefine the idea of masculinity inculcated in him by his father and other socializing agents. He described his perception of manhood as an "anti-machismo" in comparison to his father's "traditional Mexican gender roles." He clarified that his definition of manhood was not a form

of “American masculinity” but simply the “complete opposite” of what his father represented. Gerardo’s depiction of a man presented someone who was “strong,” “independent,” and able to “take care of his family,” acknowledge when he is “right and wrong,” and treat women with respect and equality. Further, Gerardo believed men had to prove themselves in various contexts and re-define manhood as they grew older and faced different responsibilities and expectations.

He attributed his differing gender role attitudes to being exposed to two different cultures with varying gender expectations and “flaws.” According to Gerardo, being bicultural allowed him to step back, consider both cultures, and pull values from each to create his own perceptions of masculinity. He did not blame his parents for their endorsement of traditional gender roles since he believed they simply adopted the behavior they were exposed to in Mexico and at home.

We [Gerardo and his sister] were exposed to two different cultures, not just Mexican traditional [culture]...We had this other side that involved school, friends, more of American culture, so we were able to see two different sides, different expectations for two different groups of people, so I guess, we were able to see the flaws of each expectation...We were able to see which side was better for us.

Additionally, Gerardo credited higher education and his exposure to less traditional women (e.g., sister, girlfriends) as contributing to his less traditional gender attitudes.

Negative impact of gender role attitudes on sexual violence. Gerardo’s endorsement of both traditional and nontraditional gender and sexual attitudes were recreated in his perspectives about sexual violence. Some of his attitudes toward women and heterosexual relationships appeared to influence his perceptions about sexual violence. Additionally, Gerardo noted the impact of a required rape education workshop he attended his freshman year in college. He remarked discontent with that workshop, almost five years later, because it attributed sole responsibility to men for engaging in sexual behavior with women who were intoxicated and therefore could not consent. Gerardo contended that a woman physically consents to sexual

behavior when her body “responds back to you,” thus there is no need to verbalize (lack of) consent. Additionally, he did not understand why it was a man’s responsibility to assess a woman’s ability to consent and stated, “It seems very unfair...how it’s easily set up for any guy to be put in a situation where he can get into a lot of trouble when it was not necessarily all his fault.” He denied engaging in victim blaming or thinking women “deserve it [to be assaulted when intoxicated],” yet stated women “shouldn’t put themselves in that situation or throw themselves on men.”

I don’t think they should blame themselves, but I think they should be aware and take some actions in the future to not put themselves in that situation...If the girl is wearing the shortest skirt you could possibly have and pretty much wearing nothing but a bra on and goes out and drinks a lot, and you invite a guy over to your place, all knowingly, and then throw yourself at him, and then in the end, you call it rape. If you really did not have that intention...yes, blame the guy, but look back and say, “I shouldn’t be drinking that much. I shouldn’t be wearing short, skimpy clothes. I shouldn’t invite him back to my place. I shouldn’t have thrown myself at him.” You don’t have the right to be throwing yourself at somebody and then later on say “No, it wasn’t like that...” When you’re throwing yourself on somebody and jumping on top of them, you’re not completely that vulnerable, I think.

Gerardo acknowledged he would doubt the situation, question if the woman was partly responsible, and assess her credibility.

I’m not saying that it’s completely her fault, but it’s really part of the reason why the guy thought he was going to have sex, or he could...That’s why alcohol is a big variable. It can change any situation. Knowing there was alcohol makes me doubt, makes me think about the situation...I’m kind of skeptical about these situations...I wouldn’t be so quickly to judge somebody and say, “Oh, she was totally innocent.” The same way with a guy-- I wouldn’t quickly jump to a conclusion and say, “He’s guilty.”

When reflecting on this scenario, Gerardo commented he would only “step in” if the woman was a friend and he “honestly thought she was drunk” otherwise he would give the man and woman the responsibility to make their own decisions and not assume the woman was too drunk, especially if he did not know her, or that “the male will rape.” Gerardo pondered how unusual and uncomfortable it would be for a male to interrupt such a scenario:

It seems like it's very unnatural for a guy to tell another guy, "Stop drinking. Don't do this with her." Even if he was really drunk... It has always been told to me, to all guys, "Oh, you should see the girl and how her condition is. If she's drunk you should back off." I don't think about the males because that's never been pushed into my head, "Oh, analyze how the guy is." So it's something very unnatural to be analyzing how a guy is, if he's impaired or not, in terms of hooking up with a girl. If we were driving, of course, we've all been taught, "Don't let somebody drive if drunk, regardless if female or guy." In those situations, I would consider, "He's drunk, therefore I shouldn't let him drive." I wouldn't be thinking, "Oh, he's drunk, therefore I don't let him go with that girl." That has never been instilled in my head by any of these classes.

Gerardo's hesitancy to interrupt a situation that could potentially lead to sexual violence was not isolated to alcohol-related scenarios. He reflected that he does not take any action that makes him "look different" to people. Thus, if he witnessed an incident of sexual harassment, it would "take a lot for [him] to step up and say something" because men might "look down on [him]" and ask, "Why are you so sensitive about that?" and these comments might threaten his public persona. Gerardo related that if he heard a joke at work, he would only know such comment was inappropriate if it elicited a strong reaction from the woman (e.g., upset, anger), and he would then step in. However, if the woman smiled or laughed, he would laugh and not see the joke as a form of sexual harassment. He contended if the woman was not offended "who [is he] to say the comment was wrong." However, Gerardo admitted knowing such comment was inappropriate because he wouldn't want that comment directed towards his mother or sister. Gerardo was able to consider the potential reasons why a woman would not object to such comments (e.g., she felt uncomfortable or unsafe, she could lose her job). Gerardo commented he "should" take the risk and interrupt such scenarios.

Gerardo struggled to differentiate between foreplay and sexual coercion and was uncertain of some of the behaviors that constituted sexual violence in dating relationships. He indicated that any threat or form of intimidation constituted sexual violence because those behaviors forced women to unwillingly comply with unwanted sexual behavior. This included

subtle threats such as, “Come on, if you love me...” However, it was unclear to Gerardo where the line was between intimidation and foreplay, and included as the latter “playful” comments such as, “Come on. Come on. You know you want to.” Gerardo stated there was a “thin line” between the two and that “women may read a threat into it even if men do not intend one.”

Although Gerardo disapproved of the social pressure placed on women to comply and engage in unwanted sexual behavior, he did not consider such compliance a form of sexual violence. He stressed that those situations were “out of men’s control” and thus men should not be penalized or held responsible for such compliance. He suggested cultural norms be changed instead.

It’s wrong that they have those thoughts, but it seems that in those situations it’s out of the guy’s control what they feel is right. It seems like all these messages that the women are getting are from their social environment... When she feels pressure from the environment, the community, social norms, that’s something that shouldn’t be considered sexual violence.

Gerardo endorsed the rape myth that women sometimes cry rape. He recalled images on television that depicted women crying rape because they were “rejected” and wanted “vengeance” or because they felt guilty for engaging in sexual behavior and want to “make it right” by believing or saying it was rape. Gerardo maintained he was aware of the influence of television in shaping perceptions of rape survivors, but asserted he could “easily see” women “doing something evil” like that and would draw on this example if he encountered a similar situation and doubt women’s experience of sexual violence. Gerardo similarly endorsed the myth that rape is forceful and violent based on media images that claimed to depict sexual violence.

When further considering Gerardo’s “issues with accountability,” he admitted he would question a woman’s credibility, particularly in certain situations, such as those involving alcohol, and he would let the responsibility fall on her to prove her credibility by providing details of the

incident, including details of her behavior and “motivation.” Gerardo agreed it was “unfair” to question women’s credibility but also considered it unfair to render all men “guilty regardless of the situation.” He stated, “Just as quickly as we are sympathetic to the woman, on the other side of the spectrum, you look at the guy accused of rape and say, ‘Yeah, he raped the woman.’ How can a guy prove that he didn’t do anything that the girl didn’t want to do? It’s hard, and therefore he’s guilty until proven innocent.” Gerardo further admitted he would be concerned about the fate of the alleged perpetrator and would potentially identify with him.

It’s not fair [to question her credibility], but I’m just thinking, if I was a male in that situation, and if I truly did not have any bad intentions, I wonder how the guy would be feeling...If the guy was not evil and he didn’t do anything he believed was wrong or was taught to believe, easily a girl can mislead a guy into thinking that, and if he’s a good guy, I wonder how he’s feeling. I wonder if I was in that situation, being accused of something I didn’t do anything wrong and believe that she did everything possible to let me know that she wanted to have sex.

Gerardo endorsed rape myths and negative attitudes toward rape survivors that appeared connected to gender role attitudes, some of which he shared earlier. However, he also endorsed the following feminist attitudes about sexual violence, which underscore his struggle adhering to two different sets of gender attitudes, one more traditional and the other more feminist.

Adding a feminist perspective. Somewhat reminiscent of the public versus private binary, Gerardo was able to shift from a more traditional and victim-blaming perspective of sexual violence to more of a social justice/systems understanding and critical feminist analysis of sexual violence. He demonstrated awareness of the impact of gender socialization and cultural values on the perpetuation of a system of gender inequality that can lead to sexual violence.

I believe that many of these actions committed by men come from the thoughts that the woman is in a lower social position in comparison to men. To most men, women are seen as people who are there to serve them and that need to always abide by their rules. This is especially seen in the Mexican culture. Because of these sexist views, whenever there is a situation where the male does not get what they want, they force themselves upon the woman.

Gerardo equated sexual violence with issues of power and control. He contended that because violence supports traditional notions of manhood “at any moment, when the Mexican male feels his image is being degraded or looked down upon, he will resort to those actions [violence] in order to gain back that power and ‘respect’ that he feels he’s deserving.” Gerardo highlighted the erroneousness behind men’s belief that they can reclaim power and control through violence.

It just seems pretty easy to beat a woman, but it doesn’t take much. It doesn’t make you stronger. It doesn’t make you better to do that...You’re not strong to deal with these tense situations in other ways other than that...You’re showing everyone that you’re not powerful...because you resort to this type of violence to get things the way that you want them to be...You have no power because you have to beat somebody to get what you want.

He reflected further:

Sexual violence does not solely encompass random women. In certain situations, sexual violence is also committed to family members such as a man’s wife. I believe there are many more cases where sexual violent acts are performed within their own house, however goes unreported due to the marital situation of the couple.

Gerardo believed marital rape was particularly prevalent in Mexican culture due to the gender norms and dynamics established by traditional gender role socialization.

I would think in Mexican culture, just because the male thinks they’re in control, that they’re the authoritative figure there...the male forces himself upon the woman, but obviously, in those situations the woman won’t say anything because that’s their husband. I don’t think they’ll want their husband to go to jail or get in trouble. I’m sure it’s really very common.

He contended that “women who abide by Mexican culture and the norms and messages given to them as children will accept that the man will be in control and will not think of it as rape but as his right, as normal.”

You get married. Your husband forces himself upon you, and just because as a little kid you thought your mom told you, “You’re supposed to be the woman. You’re supposed to let the man be the man.” Just a simple statement like that might change if you can report that as rape or not. That’s a big difference. That’s a big event.

Gerardo indicated that “more independent” women, who ascribed to less traditional gender norms, would be more likely to consider such behavior as sexual violence. Further, Gerardo believed “the male wouldn’t think this was rape, ‘Oh, she’s my wife,’ so I guess just by these labels he would just consider it nothing big. They wouldn’t consider it rape. They would just think it’s something they’re entitled to. They’re entitled to whatever they want.”

Gerardo reflected on the personal nature of this discussion and shared that he could see how in a relationship like his parents’, where alcohol and domestic violence were present, sexual violence had likely existed.

I started thinking in what situations have I seen that dynamic? With my family. My dad thinking he needs control. He’d beat my mom when I was little, and just easily I can see that [sexual violence] occurring within those types of marriages.

He sat still for a few minutes and reflected on the images he had witnessed in his home.

Raising awareness and reducing sexual violence in Mexican American communities.

Gerardo reflected that he did not have much awareness or knowledge about sexual violence prior to college, except for images presented by the media. He wondered, “What about those who are not in college, who have no education and exposure to these issues?” He noted how despite him having “talked about it a few times” he still had “doubts” about certain situations constituting sexual violence, “so imagine people without this education and exposure.” He emphasized the need to discuss sexual violence in Mexican American communities. However, Gerardo acknowledged gender norms would serve as a challenge to rape prevention efforts.

Males would think they know, they understand, what’s considered rape and what’s not. It seems most males would be very stubborn about certain issues like that. They don’t want to be told that they’re wrong...So they would be reluctant to take any classes, go to meetings, or anything, lectures, about this...I would assume that in most of these classes it would probably be a woman moderating these classes...Just the fact that they would have a woman in there goes back to the whole discussion of power, “Oh, I don’t need a woman to tell me what to do.” So, it’ll be hard all males to run the discussion about how

you shouldn't do this to a woman. Even for guys to listen to guys talk about that, they probably won't take it to seriously, especially more stubborn, proud males.

That process would have to involve you admitting you're wrong about certain situations. You being able to accept the fact that you were doing bad things. It seems like a very hard process. It's like smoking or alcohol addiction. You got to admit that you're wrong first and then got to be able to work through it and be told what's right and what's wrong in those situations. It's very difficult to just randomly get guys to do that when their whole lives, especially Mexican males, since little kids have been told this is right, this is wrong, and all of a sudden just come and, "No, you know what, you're wrong." Then getting them to change their mind about sexual violence. It wouldn't just be about sexual violence. It would be about the whole customs that they grew up with. By just having that attacked, the notion of what to do with a woman, you're pretty much attacking their whole culture that they grew up with. So that's something really big to attack.

He cited the importance of workshops for women so they can learn about their rights and not buy into gender norms or be pressured into compliance and of instilling different values in children (e.g., "sexual violence is wrong," "women should be respected") to create new norms that could prevent sexual violence in Mexican American communities. Gerardo advocated for change at a cultural level.

It just takes one generation, one son, one daughter, to put an end to it and just say, "No, you know what, I'm not going to abide by that. I'm not going to live up to these customs..." It just takes one generation to be able to say, "You know what, sexual violence is a very important thing here."

Upon reflection, Gerardo credited his more feminist views on sexual violence to his less traditional gender role attitudes. He considered his father one last time and reflected that if he had been more like his father, more "traditional," he would blame women more, never hold men accountable for sexual violence, and deny marital rape existed. Although Gerardo acknowledged some of his struggles in understanding gender and sexual violence, he believed his perspectives demonstrated a commitment to the anti-machismo he sought to exemplify.

In summary. Gerardo's gender history illustrated a son's struggle to reject a father's portrayal and expectations of manhood and develop his own understanding of masculinity. More

so, it narrated in detail the process of male gender role socialization and the sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia that underlie and maintain gender inequality. Gerardo was very cognizant of the social consequences he would face if he defied social norms, so he attempted to negotiate gender by adopting two personas, a public and a private, rather than publicly reject traditional notions of manhood. However, Gerardo became aware of the difficulties associated with juggling two personas and the incongruence that existed between his perceived and actual self. The influence of Gerardo's gender role socialization became evident as he shared his endorsement and adherence to traditional gender role and sexual attitudes as well as more traditional and victim-blaming perspectives of sexual violence. However, his commitment to adopt and adhere to less traditional gender role attitudes and a more feminist understanding of sexual violence was equally evident. Perhaps Gerardo's story and struggle depicted the cultural shift he declared was vital to the reduction of sexual violence. He is doing the work of self-assessment, awareness, and growth he advocated other men to do.

Fernando

Fernando's story is that of a man on a journey to redefine manhood and navigate the familial and social consequences of transgressing gender norms. This journey has led Fernando to a feminist awareness and commitment to social justice that includes a growing understanding of sexual violence.

Family composition and history. Fernando is a 25 year-old, heterosexual, Mexican-identified male in his second year of a Master's program in the social sciences. He comes from an intact family in which he is the eldest of three children. He has a younger sister and brother. Fernando's parents were born and raised in Mexico and belonged to large families. They came

to the United States as adolescents, after completing a grade school education. Fernando's father came to the U.S. at the age of 16 in search of "better opportunities." He joined his parents and some of his siblings who were already living in the U.S. and began working at a factory.

Fernando's mother also joined her parents in the United States when she was a teenager. As the eldest female child, she was expected to take care of her siblings and not go to school or work.

She too eventually worked at a factory. They lived in the same metropolitan city in the Midwest and met at a social gathering. They married soon after and gave birth to Fernando and his younger sister.

To Mexico and back, beginnings of gender role socialization and differentiation.

When Fernando was 2-years-old, he, his sister, and parents moved to Mexico because his parents wanted to raise their children "at home." They lived there for about six years. Fernando recalled that he loved living in Mexico, where he had many friends. He shared memories of some of his childhood adventures with his friends. They would gather their *carritos*²⁵ and action figures and play at the plaza. They would go to a forest area to hunt lizards with *resorteras*²⁶ and BB guns. They would go on the bus to a nearby town without parental supervision. He was expected to take care of his sister, help with his uncle's cows, and give women his seat in church, but he was not expected or "allowed" to help with household chores or at parties and was instead encouraged to spend that time with his friends.

Fernando indicated that already at this young age he was aware of the different expectations placed on his sister, expectations which curtailed her activities. She was not allowed close to a gun, to have a *resortera*, nor go to the forest area or their backyard, where lizards and insects lived, for fear she would get hurt. She was allowed to go to the grocery store

²⁵ little cars

²⁶ slingshots

and back or to visit a friend's house, but she "couldn't just walk around, because it was not ladylike." For the most part, she stayed home, where she was expected to help with household chores and parties.

When he was 8-9 years-old, his parents moved the family back to the United States, to the same metropolitan city, so Fernando and his siblings could have a better education. They lived in a Mexican neighborhood in the city for a couple of years and then moved to a western suburb of the city that is predominately Mexican.

Parental gender roles and dynamics. Fernando recalled his parents being supportive, caring, and affectionate towards each other. However, their relationship clearly demarcated roles as either feminine or masculine. Fernando identified his father's roles in the family as those of breadwinner, disciplinarian, and money manager. Yet, Fernando asserted his father "[did] not fit everything regarding the [traditional Mexican male] stereotype" in that he did not exemplify any "macho" qualities but rather was "an intellectual," "respectful," and "caring." Although he was not expected to help with household chores, Fernando indicated that his father would sometimes help his mother with chores if she was ill or tired. He also reported his father approved of Fernando's mother working outside the home due to financial need.

Conversely, Fernando described his mother as "the traditional Mexican woman," who "puts the needs of others before herself," nurtured and comforted her children, and acted as an intermediary between Fernando, his siblings, and their father. He described her working a double shift, coming home after her shift at the factory only to do household chores. Fernando recalled him and his sister helping her with household chores after a hard day at the factory, while their father napped. He also recalled that his father expected her to give him her paycheck to pay the bills, yet he allowed her to keep some money, which she typically gave to Fernando

and his siblings, so they could have some spending money. Fernando believed the gender roles and behavior displayed by his parents in the U.S. were consistent with their practice of gender in Mexico except for his mother working outside the home. In Mexico, she dedicated her time to her family and home.

Fernando contended that his parents shared power and authority in the home despite having separate roles that illustrated what he perceived to be traditional Mexican gender roles. He attributed his parents' unquestioning adherence to these roles to their own experiences of gender role socialization:

My parents are just products of their own environment....The gender roles that my parents play are ones that they perform because that's what was expected from them. I don't think that the gender roles that they both play are due to their own wants; rather, it is due to tradition. They were raised in a traditional household and told that a good family is raised in a traditional household and therefore they are a result of that.

I don't think there was ever a situation when they actually questioned why they do what they do or why is the structure of the household the way it is now...this is the way things are and they just accept it, and any changes to that seem kinda weird and nontraditional, so it's a bad thing... It's been set up like that for so long that in a way it seems to definitely work out for them because in a way it's more of a routine. They know what to expect. They know what to do.

Establishing the binary of manliness and anti-femininity. When considering his own early experiences of gender socialization, Fernando was pensive and stated:

Growing up, my relatives played an important part in directing me what gender roles I was suppose to play. Ever since I was little I was told that I was not supposed to cry or show emotional weakness. Feeling sad or feeling touched were just two emotions that [were] considered not being "manly."

He recalled multiple enactive experiences in which family members communicated to him, via their reactions and direct tutelage, what constituted appropriate gender behavior.

Fernando remembered his father saying:

That I shouldn't be crying. That crying is only for girls....It was definitely something embedded in my mind that said, "You're not supposed to cry." He said, "*¿Pa' qué andas*

*llorando?*²⁷ Why are you crying? Be a man about it"...You got to be strong. You got to be superior. And basically, don't show emotion. Any type of emotion is a weakness. A man can't be weak or vulnerable.

Fernando noted that his grandfather laughed at him after he had fallen and hurt himself and had said to him, "Don't cry. You're a guy. Take it like a man." These messages about appropriate gender behavior were not simply given to Fernando by male family members. They were also reinforced by female relatives. Fernando recalled an incident when he was about 9-years-old:

My cousin...had this little kitchen set...and I never would go near it because I would think that people would see me like, "Oh, you're playing with girls' stuff. You're not supposed to use it..." It was a family event...we were in my cousin's little kitchen area and we were playing...and I decided to be the cook...I remember one of my aunts going up the stairway and saying, "Ay, *mira a la niñita*,"²⁸ look at the little girl playing with the little stove."

To Fernando, his aunt's comment questioned his expression of masculinity, which for a child was hard to understand:

Right when I heard that I got really embarrassed. I just stopped everything...In a way it hurt me because she had referred to me as a woman. I'm supposed to be a man, and I'm supposed to act like a man, and I if I'm not, I'm acting like somebody I'm not supposed to be.

His aunt's comments further increased his awareness that toys were laden with gender meaning and that he and his sister were allowed to play only with certain toys. He "knew" he was not supposed to play with his sister's dolls because they were "women's toys" but with cars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and He-Man action figures.

Fernando attended Catholic school, where he received similar messages about appropriate gender behavior and norms. He reported the nuns "called [the boys] out" on behavior that was "not manly" (e.g., hold hands with other boys, cry) and instructed them not to show any emotions other than anger and aggression. Fernando also shared that the boys policed

²⁷ "Why are you crying?"

²⁸ "Ah, look at the little girl"

each other's behavior and reinforced messages about appropriate gender behavior. He recalled, "If you're a guy and you would cry, right away, all the other guys would make it seem like, 'Oh, you're a girl.' If you weren't good at sports, 'Oh, you throw the ball like a girl.'"

Fernando admitted his participation in policing other boys and providing the same messages. Further, he recognized that the "insults" used to reinforce messages of appropriate gender behavior amongst boys were comments that compared boys to girls and that attributed the transgressive behavior with "feminine qualities." Fernando thus learned he would suffer negative consequences if he transgressed behavior identified as gender appropriate by these multiple socializing agents.

Being a "cool guy," establishing heterosexuality. As Fernando turned 13-years-old, the messages he received regarding how to be a man included sexual norms and expectations. His uncles expected him to have a girlfriend and advised him to whistle at girls, call them "mamacita,"²⁹ and ask for their number. Fernando indicated not knowing if his uncles were serious or simply providing this advice in jest. He also commented that they would constantly emphasize that he needed to have many women so he could be a "cool guy." He recalled them saying, "Where are these girls? *¿Qué dice la novia? No te conformes nomás con una.*³⁰ There's a lot of fish in the sea...Go after those girls and get your groove on as much as you can." However, Fernando realized his uncles were not engaging in the behaviors that they proclaimed established manhood but rather tried to maintain the image of "cool guys." He remarked that his uncles' comments pressured him to engage in sexual behavior instead of providing him with useful advice (e.g., talk about protection).

²⁹ little momma

³⁰ "How's the girlfriend? Don't be happy with just one."

Messages that encouraged the archetype of the “cool guy” were reinforced by his peers. Fernando and his friends wanted to be like the “cool guys” at school, guys who belonged to the popular crowd, had a job and a car, stayed out late, went to the movies and the mall, and talked to girls. The “cool guys” were independent. They were “adults.” Fernando indicated he wanted to be a part of the “in” crowd, fit in, and be liked. However, his parents curtailed his activities, and he had a strict curfew, which impeded him from pursuing a “cool guy” persona:

I had to lie to my friends...because it'd be more embarrassing to tell them that my curfew was at 9 pm than telling them that I wasn't feeling well or that I forgot that I had to do this homework. It would be a lot easier to swallow that I had a homework assignment than tell them I couldn't go because my parents won't let me.

Additionally, Fernando was conscious of the “negative” qualities typically attached to the archetype of the “cool guy” (e.g., “bad boy,” “bully,” “always in trouble,” in a gang, “not smart”), which made him question if he indeed wanted to be like them.

According to Fernando, the messages he received from friends asserted that the “goal” of the adolescent male was to “sleep with the girl.” However, for Fernando talking to girls was more of an issue. Fernando noted that although emphasis was placed on having sex with girls there was no conversation or instruction as to the “mechanics” of sex. He recalled observing and modeling his behavior based on that of friends who were “smooth talkers:” “He'd go up to talk to someone. He'd be all touchy feely...He'd tell us, ‘Oh, rub her elbow. Grab her arm...’ Something about her hair.” However, Fernando was aware that the relationships of his smooth-talking friends would only last about a week, with Fernando deducing his friends were not approaching women “the right way.”

The messages Fernando received from American and Mexican mainstream media further cemented the idea that virility equated manhood. He indicated that American media emphasized the archetype of the “cool guy” or “player” and that Mexican media connected men's virility

with positive qualities that depicted men as “logical,” “intelligent,” “athletic,” and “wealthy.” Fernando recalled American media presented women as sexualized and superficial, as interested in men for their material possessions. The images he remembered from Mexican media appeared to have depicted women in dichotomous ways, consistent with the virgin-whore dichotomy present in the literature. In these images, women were either presented as defenseless, weak, victimized, and “needing to be comforted and saved” by men or they were sexualized and portrayed as unfaithful to men, as “messaging around” on their men.

Contradicting the “cool guy” persona, glimpses of chivalry and romanticism.

Despite the media emphasis on sex, Fernando also recalled that both American and Mexican media provided instruction on “how [to] be romantic and have the girl fall in love.” According to Fernando, these messages presented the archetype of “innocent,” young love, which is accompanied by images of romanticism, courtship, fate (i.e., “relationship meant to be”), and inadequacy. The latter of which resonated with Fernando: “They don’t know how to talk to each other. They were being as awkward as much as I was.”

These messages about innocent, young love appeared to have been consistent with the messages Fernando received from his father that encouraged chivalry (e.g., open doors for women, pay for everything), romanticism (e.g., learn poetry, take flowers or chocolates), and respect for women and discouraged violence against women and any womanizing behavior. In fact, Fernando indicated that the messages he received from multiple socializing agents regarding the importance of virility to the establishment of manhood contradicted his parents’ and the Catholic Church’s values about sexuality, which preached no sex until marriage and labeled sex as “taboo.”

To be a good Catholic and a good son, I had to wait to have sex until after marriage, yet one of the expectations was that to be a stud you need to have sex with all these women

and then you'd be seen as "Oh, wow, this guy gets what he wants." And that was kinda seen as the type of guy that you would want to be because all the girls would want to be with you.

He recalled inferring from parents that it was "sinful" to talk about sex," that sex was "demonic," and that he "should not do it." He recounted an incident in which his cousin showed him a Playboy magazine:

I remember feeling flushed and thinking, "Are we supposed to be looking at this?" But at the same time, just being curious...So we saw the magazine...The problem was that my uncle found out, and then my dad found out that my cousin had these magazines, and we basically got slapped down because of that, so that kinda prevented me from wanting to continue and pursue pornography.

Fernando reflected on the lack of conversations with his parents about sex during his teenage years and how he had yearned for his father to instruct him on how to talk to and court a girl.

I felt embarrassed talking to my dad about it and then I felt I couldn't really talk to my mom just because I felt that my dad would be the better person because he's a guy, and as a guy, how do I talk to women?

Comparing gendered experiences, differences between the U.S. and Mexico.

Fernando had spent all his summers in Mexico since his family returned to the United States and had maintained childhood friendships. Around the age of 15-16, he began noting that he and his friends were having distinct gender experiences. Although adult behavior was simply a goal for his high school peers in the United States, his childhood friends in Mexico were already enacting such behavior:

Everyone that I used to hang out with was already working and they would talk about how tough it was to be working at this factory and being able to have money to go do all these different things. All I was basically getting was my allowance...It was definitely kinda weird to think I'm not even allowed to work in the U.S., and they're working. In a way I was kinda envious about it, jealous. They're working, and I'm not. They're acting like mature adults, mature men, and I'm not.

He noted that their activities shifted from hunting lizards to sleeping with women.

We didn't really go out hunting anymore. It was kinda like, "Oh, that's child's play..." To be carrying a *resortera* or a BB gun at the age when you're a teenager...was seen like, "Oh, you're still acting like a little kid..." I remember those were some of the first conversations hearing them talk about women...They would talk about how there were all these beautiful girls that they wanted to go out with...and have sex with...This was one of the first few times hearing about this outside of my sex ed class and in a way it was embarrassing for me... I remember somebody was saying, "Oh yeah, did you hear about this guy? He slept with five girls..." They were talking how great of a thing this was...I felt at a disadvantage. They're talking about having sex with girls and being able to do all this stuff. Man, like, I'm really far behind.

Fernando compared the messages he received in Mexico about how to be a man to the ones he received in the U.S. and stated:

In Mexico, the idea of being "macho" seemed to be a stronger influence than in the U.S. Being "macho" meant that you showed superiority to others, that you were knowledgeable, and to a certain extent a "ladies man." But once married, "macho" meant that you were the head of the household but that you were also responsible for taking care of your family.

His conceptualization of the term suggests Fernando attributed both positive and negative qualities to the construct of machismo and that this concept shifted in meaning once a person was married.

Witnessing gender transgressions and the resulting backlash. Fernando admitted that as an adolescent he bought into some of the messages he received about women, particularly from the media, that relegated them to more traditional roles. He indicated not having "a very positive image of the ideal woman" as an adolescent, thinking she should be "meek, quiet, not confrontational...caring," like his mother. He recalled how he disliked "outspoken" girls in school because they displayed "negative qualities" he did not like. However, Fernando reflected on how he began to be more critical of the messages he received from the media because they did not match his sister's behavior or those of the women he knew in "real life."

I saw my sister growing up, and she was different...she was defying everything...and she was still able to be a woman, but not have those expectations I had and those expectations

that my parents had of her...My sister, she wasn't like [the *telenovela*³¹ female character]. I saw my sister as being really strong...It was kinda weird for me to see on the television somebody who is supposed to be a popular actress but she is always playing these roles where...she just feels weak or she is the one that is being victimized and is "Okay, I got victimized. Please comfort me." Whereas my sister would be more like, "No, I'm not going to let myself be victimized and I'm going to do something about it..."

It was weird because the teachers that I had were always female and to see how they were professional and they went to school, I don't know, it was just, there were definitely mixed signals that were being sent, and...I had a hard time trying to really make sense of what was going on especially because [the media] had their own way of portraying women whereas in reality I didn't see that.

Since his childhood days in Mexico, Fernando had been aware of the differential gender treatment his sister received from his parents. However, the disparity in gender expectations became more apparent to him during adolescence, particularly with the dawn of her sexuality. Fernando commented that his sister had always upheld less traditional gender roles, wanting to break away from parental and societal expectations and define herself. Fernando described her as an outspoken vegetarian who wanted to become involved with PETA, travel, and write and who was "not afraid to call you out on something that she doesn't agree with." He compared her to his father in her directness and aggressiveness and indicated he was more passive, like his mother, noting their similarities to their opposite-sex parent. He recalled her not being afraid to confront their father, particularly about the differential treatment she experienced, which included a more restricted curfew, needing to learn and do household chores, the expectation that she would live at home until married, and a lack of permission to go out alone with men, including male cousins and brothers, because she would be the only girl, or to go away to college.

Fernando attributed these parental restrictions on his sister to his father's emphasis on virginity. He indicated that virginity was very important to his family. He commented, "If the

³¹ soap opera

family found out she had sex outside of marriage and was no longer a virgin...she would be associated with a whore and talked about. My parents would feel ashamed and disrespected.” According to Fernando, his father would not allow his sister to date without a chaperone (i.e., their little brother) and would not consider her leaving home for college because he “didn’t trust her” and thought she would get pregnant or “party all the time, get drunk, and then drop out.” His father’s messages and treatment of Fernando’s sister appeared consistent with the virgin-whore dichotomy presented by other socializing agents. When confronted about gender differences, Fernando indicated that his father’s reply was, “This is how I grew up. This is the way things are supposed to be.” In challenging gender norms and expectations, Fernando noted his sister had suffered familial backlash for her gender transgressions, although he believed his mother was supportive, albeit inconspicuously. Fernando would later wonder why his parents’ gender expectations of his younger brother would be more lax (e.g., not expected to help father around the house, allowed to have a “rock” personality and changing hairstyles). He was uncertain if such flexibility was due to acculturation or simply tiredness after raising two other children.

Seeds of rape mythology and victim-blaming, emerging discomfort and awareness.

By adolescence, Fernando had developed some understanding of sexual violence, which he attributed to messages he had received from the media, primarily movies, and his community. The images depicting sexual violence that Fernando recalled from movies appeared to be supportive of stranger rape mythology:

It was always this female-male situation where the male was the one taking advantage of the female against her will, by beating her or with drugs...It always used to be some stranger. They didn’t know who it was, coming out of a bar, with friends, and somehow this girl was left alone, and he realized she was alone and took advantage of her.

The messages he received from men and women in his community appeared to be victim blaming. Fernando revealed that his community treated survivors differently based on their adherence to appropriate gender behavior, which appear to be consistent with virgin-whore perceptions, and that they believed rape to be a consequence that women faced for breaking traditional gender norms.

If the person was to be dressed more conservatively and this person was still raped, I guess people will feel that they can empathize a little more than if somebody was dressed more provocatively since already dressing more provocatively is distancing you of this definition of what more ladylike is supposed to be.

From what I would hear people say, when women dress provocatively they're calling out for attention, and if they get whistled at, or to the point of rape, that it was also her part because of the way she was dressed...Mexican culture is very conservative, so if you're dressing provocatively you're not dressing ladylike, and if not dressing ladylike, then you are asking for problems...“You should have known better... You were asking for it... Stop crying about it. You wanted it.”

In addition to victim blaming, Fernando indicated that his community silenced, disbelieved, and minimized women's experience of sexual violence. He acknowledged his community's endorsement of rape mythology (e.g., women secretly want to be raped; women deserve to be raped; women cry rape) and disclosed that as an adolescent and as a result of such socialization, he endorsed rape myths as well. Fernando also reflected that as an adolescent his understanding of sexual violence had been on an individual level, a consideration to something that could affect his sister, but not on a systemic level, to which his understanding of sexual violence would later evolve.

However, Fernando remembered that while working at a factory during high school he had witnessed the sexual harassment of female workers by a male supervisor. He recalled his struggle in labeling such incidents as sexual harassment and deciding if he should intervene. His discomfort witnessing those situations suggests he was starting to be critical of incidents of

violence against women despite the messages he had received from multiple socializing agents that sexualized women and minimized the scope (e.g., sexual violence equated to rape; other forms of sexual violence not acknowledged) and impact of sexual violence.

Ethnic and gender identity development, beginnings of a social consciousness.

Fernando indicated that his parents encouraged him to go to college because they did not want a life of factory work for him. However, their expectations were that he would attend community college, find a job, get married, have children, and live next to them.

Feeling restricted I knew that I had to leave town to go to college. There were set structures and a system in place designed to get me to become what my parents wanted...If I didn't get a chance to leave my family, I think that the gender expectations that I had growing up would still be there.

The imperative nature of Fernando's decision was underscored by a friend's comment that if he did not leave for college Fernando would come to think that "life was [his hometown]." Thus, despite his parents' disapproval and his mother's attempts to convince him to stay, "*¿Porqué te vas? ¿Qué, ya no nos quieres?*"³² Fernando moved away to a rural Midwestern college.

In college, away from his parents' rules and strict expectations, Fernando felt he had more freedom. Further, Fernando identified college as prompting and shaping his ethnic and gender identity development. Fernando recalled how the realization that Latina/o students were less than two percent of the student population at his college led him to "question [his] own identity" and "what it meant to be Mexican," thus prompting his ethnic identity development. Fernando shared that part of his ethnic identity development process entailed acquiring cultural knowledge he felt he was lacking (e.g., learning to cook Mexican food and read and write in Spanish, celebrating Mexican holidays) and becoming socially and politically involved in organizations that addressed issues impacting Latina/os (e.g., a nonprofit organization that

³² "Why are you leaving? What, you don't love us anymore?"

provided services to recent Mexican immigrants and a student organization that promoted Latina/o cultural values and participated in discussions on racism). Fernando's exposure to these organizations and issues resulted in a social consciousness that prompted him to want to make an impact.

This exploration of ethnic identity would inadvertently lead Fernando to challenge the traditional gender role socialization to which he had been exposed until then and begin exploring alternate definitions of manhood. This gender resistance and negotiation occurred in the context of relationships with Latina women who were in these Latino organizations and challenged the images of Mexican women imparted on Fernando.

We would have discussions all the time about gender inequality and racial inequality, and, so, at first it was a little weird, because maybe I just didn't really think about it as much, and it was more like "Okay, guys do this. Girls do that." Because I think my parents kinda had the same idea, like, "This is what a woman should do. This is what a man should do." That was what the expected norm was...So at the beginning I think it was a little tough, and basically, when we were having those conversations a lot of the times I was just listening because I wasn't really able to understand where they were coming from, the views they were expressing. It was all something new to me.

These relationships prompted Fernando to take a gender inequality class to better understand and more critically analyze socially prescribed gender roles. Fernando credited this course for providing him with a framework for his burgeoning feminist and social justice attitudes.

Continuing to develop self-awareness and critical consciousness. Although Fernando denied any internal struggles when challenging the gender role attitudes he was socialized to adopt, he admitted struggling to adopt more feminist sexual attitudes. He recalled having his first girlfriend and sexual experience while in college and disclosed he had felt "shameful" about engaging in sexual activity, particularly since his girlfriend initiated it, which contradicted the sexual scripts he had internalized from uncles, peers, and media. Fernando indicated he had believed the man should initiate sex:

The man appears to be more the initiator of sex. For some reason, if you're going to have sex, the guy is supposed to motivate the girl to wanting to have sex because the girl would normally not do it.

He reflected on his feelings about that situation:

To me it made it seem like things were moving really fast, just because I wasn't the one who was initiating, so I wasn't the one who was in control...At first I thought that maybe I had done something wrong...maybe I missed that cue of me trying to initiate it, and so I felt like, "What the hell happened? Am I missing something?" But no, she was like, "No, sex is a couples' thing. Whoever initiates, initiates..." That I shouldn't feel emasculated in a way...It was all, basically, just growing up, all these little, all these messages that I'm supposed to be the one that initiates the whole sexual process.

Fernando remembered those initial conversations about sex with his girlfriend as awkward and disclosed feeling guilty talking about something that his family had labeled taboo, but Fernando commented that it became easier to talk about sex as the relationship progressed, and he stopped feeling shameful.

The exposure that Fernando received to more feminist gender role and sexual attitudes from girlfriends, female friends, and the women's studies course allowed him to critically analyze and dismiss some of the gendered and sexual messages he received in college. Fernando recalled being exposed to a college environment where "getting wasted" was "the thing to do" and the impetus for joining a fraternity was to have access to alcohol and "hook up" with girls. He considered this environment to be enacting media messages (e.g., from movie "American Pie") that emphasized sex was the goal of heterosexual dynamics and proclaimed the "end justified the means."

Fernando also reflected on how female friends' safety concerns around date rape drugs and a friend's experience of sexual violence within a relationship further expanded his awareness and knowledge about sexual violence. Further, he commented on how he continued to feel

guilty and uncomfortable (“like a pervert”) when viewing pornography with male friends and began to consider it as a form of sexual violence because it objectified and degraded women.

Breaking away from gender expectations, struggles to redefine masculinity. When he finished college, Fernando decided to move out of state to work at a non-profit for two years. His interest in feminist and social justice issues grew, and he decided to apply to graduate school and pursue a master’s degree in social work. Fernando was aware that his decision to continue his education and his field of study would not meet his parents’ approval, but he indicated not wanting to be confined by their expectations of manhood. He did not want to be “that man.” He wanted to break away from societal expectations around gender and define himself. Fernando did not arrive at such decision easily:

I didn’t want to be told what I needed to do, what was expected of me, by society...It was kinda hard for me to do it but I had to break myself from that and basically stop worrying about what others would think of me.

He confessed having struggled with such decision, but finally accepting he would not be able to meet his parents’ expectations of him as a man (e.g., get married, have a home, a business degree or position of authority, wealth and expensive possessions), for “failing” them in that aspect. He recalled thinking, “I can’t be like that. I can’t meet those expectations that they have of me because I have my own expectations.” However, Fernando admitted that it was easier to transgress gender expectations at school, away from home, away from relatives who had their own expectations of who he should and needed to be as a man. Memories of the backlash his sister experienced when sharing different perspectives with the family further discouraged him from sharing his understanding and expression of gender identity. Thus, it appeared one of his current struggles was how to navigate potential familial and community reactions to his redefinition of manhood.

Further, Fernando confessed he was struggling to redefine the construct of manhood for himself. He indicated being in the process of learning who he was and what he wanted in terms of gender identity and pointed to the lack of role models for alternate forms of masculinity and manhood, especially for Latino males. Fernando was candid when exploring his current struggles with masculinity. He admitted that he held more traditional sexual attitudes (e.g., sex within the context of a relationship, when “they love each other,” and not casual sex), including attitudes toward dating, courtship, and relationships (e.g., romantic, chivalrous, gentlemanly). The discrepancy in upholding non-traditional gender role attitudes while ascribing to more traditional sexual attitudes was conflicting for Fernando because he felt he was falling back into traditional gender roles, and he wondered if his behavior when dating or courting women was “machista.”

So far, with all the relationships that I’ve had, it’s always been that I fall back into, “As the male part of this relationship, these are my expectations and this is what I’m supposed to do.” I don’t think I’ve actually given myself a chance to really think about why I do this. I think it’s just something I’ve done before. It’s worked before, and it hasn’t worked before, but, this is what I am used to, what I feel comfortable with...I do this more subconsciously... [and I’m] having a hard time being able to change. It has become a problem... And honestly, it sucks...

His use of his parents’ relationship as a role model for his relationships added to this conflict since his parents have a relationship based on separate and socially-defined gender roles, which Fernando denounced and did not aspire to reproduce in his romantic relationships.

To me, they’re a role model, as far as, what a good relationship is like, and this is where I have my contradictions because...there are expectations...there are definitely things that I see between both of them that tend to work but there are things that I don’t agree with and I would change, but because I only see them as far as when I think of positive relationships, I think about that, having the male-female differences and living under one structure, and things will work, and I think it does impact me when I start to be a part of relationships, I fall back into what I think is a good relationship, the separation between male and female and there are already expectations and roles for both the male and the female, and with everything else in my life, I don’t let that happen, so yes [nervous laughter], I don’t know...I feel I need to change that.

Developing a more feminist understanding of sexual violence. Although Fernando struggled to further redefine himself in terms of gender, his awareness and understanding of sexual violence continued to grow. His social work classes and work at a non-profit for teens, many of whom had experiences of sexual violence (e.g., sexual abuse and rape), further exposed him to the prevalence, continuum, and impact of sexual violence. He was now able to consider sexual violence on a global and systemic level, as institutionalized. Fernando recalled how some of the teens' stories illustrated rape as a weapon of war: "I had some African students I used to work with that were from Nigeria that witnessed their sisters or mothers sexually molested, raped, abused in front of them." He also shared knowledge of the role of sexual violence in the femicide occurring in Ciudad Juarez, México:

In Ciudad Juarez...a lot of the women who are working there [at the factories], they're being taken advantage of and not offered the safety they need, so a lot of women there have disappeared...they've also been raped and sexually abused.

Fernando reflected on how his understanding of sexual violence had grown from stranger rape to other forms of sexual violence and noted his realization that acquaintance rape and incest are more common forms of sexual violence, which he identified as "scarier" because the perpetrator is "someone you know." Fernando shared that incest, in particular, was difficult for him to understand because he thought of family as the people you go to for support and not the people who are "dangerous" to you, which he deemed "contradictory."

Fernando struggled to identify the "vague line" he believed existed between forms of sexual coercion that constituted acceptable sexual behavior and that which constituted sexual violence. He explained that if a woman is intimidated or threatened and thus feels forced to consent to sex, that scenario does indeed constitute sexual violence, but if a man is able to "convince" a woman to agree to sex through other strategies (e.g., foreplay, unthreatening peer

pressure, deception) then sexual coercion does not constitute sexual violence because consent was obtained. Fernando admitted that some of these strategies were not “okay,” but he reiterated that they did not result in sexual violence. Fernando did, however, identify sexual compliance as a form of sexual violence. He explained that women feel obligated, due to gender norms, to consent to sexual behavior, and thus do not freely consent to that behavior. He labeled sexual compliance as a culturally accepted form of sexual violence:

These women in situations like these are feeling obligated to have sex, and if they’re not really deciding to have sex, it almost makes it seem like it’s a more accepted form of sexual violence, because if you’re not deciding that you want to have sex, if you’re not freely consenting to it...I think that constitutes rape, and I guess, technically, even if your culture says you’re supposed to.

When reflecting on the impact of gender roles on sexual violence, Fernando indicated he believed traditional gender roles could lead to sexual violence. More specifically, Fernando explained how the expectation of being a “player” forces men to objectify women and do anything to obtain sex:

It’s almost like setting both the male and the female for the male to be sexually violent. If the male is the one who, or if in a particular situation, he’s a player and all you’re looking for is sex, then, once you’re in a relationship with a female, and the female was taught to think that they need to provide sex to keep the boyfriend or the husband, it’s almost like adding fire to this whole idea of, all the sexual violence behind it. You’re allowing it to happen. You’re encouraging it, and you’re not breaking those ideals.

He believed that due to gender expectations men feel they have to initiate sex and have sex when they are ready and not take into consideration if the woman is ready and willing.

Fernando reflected that had he endorsed more traditional gender role attitudes his perspectives on sexual violence would be different to those he holds today and more consistent with those endorsed by his community, because those perspectives would have been the norm. He attributed his endorsement of less traditional gender role attitudes to a college education and exposure to other people and different life experiences outside of his community. However, he

indicated still needing to learn more about sexual violence, and asks, “How could I believed that?” when reflecting on his understanding of sexual violence when younger.

In summary. Fernando’s gender history clearly illustrates how his journey to redefine manhood has been intertwined with his increasing awareness and understanding of sexual violence. He was candid about his struggles, current and past, in challenging traditional gender norms and expectations, redefining gender into a construct more congruent with his understanding and presentation of self, and navigating familial and community reactions to his feminist perceptions of gender and increasing negotiations around his understanding and expression of gender. His development of a more feminist understanding of sexual violence that debunked rape mythology and engaged him in a more systemic and feminist analysis of gender inequality can be mapped onto his gender identity development, and both can be linked to Fernando’s academic and occupational experiences as well as his relationships with women who have themselves transgressed expected gender behavior and negotiated gender identity. It was evident that Fernando would continue on both journeys and that they would continue to inform each other.

Monica

Monica’s story is that of a woman’s whose gender development has been influenced by personal experiences of domestic and sexual violence that originated in childhood and are still part of her life and identity. She used higher education to escape the abuse in her home and start forging a path for her siblings and mother to break away from traditional gender norms and the domestic violence in the home. Higher education has allowed her to develop a feminist

understanding of her experiences and how they have informed her gender identity and perspectives on sexual violence.

Family composition and history. Monica is a 20-year-old, heterosexual, Chicana-identified female in her junior year in college majoring in liberal arts. She comes from an intact family of six where she is the eldest of four children. She has two younger sisters and a younger brother. Her father was born in a Mexican border town and completed a seventh grade education. Her mother was born in a large metropolitan city in central Mexico, where she completed a sixth grade education. At age 16, her mother moved with her family to the same Mexican border town and started working at a *maquiladora*³³, where she met Monica's father. They married a year later, and Monica and her sister were born soon after. Monica's father attended trade school, became a carpenter, and saved enough money to migrate to the United States in search of employment. His destination was a large metropolitan city in the Midwest where some of his sisters lived with their families.

Life in Mexico, beginnings of gender role socialization. While her father was away working, Monica lived with her mother and sister in a house twenty minutes from the Mexican-U.S. border and across the street from her father's family. She recalled that all the men in the family eventually migrated to the United States to work, leaving the women to adopt the role of head of household. Monica was astonished that despite the men's absence the women in the family policed each other to maintain and reproduce traditional gender roles. "They all worked. Some of them even owned their own stores, but they were still holding to this ideal of how you should behave even though there was no one there to uphold them to it." Monica reported her mother was expected to follow these same standards. She was expected to work full time, complete household duties, and "raise *señoritas*, well-behaved young ladies." She reflected on

³³ factory

how “all the responsibility fell on her [mother]” during that time, yet she was able to meet all her responsibilities and show her in-laws, and Monica, that “she was really strong.”

Prior to kindergarten, Monica and her sister were already expected by her paternal grandmother and aunts to follow certain gender expectations. The differential treatment between boys and girls was noticeable to Monica even at such a young age.

We had to be quiet or had to sit down with our legs crossed and put our hands on our laps, because we had to be *señoritas* and be presentable. We had to be pretty, hair combed, clean and neat, because dirt and all that stuff were for boys, because they worked outside. We had to wear dresses, not shorts, because that’s for boys. We could not play outside after a certain age because we needed to take care of the house, help with the house, sweep, mop, care for the younger children.

Additionally, Monica recalled receiving messages that women became eligible for marriage at age 15 and that they were expected to marry and start a family at a young age, with many of her female cousins marrying at 15-16 years of age. “It was expected that if you wanted to leave the house you had to leave with a man by your side.” Gender distinctions were further visible when the men visited. The women were relegated to the interior of the home to cook and clean while the men congregated outside. Monica reflected on the impact of the behavior that was modeled and recalled how the children recreated these dynamics and sought to belong to group they identified with by gender.

New life in the U.S., intersections of domestic violence and gender. When Monica was 6-years-old, her father sent for her, her sister, and her mother. She remembered walking across the bridge, being put on a plane by her uncle, and arriving in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. They lived in the south side of the city for a “little bit” and then moved to a predominately Mexican suburb where they lived in her aunt’s basement for a couple of years. Soon after they have arrived in the United States, Monica recalled her parents fighting over money and perceived or actual incidents of infidelity on both sides. The fights would become

verbally and physically violent, with Monica labeling them as incidents of domestic violence. She disclosed there was a cycle of domestic violence on both sides of her family, with both grandmothers having experienced abuse from their husbands. She reported the abuse in her home had started when they lived in Mexico, yet it had been sporadic due to her father's absence. Their migration to the United States had increased the frequency and severity of the violence in the home, yet Monica believed they were better able to manage the situation in the U.S. because they could call the police whereas in Mexico she felt there had been no external support to help them diffuse the situation since bystanders were hesitant to interfere because it was not their "business." Monica pondered the many times she called the police as well and urged her aunt to intervene.

Monica reflected on how the domestic violence impacted the gender roles she observed her parents display in the home.

I grew up in a domestic abuse home so I think I saw very opposite extremities of what a man and a woman should be. My mom was very quiet and submissive. My dad was very strong and bad-tempered. They were always fighting and yelling at each other as far back as I can remember. It would get violent, and I would have to call the police. My mom was always afraid to make him angry.

She described her father as a "traditional, stronghold Mexican" who expected her mother to stay home, take care of the family, perform household chores, and raise *señoritas*, while he went to work, brought home the money, and did not share in child rearing or household responsibilities. According to Monica, her father assumed he was the head of the family, had the power and authority in the home, and deserved the respect of others simply for being the breadwinner, yet she contended his lack of input or role in the family and lack of physical and emotional presence rendered his assumptions inaccurate.

Monica indicated her father expected her and her sister to abide by “traditional” gender norms and provided them with gender messages similar to those provided by his family in Mexico. She recalled following traditional gender roles at that age because she observed her mother behave in that way and thought “that’s how women behave.” She reflected on how she was “more accepting” and “well-behaved” at that age due to the threat of domestic violence, although her father was never physically abusive toward her or her sister.

When I was little, I remember being quiet and submissive. I was always scared to break the rules or to not follow directions. I think it had a lot to do with the fear of hearing my dad yell. To him, women were supposed to be quiet and wait on him hand and foot. If we didn’t do that he would yell at us. My reaction was to behave as my mom to avoid getting yelled at. I would never ask to go out, or hang out with friends, or anything, because I was always scared.

When Monica was 8-years-old, her family moved to an apartment above the train tracks that was “roach and rat infested” and where the blinds had to be closed to simulate no one lived there. Monica believed her father was trying to hide her mother because he was jealous. They soon moved to another part of town, where the domestic violence continued. Monica recalled her father using the threat of deportation to stifle any thoughts her mother had of abandoning the relationship. He refused to sponsor her mother’s application for citizenship and used her lack of documentation to isolate her from her family, which was in Mexico. Monica’s mother was unable to visit or communicate much with her family until Monica’s grandmother arranged a visit to the United States many years later, whereas her father had the “privilege” to travel and visit his remaining family in Mexico. Monica also reflected on how her mother’s inability to speak English further deterred her from leaving, thus language issues overlapped the male dominance in the home.

In response to her mother’s impotency, Monica decided to assume the roles of caretaker and conflict mediator in the family.

My position in the family was always the problem-solver. So, when they would get into arguments, I would be the one in the middle. I wanted to avoid conflict at all cost... I was always trying to keep peace with everyone, just trying to please everyone so that nobody would get angry, nobody would raise their voice, nobody suspected anything.

Further, she attempted to shield her younger sister from the violence in the home.

I had to grow up really fast because I always tried to shelter my sister from it. Like when they would start arguing or would get violent, I would hide my sister in my room, so she wouldn't see it, so she wouldn't get caught in between it. I was trying to keep up appearances as much as possible.

Monica tried her best to support, protect, and care for her mother, and, in doing so, she witnessed and experienced the impact of her parents' substance abuse. Monica noted the relationship between her father's substance abuse and the domestic violence he inflicted in the home and recounted how his use escalated from alcohol to "harder stuff like coke and pot," leading to an overdose that prompted him to stop his use, yet the domestic violence continued. To escape the violence to which she was subjected, Monica's mother began to use alcohol "*a escondidas*"³⁴ and would "hide her liquor" from Monica and her sister. Monica stoically recalled some of her interactions with her mother when intoxicated.

She would get very resentful, very bitter. That's when she'd start yelling and crying, and she would always yell at me and call me things, backlash at me because I wasn't strong enough to fight my dad. I just always had to hold it in because what am I going to do. I just let her bash at me. Let her yell at me. She slapped me a couple of times.

Monica reflected on how her role and behavior in the family was congruent with the expectations of women in her family. She marveled at how she had inadvertently conformed to traditional gender norms.

Seeds of gender transgression, early recollections of sexual violence. Slowly, Monica began to note a "shift" in her mother, which she believed was prompted by their migration to the United States and new perceptions of womanhood. Monica reflected, "I saw my mom go

³⁴ in secret

through that transition. She was a quiet, submissive woman from Mexico and then turned to an independent, strong, liberated woman here...It was here that my mom was able to become stronger, more outspoken, more confident, more independent, with time, standing up to my dad.” However, Monica’s father reacted to this shift in her mother’s presentation and behavior by increasing the violence in the home, which resulted in her mother “running away” from the home for hours or days as well as suicidal thoughts and attempts from both parents. Monica recalled that period in her life and said, “So her transition becoming more independent was difficult for all of us.”

As her mother became more independent, Monica desired to be released from the familial responsibilities and caretaker role she had assumed due to the domestic violence in the home. She commented, “I realized I was not being treated as a child...that I had a lot of responsibility, that I was doing a lot more taking care of than I was receiving.” She craved the freedom her friends enjoyed and “wanted to fit in somewhere.” That “somewhere” was school. Monica described herself as being “two different people, at school and home.” She recalled being able to “fully express” herself at school, but not at home. She was mindful to “hide” the domestic violence from her friends for fear they would “treat [her] differently,” perhaps “pity [her].” Monica remembered, “I didn’t want to be left out because then I had to fight at school, and I have to fight at home, so where do I find space.”

During this time, Monica began receiving conflicting messages about gender from her parents. The messages her mother was conveying through her behavior suggested to Monica a subversion of traditional gender norms, yet her father expected her to follow traditional norms. In fact, as Monica neared puberty, he began to provide her with additional messages about what constituted appropriate gender behavior. According to Monica, her father did not want her to

wear any makeup or nail polish until she turned fifteen because prior to that age “[she] was not a lady yet and needed to be pure and virginal.” Further he only allowed her to spend time with female friends because “men are only after one thing,” but she could not visit friends’ houses because “young ladies don’t go out unaccompanied.” Monica also reflected on her curfew and stated, “I couldn’t be out at a certain time by myself because that was whorish or that would make me a slut or have a bad reputation.”

In addition to Monica dealing with the challenges resulting from her mother’s transgression of familial and gender norms and the conflicting messages about gender she was receiving from her parents, she was dealing with early experiences of sexual violence. Monica reflected on nightmares she began having since an early age and began impacting her behavior as she neared puberty. She would later learn these nightmares were based on a childhood memory of abuse.

I would always have nightmares of being attacked by someone, and I’d always tell my mom. And she’d say, “No. It never happened.” It got to the point where I was really very scared of the nightmares. Well, I thought they were nightmares. I wouldn’t let anyone touch me. I would just start wearing baggier clothes. I was really scared of how I physically looked and that if I looked attractive I would cause that to myself or make my dream come true. So I was always hiding behind my clothes...and I was always really scared of my dad because there was a guy in my dreams. I guess I made the association with my dad, so I wouldn’t let him hug me or pick me up. That caused a lot of trouble in my house. “Why not? What did they do to you? What’s wrong?” I just didn’t want to tell them, “I’m having this dream about my dad assaulting me or harassing me in my dream,” because it would create more problems. So I tried many different ways of protecting myself, so I would just dress differently. I wouldn’t let anyone come near me. I didn’t want anyone touching me.

Monica remarked she hid her body during puberty because she “didn’t want to call attention to [herself]” and instead dressed like a “tomboy” and wore baggy clothes to hide her developing body. Early experiences of sexual harassment reinforced her decision to hide her body. She recalled, “Certain people when you’re walking home they would holler at you. That

would make me uncomfortable, so I would wear baggy clothes.” Although her attire was not reflective of traditional gender norms, Monica indicated her father did not reprimand her for this transgression because it helped protect Monica’s virginity, the importance of which was becoming clearer. Similarly, Monica did not receive negative feedback from her peers regarding her attire. She reflected on how the boys at school were comfortable around her because she “didn’t look like a girl to them...but then all the girls started hating because [she] had all the boys’ attention.”

Searching for a gender identity, facing the consequences of transgression. The onset of puberty brought about new pressures to conform to social expectations of womanhood. Monica was 11-years-old and in the sixth grade when she started receiving messages from peers about the importance of appearance and relationships. These messages urged Monica to “look beautiful to get a boyfriend,” “dress to impress,” and “show her assets” through clothes (e.g., short, tight skirts) and makeup. She learned about sex from a friend who was sexually active with “older boys” and was “peer-pressured” to have a boyfriend. She recalled her friends setting the expectations for this “relationship” (e.g., when to hold hands and kiss).

Girls that age wanted to be older, grow up quickly, but to me being older was like my parents. “I don’t want to be old.” Because we came from different homes and different backgrounds, our ideas of what it meant to be older were very different. They were pretending to be older on the outside while to me I already felt old in the inside. I felt older than I should have, and I didn’t necessarily feel I needed to wear all this makeup to look older or pretend to play dress-up.

However, in an effort to fit in, Monica began wearing makeup, “shaved” her eyebrows and drew them in, used dark nail polish, put her hair down, wore tighter clothes, and started “running around with guys.” Monica commented she adopted the behaviors suggested to her by her peers because she did not want to be “ousted in school and at home.” She recounted how

these changes in her behavior and appearance resulted in some unforeseen outcomes, including a new found power in her sexuality.

When I did change and looked more like the girls, my first boyfriend at the time was, “You’re too much of a slut.” And so we broke up, and I was like, “Wait a minute....” But now more boys began to be interested in me. It was really weird because I wasn’t behaving like myself or like I wanted to, but it was like these expectations were getting results... Because I looked differently or like changed the way I looked, I was getting some sort of attention, and I was happy to get anything. I saw that it was working and that boys were going head over heels for me or that I had some sort of control to hurt them because they loved me or whatever, that I just kept doing it, and I kept on getting meaner and meaner, but more and more guys wanted that.

Monica shared she had mixed feelings about the new persona she had adopted because it was not reflective of who she was but it afforded her the power and control she lacked at home and which she craved.

That’s why I started dating all these guys. Because to me it felt I had more power or strength to be able to pick up guys at my own pace. I guess that’s the skill and ability that these girls taught me.

Further, she disclosed she adopted this new persona because she wanted to be the opposite of what her mother represented. The domestic violence in her home continued, despite her mother being pregnant, and she wanted to distance herself from what her mother represented. Monica was convinced there was “only one way to be a man and a woman,” based on her parents’ example, and that her only option was to be like her father. Thus she acted like a “player.”

My perception of what it meant to be a woman did come from what I saw my mom was...My goal was to never become her. I wasn’t ashamed of her. I just didn’t like the way she was treated and the cycle she was caught in. I wanted to be the opposite of that, and I thought that was a man and not a strong, liberated woman...To me the opposite of that was my dad, physically the opposite. I wanted to be stronger. I wanted to be the one in control, and to me those were attributes that were manly...If that’s what makes you a woman, I want to be a man, and that’s the way I lived. When it came to relationships with boys, I was always the one asking them out or breaking up with them. Or more like, “I’m tired of you. Next.” I always wanted to be the one in control. Always be the one to break the hearts. Like, “You’re not going to make me cry. You’re not going to be mean to me. If anything, I’m going to be mean to you.” I tried so hard to not become what my mom unfortunately became, but didn’t see myself turning into my dad. Damn.

Monica reflected on how her behavior was related to her (lack of) relationship with her father and the love and affection she wished she had from her father.

I can totally see that I was going from guy to guy searching to fill in like that father figure, searching to feel that love from a man that I never got. I'm constantly in need for guys to give me attention, guys to tell me I'm pretty, to tell me I'm their princess because that's what I was trying to fill, that gap. I wanted that but on my own terms... There were many boys that really did care about me and were concerned with my well-being, but I couldn't see it... If it did get to that point, I would push them away, break-up.

She shared that she experienced backlash during middle school for subverting gender norms and adopting this "player" persona.

That's what I thought to be a man was. You have control. You can go around with as many as you wanted. But, of course, that was my mentality, but it didn't come without consequences because I was still living in a patriarchy society, what was expected of women. So, you know, I was always considered a slut or a whore, by my dad, by other people, because I had so many boyfriends... because I was dumping guys left and right, because I was a lot stronger than the other girls.

In response to her "rebellious" against traditional gender norms, Monica reported her father became hypervigilant about her sexuality. She commented her father was concerned she was a "whore," would develop a "bad reputation," and become pregnant. She believed his concern stemmed from his preoccupation with how he would be perceived by others in the community and in his extended family.

Because, what would people say about him? That he doesn't have control over the *mujeres*³⁵ in his house... like he doesn't have control over the household. "Your *mujeres* are running around wild. The whole block knows it." Or fear that his family would reprimand him for not having control of his family.

Monica believed her virginity became so salient to her father due to Catholic values that contend women need to be "virginal, clean, holy, and have no sex before marriage." She noted that although she had not been to church since her communion, her father enforced religious values, particularly as related to gender and sexuality, in the home. She recalled him saying, "You can't

³⁵ women

get pregnant or else you're going to go to hell... You just have to resist temptation... God is watching you." Monica indicated that to secure her sexuality her father placed more restrictions on her behavior. He prohibited her from using tampons, a restriction Monica believed was based on "the myth that then you're not a virgin." He prohibited her from staying out of the house past 8pm otherwise people would think she was "whoring around," and he would request monthly updates regarding her menstrual cycle. She recalled, "I always had to give him an update about whether I got my period or not. He wanted to make sure I wasn't pregnant... He was always under the assumption I was already pregnant."

In recounting her father's assumptions and restrictions of her, Monica became angry toward her father for believing she was "whoring around" and questioning her virginity.

He never trusted me to be outside by myself or trusted me to do my own thing or that they had raised me with enough sense to not go and get pregnant or do drugs or any of that. He always had this fear that I was going to get pregnant or that I was going to get hurt or that something was going to happen to me, but he represented that fear through anger.

She did not express her frustration and anger to her father. Instead she set "rules" for herself about what she thought her parents expected of her based on their comments about female cousins, girls in the neighborhood, and women on television. Monica commented that she chose to comply with the "indirect messages" her parents provided about appropriate and expected gender behavior to avoid conflict. She associated her desire to avoid conflict to the domestic violence in the home and her role in the family.

The only rules I set upon myself were based on the subtle things, the things they weren't saying but I knew they expected or were thinking... clothes that I should or shouldn't wear, makeup that I should or shouldn't wear, and how I should act with boys, that I shouldn't be all over them, flirting with them, what time I should be inside the house, what kind of boys I could associate with or not. I think all that stuff that I did precautionary was because I was always trying to avoid a fight. I was always trying to avoid that my dad would yell. A lot of these things were done of my accord but not really. If I had a choice I would have just done whatever, tried all sort of different things,

but it was just always trying to appease him, to avoid any conflict, or avoid him yelling at my mom.

By the time Monica was 12-years-old the domestic violence in the home had escalated to moments of parental sexual violence in which Monica felt compelled to intervene. She recalled having to “pull him off of her [mother] when he started beating her while they were having sex.” Further, her role in the family expanded to mother and caretaker of her baby brother, as her mother attempted to deal with the domestic violence in the home and a new pregnancy.

Emerging gender awareness, finding a way out. As Monica entered high school, she began to note the conflicting messages given to women by peers and the media that placed women in a double bind. Central to this double bind was the expectation that women needed to be sexual but not too sexual, “flirty but not slutty.”

When I was in high school, the messages were very mixed. Students wanted to claim that they were cool by having sex, but if you actually were, then you had the reputation of a whore, if you were a woman, of course... You were dirty, or you were tainted, or you were easy. All this high school gossip. If you decided to sleep with one guy, it would get across all of high school. If you decided to accept that or embrace it, you were seen as a slut.

However, Monica noted that women were expected to “give it up” to their boyfriends, and “if you don’t meet these expectations of being flirty, you’re seen as a bitch or a prude or just not nice.” She mapped the binary between “flirty” and “slutty” onto that of the private and public spheres.

We all knew that we were just expected to give it up, but if we did, in the public, you were a slut. So, like a lot of people would just talk trash and would talk all these bad things if you were sleeping around or whoring around, but within the private sphere, within your relationship, we all knew we were expected to sleep with them.

She recalled some of her experiences within this double bind.

I remember I lost a boyfriend because I didn’t want to sleep with him... It became a big high school drama all of a sudden because I wouldn’t put out... It was pretty outrageous. When I eventually had sex, I felt really bad and disgusting. I refused to break up with my

boyfriend at the time, even though I should have, just because I didn't want to be known as a whore. I also felt like I had betrayed a lot of what my parents had taught me, which of course was to wait until marriage. I eventually got over it.

Monica charged the media as responsible for creating and disseminating such mixed messages and the backlash that accompanied them. She recalled messages from the media (e.g., television, movies, hip hop, rap, pop, music videos) that emphasized the importance of appearance (e.g., thin, large breasts and butt) and heterosexual relationships (e.g., emphasis on what a woman needs to do to keep her man and sexually please him) to female identity. She noted that in the media there was an "over-sexualization and objectification" of women, a double standard between men and women (e.g., "men can be womanizers but not women," "women are sluts but men are just being guys"), a sexual double bind for women, and "repercussions" for women who decide to be sexual (e.g., they were "bashed" or "trashed" in the media). She credited specific messages to mainstream U.S. media, including messages that "overly commodified" and "exoticized" Latinas as well as messages that suggested women needed to choose between having a successful career and "a man and a family." Monica reflected on how these messages placed women "in this binary, that you have to choose, you can't be both, either you go to college or you get married, but you can't have both." To further reinforce this binary, Monica indicated the media "reprimanded" women who attempted to have both by labeling them "bad mothers and wives."

When considering Mexican media (e.g., *telenovelas*,³⁶ talkshows, movies, music), Monica contended Mexican media also over-sexualized women, yet in a more "private" and "respectful" manner that was not as "dirty" or "vulgar" as mainstream U.S. media, mainly because sex was "implied" or "alluded to" but not talked about or "up in your face." However, Monica asserted that Mexican media did transmit traditional gender ideology. She noted how

³⁶ soap operas

women were portrayed as the affectionate caregivers and tireless homemakers while men were portrayed as the strong breadwinners who had no household or childrearing responsibilities and did not show their emotions. Further, Monica indicated *telenovelas* emphasized the importance of heterosexual relationships for women and presented women in one of several disempowered archetypes, all of which needed to be “rescued” by a man.

Telenovelas were always really dramatic about women having to find the love of their life so they could get married...There’s always this need to find that guy that’s going to rescue you and make your life better...You have to find that heterosexual perfect relationship no matter what, even if you have to kill your brother’s cousin or whatever you have to do.

There was the damsel in distress that needs to be rescued by a big, strong man. God forbid they think for themselves, how to rescue themselves. The submissive woman, the angry one that needed to be tamed, the bitter one that needed to find a husband. They all needed a man to fix it, whatever “it” was.

The conflicting messages Monica received from her parents, peers, and the media as well as the backlash she encountered for transgressing gender norms resulted in the onset of a long-standing depression Monica deals with today. However, her depression was attenuated by the budding discovery of who she wanted to be and of a way out of the domestic violence in her home.

I went back to my baggy clothes and my big sweaters, and I stopped messing around with my hair. I gave away all my clothes because that was not the person I wanted to be anymore...so I went to high school, and so there were all sorts of different young women. They all dressed differently. They all acted differently, and so I think it was in high school that I had more of a freedom to decide who I wanted to be, and I did become more studious, a big nerd, president of every club there. That’s who I became. That’s who I was comfortable being, a strong, individual woman. I think that had lots to do with teachers that I had my freshman year.

Monica indicated these teachers saw “potential” in her and provided her with a new option beyond pregnancy or community college. They encouraged her to go away to college.

“You can get away from your house.” That’s what caught my attention. “You can get out of your house.” Holy shit. I found my way out. I started joining clubs for my

resume, my application, because in four years I can get out of here. The only way out was college.

Continued transgressions and struggles, continued exposure to sexual violence. As she became more comfortable with herself, Monica began to assert herself more in school, “speaking up” for herself, which resulted in others thinking she was *rebelde*³⁷. She clarified that her intent was not to “challenge authority,” but she simply wanted to learn more about a situation and “express” her opinion. She indicated wanting to be treated more like an adult because she “didn’t fee like a child” due to the role she played at home.

I was always considered *rebelde*. “That’s not how a lady should behave. She shouldn’t talk back. They should just follow the rules.” I had that happen to me like a lot. I would talk back, but it wasn’t because I was trying to start something. I was trying to have a conversation with you. “Ok, you’re yelling at me. Can we further discuss this? Why are you yelling at me? I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Such assertiveness at school was offset by the powerlessness she experienced when she and her friends were given unwanted sexual attention by men in her neighborhood. She deemed these experiences as instances of sexual harassment.

Guys would just pull up in their cars and say, “Hey girls. How ya doing?” Or they’d holler and all that stuff. I’m not by any means wearing anything that should be calling your attention. Why are you doing this? So this was something I had to constantly deal with in my little neighborhood. I always had a gang member approach me or one of my friends because we were going through puberty or we were very feminine. We were little girls. I just remember at one point when I was just walking through this store. I was wearing jeans, and this creepy old guy cornered me to the wall of the store, and he was just telling me how pretty I was and how he could take me out of this neighborhood and give me everything I want. I just said, “Man, get me away from here.” Come to find out that he was the damn trustee of the town. I was like, “What the heck?” Me and my friends always had these instances when these guys tried all sorts of weird things to try to get our attention. I remember at one point this one gang member was really obsessed with me. I by no means gave him the impression I was interested, and he brought a gun to school to show me his masculinity. “I can take care of you. I can do this.”

In her home, Monica continued to assert herself in the caretaker role she had assumed years earlier. She reported it was she who made decisions for the family (sans father), nurtured

³⁷ rebellious

and protected her siblings, and was involved in their rearing and education. Her connection to her siblings was such that she referred to them as “my kids.”

I am the foundation of the family. I hold my mom, support her, carry her grief. I’m there for her...When it comes to money, when it comes to the family, when it comes to how to raise the kids, that’s my decision.

Monica did not consider her fifteenth birthday to be a rite of passage into womanhood as she already had confronted adult situations and contended with the meaning of gender. She recalled unwillingly having a *quinceañera*, and it being devoid of meaning.

I didn’t want one, but my dad threw one anyway. We couldn’t afford a big *quinceañera*, so they made a family party in the back yard. I wasn’t even there. I was inside watching TV. The *quinceañera* is about the family outing itself up, “Hey, we did a good job.” It wasn’t about celebrating me. It was about my dad putting himself out there.

At that age, Monica started working and became financially independent of her father. She indicated with pride never needing financial help from her father since that age.

That age also marked the beginning of Monica’s five-year long relationship with her current boyfriend. She indicated it was difficult for her to be in this relationship at first because she “went from being more like dad to becoming more of what mom was.” She reported becoming “completely dependent” on him and coveting his family life.

He was my life. He was the only person I opened up to. He became my confidant for everything. I didn’t want him to leave my side at all. I was jealous, panicky, had low self-esteem, and it wasn’t him doing anything. He wasn’t a jealous boyfriend. He grew up in a different household, the Mexican version of the Brady bunch. They were always happy all the time...I was jealous, “How are you going to have a better family than me? How are we different?” Why is that fair? He had all this stuff that I’d been working toward, and I still didn’t have it. His dad was always there for him...His life was what I always wanted - someone to take care of me.

With time, they were able to establish a healthier relationship based on trust, respect, and more egalitarian values. However, Monica still struggled with the role a relationship with a man should play in her life.

Monica's new relationship did not go unnoticed by her mother. Monica recalled that when she was 16-years-old her mother provided her with some "sex education" that consisted of taking her to the store and showing her where to find condoms. Monica commented there was no "sex talk" nor did her mother ask if Monica was sexually active but simply wanted her to be protected from pregnancy for she wanted a different life for Monica than children and family at a young age. She wanted Monica to have a life different than her own. Monica noted that the lack of "sex talk" was unimportant as she had received sex education (e.g., reproductive system, loss of virginity, sexually transmitted infections) earlier in high school and had not expected either parent to talk to her about sex. However, despite its "awkwardness," Monica believed such incident "strengthened" their relationship because she felt her mother was not "judging" her or calling her a "whore," but only willing to listen and help her, which was "comforting" to her.

The messages Monica reported her mother provided about a woman's role and expectations in relationships appeared to be shaped by her experience of domestic violence and traditional gender norms. Monica recalled her mother urging her to avoid conflict in the relationship and blaming her for any conflict with questions such as, "Why did you get him mad? What did you do to anger him?" She was also hypervigilant of any indication of violence in Monica's relationship. She wanted Monica to be "respectful, humble, and nice," "serve him food," and "dress-up more," and stated, "A boyfriend wants a pretty girlfriend and not a bum like you." Monica also recalled her mother saying it was a woman's "duty to please her husband" and procreate, and thus it was "a woman's responsibility to have sex with her husband whether she wanted to or not because they were married." Monica commented, "I'm sure she was just reflecting on her own marriage." Despite these messages, it was clear to Monica that her mother

wanted her to have a different relationship than her own, one full of “respect, love, honesty, mutuality, and no violence.”

Soon after, Monica learned from her parents during a drunken argument that she had been sexually abused as a child by her grandfather.

My mom started yelling at my dad for letting that happen when I was a kid. It just came out. She started yelling at him for not defending me from his dad, my grandfather. They told me what had happened, where I was, that my mom was at work, that my dad didn't believe it when they told him...It happened to me when I was little. I was still in Mexico. I was 4 or 5. I never consciously knew it had happened, but...it explained a lot of my behaviors. It explained why I was having those dreams.

Monica shared that was the only time the child abuse was acknowledged or discussed by her parents. She was uncertain if they recalled such disclosure since they had both been intoxicated at the time. She confessed she was afraid they would “invalidate [her] experience” or “deny it” if she introduced the topic or that it would “create more problems.” Monica reflected, “That’s how I remember it. That has been my lived experience. It’s my truth. It’s how I’ve gone through life.” She expressed anger toward her parents and said, “They weren’t there to support me. They weren’t there to help me through it.” She reflected on the impact of the abuse and stated, “I can see where that incident connects with the rest of my life and how that impacted my relationship with my dad.”

To her understanding, only her parents know of the abuse. However, during another drunken occasion, Monica learned that her mother too was sexually abused as a child, suggesting a cycle of child sexual abuse in the family.

Following a way out, dealing with domestic violence from afar. As her high school years came to an end, Monica anticipated escaping the domestic violence that continued to plague her family by leaving home to pursue a college education. Such pursuit represented not only a way out for her, but for her siblings and mother as well.

Just seeing what my mom had to go through or what she's going through, it was empowering for us to be like, "We need to change this." And for me, being the oldest one, I got to get myself out of this situation. I got to open doors for my younger sisters and for my brother to become a better man.

I always felt it was my responsibility to try to get us out, to try to move us forward, so I've always been the one who's been more outspoken, more in charge of what it is we need to do, organize the projects that we need to do, or be more involved in my kids' school experiences...I try to be as involved as possible as I can, take them to museums, to places me and my sister did not have the opportunity to go to.

She reflected on how she had tried to protect her younger sister from the abuse in the home and stated, "I recognize that I sheltered her so much. I babied her more than I should have. She's only a year younger than me, and I treat her like she is my daughter. So she's very sheltered and shy." Monica indicated her sister "conformed" and "never pushed the limits of the rules" their father enforced. She described her as "bitter" and "resentful," and although she did not "physically rebel," she would argue with their mother about the things they lacked (e.g., money, food) and which differentiated her from her friends. However, Monica noted her sister had been "given more liberties" because she had not "demanded" them as Monica had.

Monica and her mother provided Monica's youngest siblings different messages about gender since they were born after Monica and her mother had begun transgressing traditional gender behavior. Monica indicated she provided her youngest sister with messages that conveyed to her that women can be "in power" and independent and focus on a career rather than a man and a family. She marveled that her sister already wore make-up and nail polish and was developing a sense of style and had no household chores or responsibilities. Monica commented she inculcated in her brother respect toward women and that he understood women were not his "servants" or "slaves," and thus that "he can get his own food." She stated with pride that he cleaned more than her little sister. Monica noted her father provided her brother "homophobic messages," such as "boys don't play with dolls" and "boys don't wear makeup or dresses," but

she counteracted those messages by telling her brother that “boys can wear pink” and “boys can kiss boys and girls can kiss girls.” Further, Monica indicated her boyfriend served as a different male role model for her brother and modeled to him “what it means to be a man.”

Monica thus believed the next step to forging a way out for her siblings and mother was to leave home and attend college. However, neither of her parents was supportive of her going away to college. They wanted her to attend community college, live at home, and have a job. The continued abuse in the home is what Monica believed propelled her mother to change her mind and be more supportive of Monica’s decision.

She finally said (to Monica’s father), “You know what? *Ya basta*.³⁸ You can’t do this. You need to stop.” Her courage gave me the courage to leave...My mom’s strength and courage to say, “I’m getting my life together. You can’t hit me anymore.” Gave me enough strength to actually leave home because I don’t think I would have had the strength even though I’m sure I could leave whenever I want. I don’t think I’d actually done it

Being hundreds of miles away at college did not allow Monica to fully escape the abuse in her home as she had envisioned. She dealt with the domestic violence from a far, trying to problem solve and “mediate” situations from college.

When it would happen when I was here, she (oldest sister) didn’t know what to do. So she would get panicked and call me on the phone, and I would get panicked here because there’s nothing I can do over the phone.

She realized the situation at home was still “the same” and began to feel “selfish” because she “didn’t want to be there.” Monica wondered if she had made the “wrong decision” and whether she should have stayed at home, gone to community college, found a job, and moved them all to their own apartment so they could all escape her father and his violence. After much soul-searching, Monica concluded she had made the right decision, for, had she stayed, “they would

³⁸ enough

have seen [her] perpetuate the same cycle” so she had “to find [her] own space.” With time, she would feel more secure with her decision.

When I left, it was like the whole family fell apart. They were bitter and resenting me for leaving. We’re still trying to struggle with it. My mom has learned to be more independent. My 19-year-old sister is slowly coming into her own independence and knowing what she has to do.

When things at home became more settled, Monica began addressing issues she encountered during her transition to college.

Negotiating identity, finding a place to belong. In college, Monica found that appearance was still emphasized amongst her peers. However, appearance now included phenotype and size. Monica commented, “I was not dark enough for the Latinas, too dark for the white girls, but I was too big for everyone.” She indicated not feeling like she “fit in” with other women, which resurfaced similar feelings of lack of belonging she experienced as a child. She exclaimed, “College women are expected to be super hot,” yet she had gained weight her first two years of college, which she indicated led others to believe she was pregnant or at least “not as hot anymore.” Monica shared that these struggles with body image lowered her self-esteem and made her first two years of college difficult.

Similarly, Monica found that the sexual double standard she had encountered in high school and which cast women into the binary of “whore” or “prude” continued to exist in college. She reflected on how although it was “more accepted for women to sleep around” in college, the closeness and small size of the Latino community on campus limited such freedom.

We all know each other. Everyone knows your business. Everyone knows who you slept with the previous weekend. We were all at the same party. We all heard about it. Someone’s gossiping next to us about it, and so everyone knows your business... You become a target.

Monica soon began taking courses in the area of gender and women's studies and developing a feminist awareness around gender construction and oppression. She also began considering the impact of her gendered experiences on her definition of womanhood and perception of gender roles. She reflected, "My parents have helped to develop how I think of gender roles. Not so much as they served as a platform for me to mimic but more as something to avoid." Monica declared she "rejected marriage" due to the "example of marriage" she witnessed between her parents and that she did not want to pursue motherhood because she "already raised some." She commented, "I've taken care of kids. I've taken care of a household. When is it going to be my turn? I need to do what I got to do." Monica contended that she did not advocate a specific definition of womanhood or gender roles. She stated, "There is no ideal woman because to me that means you don't change...and that's not true. We all change." She reflected on how she had been "many types of women" in her twenty years. She commented, "I think throughout my life and my experiences I have changed the type of woman that I am. I think I have become a more independent and strong-willed woman." However, Monica acknowledged there were consequences for not conforming to social expectations.

As easy as it sounds for me to say, "Do whatever you want. Describe yourself how you want to," there still social consequences and constructs that are forced upon you, and you are forced to behave a certain way. They are so embedded and ingrained in how you're raised and who you are that you don't even realize that we do maybe contribute to that ideal woman or that you may be following these notions without wanting to.

She recounted some of the backlash she experienced at college for transgressing gender norms and expectations.

I've had to deal with challenges with the type of woman that I am when I got to college. Because I am very open-minded and express myself and stand for what I believe in people think that I'm a bitch. My characteristics are attributed and associated to male behavior. I'm a student leader so I put myself in the forefront, and I do believe a lot of men are intimidated on this campus by what I do. I have often had to fight to earn respect for my work. Women, ironically, also consider me a bitch and insensitive...They say

that I'm too much of a rebel and not going in the right direction... That my attitude is too strong, my character is too strong for a woman. People have called me a bitch to my face and behind my back... A lot of challenging my identity or questioning my identity. They ask why I even identify as a Chicana or a feminist.

I also get a lot of judgment because I don't want to get married or have kids. I rather focus on my career. People usually make me feel bad because I'm "selfish." I guess because of this I'm not "fulfilling" my role as a woman. I say that I'm fulfilling my own role and creating a new model of what a woman should be.

Monica acknowledged that it was "difficult having to constantly explain who you are, having to reassess yourself," but quickly minimized this struggle by attributing the backlash to people being "ignorant" and not "knowing" her or "the history of all this." She remarked that what kept her forging head through this backlash were her siblings and mother.

You just have to be confident enough to be able to take rejection, or be able to take people talking smack about you, or be able to confront the world, because if that's what you want to do and that's how you want to be, then be ready for a lot of backlash, be ready for a lot of people judging you, questioning you, not understanding, but if that's truly what you want to go through and if that's how you feel, then you'll accept those as they come, and if you succeed in it, then you've cleared a path for a whole bunch of women to do the same, to be able to define themselves. To me that's worth it. If I can go through this and then my sisters will be like, "Well, they ain't treating me that way." I'd be like, "Good. I did all the work."

Supporting her through this backlash was a group of female friends who were also "deconstructing" gender. These were Latinas she had met in college and who provided her with the "support to be who I am." She felt a sense of kinship and belonging with these women.

Despite her increased self-understanding of multiple aspects of her identity, Monica indicated she still struggled with the type of man and relationship she wanted in her life as well as the importance she should place on the relationship vis-à-vis other parts of her life. She reflected on how her boyfriend possessed all the qualities she thought she wanted in a man (e.g., honesty, trustworthiness, hard worker, commitment, passion, dedication) and yet she was "still not satisfied."

He is very honest. He'll express his feelings. He probably cries more than I do. You have this ideal of the sensitive man, the romance, and all this stuff. I love it, but when I think about it, you have the two opposite extremes. You have my dad and you have him. Once you do have that ideal man, you're like, "Ahh, no, let's come up with another idea."

However, she was adamant she did not want a man comparable to her father. She was certain she did not want "that."

Although there seemed to be no struggle around issues of sexuality, there was an incongruence between Monica's sexual attitudes and behaviors. She advocated feminist sexual attitudes such as women's rights to self-pleasure and casual sex, to feel comfortable with and understand their bodies, to be informed of sexual consequences and resources, and to feel "comfortable," "safe," and "free" to express themselves and make their own decisions around sex and sexuality. Monica believed finding "a partner who had similar feelings and values about that sexual relationship, about what sex is and should be," was essential for women negotiating what they wanted from a sexual relationship. She was aware and critical of social norms that cast men as "the players" and "sole initiators" of sexual activity and confined women to having sex solely within the context of relationships and discouraged them from initiating sex for fear of being "look down upon" as "dirty" or "easy."

However, Monica appeared more conservative regarding her own sexual behaviors. She shared that although she had not had many sexual partners, she had only negotiated sexual behavior with her current boyfriend. She commented she only engaged in sexual behavior within the context of a relationship, with someone who understands who she is and with whom she has an "emotional connection." Monica commented that she was "trying to be true to [her] perspectives about sexuality" and was becoming "more comfortable" with her sexuality and "learning" more about sexual relationships from her own experiences with her current boyfriend and those of friends'. She reported she and her friends supported each others' sexual decisions,

discussed and promoted sexual health, protection, and pleasure, and talked about these issues with Latina under-classmates. Monica contended that her sexual decisions were based on her goal to help her siblings and mother find a way out the domestic violence in the home as well as for health reasons (e.g., pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections). She did not acknowledge any potential influence from gender role socialization, her witnessing domestic violence in the home, or her own and others' experiences of sexual violence, which continued in college.

Understanding sexual violence, personal experiences and feminist awareness.

Monica reported that in college she continued to receive unwanted sexual attention, now by teaching assistants and other married men. She labeled these experiences as sexual harassment and expressed frustration and confusion as to why she was the target of such sexual violence.

It happens to me a lot, and I don't know what I do. I don't know if I put myself in these situations. I don't know if I'm wearing a certain shirt that says, "Do this to me." But it happens a lot...What becomes difficult for me is that it won't often be a lot of strangers that just come up to me in a party. No, it'll be people that I've worked with for so long and have known me in some professional level.

She shared that some of her friends had been sexually assaulted while intoxicated and believed alcohol-facilitated rape happened "a lot" on campus. Monica commented that sometimes women drank too much at parties or were drugged and then "woke up next to someone they didn't know." She contended these women "didn't want it [sex] to happen and it did," and they were unsure if they should label these incidents as rape since they were intoxicated and "all over the guy" at the time of the unwanted sexual behavior. Monica believed that the lack of sexual consent in these situations due to women being too intoxicated or unconscious to consent denoted these acts as sexual violence. She added that women did not report these incidents to campus or local police if they were underage and had been drinking for fear their parents would be informed of the sexual assault and drinking.

Monica was astounded to learn during a recent conversation with her friends regarding this study that they had all experienced some sort of sexual violence. She expressed surprise that despite their closeness they had not shared these experiences with each other before. Monica reflected, “We’ve all had some sort of experience with it, but we don’t talk about it.”

She pondered how personal experiences with violence, hers and those of significant others, coupled with a growing feminist awareness had impacted her perspectives about sexual violence. Monica’s understanding of sexual violence included feminist and sex role socialization theories of rape that suggest men perpetrate sexual violence to establish “power and control” and “dominance over women” through the use of gender roles that contend “this is the way men should behave, and this is how women should take it.” Her understanding of sexual violence also included family systems theory that suggests men “do what they see at home because they think it’s the norm.”

Monica utilized feminist theory to underscore the relationship between gender and sexual violence. She contended that because women are “commodified” in our society, “their sexuality is not under their control,” and thus they need to have a certain awareness regarding their behavior and environment to reduce the fear and risk of sexual violence. Monica remarked that sexual violence is seen as a “women’s issue,” thus requiring women to “limit themselves because of men’s potential behavior.”

Monica commented she considered sexual violence to be “forceful” based on her parents’ relationship. She recalled the violence (e.g., beating, yelling, screaming, crying, verbal abuse, “forcing himself on her”) she witnessed between her parents during moments of (unwanted) sexual behavior. Thus, to Monica, sexual violence constituted “sex and violence without consent,” “violent sex,” or sexual behavior that was “physically and emotionally harmful.”

However, she acknowledged sexual violence did not need to be “physically forceful.” Monica indicated that threats and fear (i.e., sexual coercion) constituted sexual violence because they denied women the freedom to make “a choice” about their desire to engage in sexual behavior. She included “playing games” (e.g., “If you love me, you’ll do it) as a form of sexual coercion, and thus sexual violence, and stated, “She said no for a reason. Why threaten her that you’ll go sleep with so and so?” She contended sexual violence occurred in many long-term relationships and marriages and associated such violence to the gender roles men and women assumed in relationships.

Many people who have been in a long-term relationship or are married believe they should be having sex because it’s their responsibility. It’s part of the relationship, but they don’t necessarily want to do it...It goes back to stereotypes of what a woman should be, what a man should be, that the woman’s body is meant to reproduce, to keep the husband happy.

Further, she highlighted the connection between domestic and sexual violence. She indicated that women in domestic violence situations are forced to comply with unwanted sexual behavior for fear that a refusal could lead to violence. Monica commented that “to avoid being beaten, you have to adjust your values.” She clarified that compromises around sexual behavior that are made in “healthy relationships” do not constitute sexual violence. Similarly, she noted that although gender norms can promote or lead to sexual violence, “succumbing” to social norms and expectations (i.e., sexual compliance) was not sexual violence.

Monica shared that due to her own personal experience of child sexual abuse she was more aware of the dynamics and impact of child sexual abuse on a personal and global level (e.g., child trafficking and prostitution). The images that came to her mind were those of “a man with a little girl,” and she commented on the likelihood that the perpetrator is someone we know.

We don't want to set our mind to it that it could be one of us, someone that we know, who has some sort of connection or proximity to the child. I'm thinking you have to have some trust with the child so they won't say anything.

She remarked that the child "can bury it and then it comes out in different aspects that you don't understand until you know it happened and then it makes sense." Monica indicated the impact of the abuse depended on the age and developmental stage of the child at the time of the abuse and acknowledged "it can scar you at different levels," if anything just being "distrustful" of others.

Monica indicated she would believe the victim and "be on her side." She reflected, "I can relate to what they've gone through and what the consequences of that are. So because of that personal attachment, I'm more prone to believe that it's true." Monica commented she would always place responsibility on the perpetrator regardless of the situation because "the victim is always the victim." She pondered on the psychological impact of sexual violence and on her experience.

It's traumatic. Something of yours was taken away. Like this loss of control, loss of power, of independence, that was aggressively taken from you by someone who felt they needed to show-off, that they needed to be in control over someone...It's really a completely traumatic experience. It's really difficult to get over...It's a very difficult process. I think to some extent I can relate to survivors of sexual violence. I think I can also understand the psychological consequences of sexual violence, and so I may be more apt to feel sympathetic with other women who also went through this experience. My reactions and perception of women who have experienced these situations are obviously influenced by personal experience.

When considering sexual violence preventive measures, Monica emphasized the importance of male responsibility and engaging "men as allies." She believed men first needed to develop an awareness about gender issues (e.g., gender roles, gender oppression) to later be able to reduce the incidence of sexual violence. More specifically, Monica believed men needed to "break down stereotypes and deconstruct what it means to be a man," develop respect for women, and "step up when men joke around about sexual violence."

The interlacing of gender identity and experiences of violence. Monica acknowledged her gender identity was interwoven with her experiences of domestic and sexual violence and that each informed the other. She commented, “I really do feel my experiences as a woman have really determined the way I see sexual violence, the way I understand sexual violence.” She then pondered how her experiences of violence (e.g., domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and sexual harassment) across her short lifespan had impacted how she defined herself as a woman and how she perceived and interacted with men. “I think all my experiences have affected the way I see men. It was never like I completely trusted them.” Monica shared that she was uncertain as to how she labeled herself. She indicated she was “definitely a domestic violence survivor” but she was unsure if she was victim or survivor of child sexual abuse since she “hasn’t gotten over it.” She considered how these experiences have prevented her from fully trusting others and sharing her feelings, opinions, and personal stories, which has resulted in lost friendships due to her not being “reciprocal” or “sharing” of herself.”

If the domestic violence and child sexual abuse would have been absent from her life, Monica contended she would have still experienced sexual violence at some point in her life due to the mere fact she was a woman. However, in the absence of domestic violence, she believed she would have “fallen into” traditional gender roles rather than “challenge” them and therefore would have been less aware of sexual violence. More specific, Monica associated traditional gender role attitudes with traditional perspectives of sexual violence. She asserted that “gender norms play into one’s interpretation of sexual violence, what you consider sexual violence, and what can lead to sexual violence.” She believed her non-traditional attitudes about gender and her experiences with domestic and sexual violence provided her with a unique and growing understanding of sexual violence and herself.

In summary. Monica's gender history clearly illustrates how early and recurring experiences of domestic and sexual violence impact a woman's gender identity formation and understanding of sexual violence as a personal and social construct. It narrates a story of personal survival and determination, of gender subversion and redefinition. Monica was candid about her struggles to redefine gender and divorce herself from the notions of gender her parents represented. Her anger toward her father was evident, in the narrative and her presentation, but the pain underneath the anger remained for the most part latent. Monica oscillated between acknowledging and minimizing the challenging nature of the experiences and backlash she had faced and navigated. However, she critically considered how her experiences with gender and domestic and sexual violence were intertwined and informed each other. The role of higher education as a vehicle through which Monica escaped domestic violence and developed a feminist awareness that provided her with a framework from which to understand and integrate her experiences of gender and domestic and sexual violence was subtle yet paramount. Access to higher education, a feminist awareness, and the opportunity to subvert and redefine gender were the result of migration. Her path to self-determination, which concurrently forged a path for her siblings and mother, was still long, and its destination undetermined, yet Monica knew it did not lead home.

Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter considers the experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and understandings of sexual violence -- presented in the previous chapter as individual gender histories -- across participants and within the contexts of gender, migration, and domestic violence. This collective consideration of participants' narratives highlights several themes regarding (a) parental gender roles and socialization practices; (b) the influence of peers, the media, and other socializing agents; and (c) contributing factors to and resulting struggles in subverting and redefining gender and understanding sexual violence. These themes are presented below and considered within the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. Following these themes are reflections on the research process and the unique engagement with participants that resulted from the methodology employed. The chapter ends with a brief remark on the contributions and limitations of this study.

Modeling of *Machismo* and *Marianismo* at Home

The primary gender roles adopted and modeled by participants' parents were consistent with the claims that Mexican gender roles are dichotomous, rigid, and reflective of the constructs of *machismo* and *marianismo*. Mothers adopted and fulfilled the role of "homemaker" and were responsible for all household (e.g., cooking, cleaning) and childrearing responsibilities in the home. When employed outside the home, they worked a double shift, meeting the responsibilities of both paid employment and unpaid housework. Conversely, fathers adopted and fulfilled (or attempted to fulfill in the case of Gerardo's father, due to chronic unemployment) the role of "provider" and disciplinarian and refused to perform any female

chores (e.g. cooking, cleaning, or childrearing), although all fathers, with the exception of Monica's, occasionally cooked or cleaned to show their appreciation towards participants' mothers.

The manner in which participants conceptualized their fathers supported the bi-dimensional construct of *machismo* proposed by Arcinega et al. (2008). Leticia and Fernando attributed to their fathers the positive qualities historically associated with the construct of *machismo* (Abreu et al., 2000; Arcinega et al., 2008; Casas et al., 2001; Flores, Eyre, & Millstein, 1998; Niemann, 2004; Pavich, 1986; Saez et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2002; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005), which Arcinega et al. (2008) termed as *caballerismo* (e.g., intellectual, respectful, caring, gentlemanly, chivalrous). In contrast, Monica and Gerardo presented their fathers as solely embodying the negative characteristics attributed to the construct of traditional *machismo* (e.g., aggressiveness, possessiveness, arrogance, jealousy, authoritarianism, sexism, and proclivity to oppress and abuse women; Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, & Newcomb, 2000; Arcinega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Casas, Turner, & Ruiz de Esparza, 2001; Espín, 1997; Falicov, 1998; Gutmann, 2000; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001; Saez et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2002; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). Interestingly, no participant attributed both sets of qualities to their fathers, but simply cast them as one-dimensional. Noteworthy is the fact that Leticia's and Fernando's fathers were absent (to varying degrees) and less engaged in their children's lives. Thus, their desire to have a closer relationship with their fathers may have resulted in a more idealized view of them. Salient to Monica's and Gerardo's perceptions of their fathers was the domestic violence in the home, which appeared to have exaggerated their parents' traditional roles into "extremes of what a man and a woman should be." The domestic violence in the home similarly influenced Monica's and Gerardo's perceptions of their mothers

(e.g., their mothers had to be “quiet” and “submissive” for fear of violence) and relationships with their mothers (e.g., they both served as their mother’s ally and protector and intervened during moments of violence).

Despite the dominant *machismo* and *marianismo* in the home, participants’ households were more reflective of a multi-dimensional array of family arrangements than “a uniformly extreme form of patriarchy” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, p. 187), which supported the literature claiming there is no household model characteristic of Mexican American families (Del Castillo, 1996; Falicov, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996, p. 187; Lazur & Majors, 1995; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Torres et al., 2002). Gerardo and Monica noted that their fathers’ pursuit of power and authority in the home resulted in a more patriarchal household. However, the male dominance that framed their families was confounded by the domestic violence in their homes, and therefore, cannot be considered characteristic of Mexican American families. Further, Monica contended that her father became more of a “figurehead” as she and her mother adopted less traditional gender roles and began making family decisions without him, thus further challenging the male-dominated nature of that household. Similarly, Leticia reported that her household was more female-dominated inside the family. She contended it was her mother who “wore the pants” in the family while her father acquiesced. However, in both of these households, fathers were deferred to in public, maintaining the illusion of male dominance. This illusion or gender “pretense” has been found to exist among both Mexican and Mexican American families (Del Castillo, 1993, 1996; Hurtado, 2003). Lastly, Fernando contended that despite holding distinct and rigid gender roles, his parents shared the parenting, power, and authority in the home and that their relationship was supportive, caring, and affectionate. His description of his household

appeared to be a blend of traditional and more egalitarian values. It was unclear if gender pretense also occurred in his home.

Parents' adoption of traditional gender roles were attributed by participants to traditional gender role socialization practices in Mexico. Participants reflected that their parents did not challenge the gender roles they were expected to fulfill or the hierarchical structure of their families (real or "performed") because they accepted those roles and dynamics as the norm, as "the way things are" and "the way it's supposed to be." The one exception was Monica's mother who became more "independent," "confident," "liberated," and "outspoken" as she tried to escape the domestic violence in the home.

Traditional Gender Role Socialization

Consistent with the first level of gender role socialization described by Harro (2000), participants' families, primarily their parents, provided them with explicit and covert messages, rules, norms, and expectations regarding appropriate gender roles and behavior. Socializing agents composing the second level of gender role socialization (e.g., peers, media, K-12 school, church) reinforced familial gender role socialization practices through pervasive and consistent messages regarding appropriate gender behavior (Harro, 2000), although some of these agents (e.g., high school, higher education, more feminist television shows) would later create spaces for participants' transgression of traditional gender roles and expectations.

Parental gender role socialization practices. Parents engaged in gender and sexual socialization practices that promoted traditional gender role ideology (i.e., *machismo*, *marianismo*). These practices were consistent with those in the available literature (Arredondo, 2002; Baumeister et al., 1995; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Guzmán et al., 2006; Hurtado, 2003;

Marín, 1996; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Romo et al., 2002). More specifically, the messages Monica and Leticia received from their parents promoted behavioral characteristics associated with *marianismo*, such as submission, passivity, domesticity, sexual purity, respect for and deference to authority, and lack of sexual knowledge (Arredondo, 2002; Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Espín, 1997; Falicov, 1998; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001, 2004; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997; Torres et al., 2002). From an early age, Monica and Leticia received direct tutelage in behavior considered to be lady-like and clearly distinct from the behavior in which boys engaged. As they entered womanhood (i.e., puberty), they were afforded a few additional privileges (e.g., extended curfews, permission to wear heels and makeup) but also experienced increased pressure to engage in appropriate female behavior (e.g., dating norms and rules that established sexual propriety) and maintain their sexual purity until marriage (Hyams, 2006). Explicit and latent messages regarding the moral aspects and dangers of sexual activity (e.g., pregnancy) and the potential disgrace, shame, and embarrassment to the family were provided to both by their parents (Guzmán et al., 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2000), particularly by Monica's father and Leticia's mother. For Monica, the importance of virginity was further cemented by the messages she received from her father that established the binary of virgin/mother-*puta*/whore (Niemann, 2004). The women attributed these messages to their parents' enforcement of religious edicts that proclaimed women should be "clean," "holy," and "resist temptation" until marriage. Based on their perceptions of their parents' expectations, both Leticia and Monica established and self-imposed additional rules to ascertain they were maintaining propriety, thus suggesting an internalization of social and familial norms around appropriate gender behavior.

Parental messages also emphasized the importance of marriage and motherhood to female identity (Niemann, 2001; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997). The saliency of a career or of higher education to a woman's sense of self was lacking from parents' conceptualizations of their daughter's sense of womanhood and identity. Thus, Leticia and Monica were not expected to go away to college. If anything, their parents believed they would attend community college, have a job, and live at home while they married and had children. This was the fate experienced by Gerardo's and Fernando's sisters, both of whom wanted to go away to college, but were discouraged or prohibited to pursue those dreams by familial messages about appropriate female behavior.

Leticia and Monica also indicated their mothers provided them with preventive messages about sexual and dating violence, which bordered on hypervigilance. Leticia indicated her mother was hypervigilant about sexual violence, which Leticia attributed to the television shows her mother watched, yet wondered if her mother had experienced sexual violence earlier in her life but never disclosed it. Monica reported her mother was hypervigilant about violence occurring in Monica's relationships with men and advised her to be "submissive," "avoid conflict," and once in a sexual relationship, be sexually compliant, which Monica attributed to her mother's experience of domestic violence.

The men received messages from their parents that explicitly or covertly communicated expectations regarding appropriate and expected gender behavior. Fernando and Gerardo recalled receiving explicit messages about gender from their fathers. Through these messages, emotional restrictiveness, antifemininity, male dominance, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia were introduced into these young boys' socialization into manhood. Although these concepts can be associated with the construct of *machismo* as defined in the literature regarding

traditional Mexican gender role ideology (Abreu et al., 2000; Arcinega et al., 2008; Casas et al., 2001; Espín, 1997; Falicov, 1998; Gutmann, 2000; Marín, 1996; Niemann, 2001; Saez et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2002; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005), they can also be associated with more mainstream and global aspects of male gender role ideology (i.e., masculinity ideology; see Good et al., 1995; Saez et al., 2009; Truman et al., 1996). The gendered messages Gerardo and Fernando received and the gender roles they observed and displayed appear to be reflective of masculinity ideology (see Good et al., 1995 and Truman et al., 1996) rather than an extreme form of masculinity (see Mosher, 1981). This is an important distinction because it challenges the claims in the literature that an extreme form of masculinity (i.e., *machismo*) is innate to Mexican American men and that the male gender role ideology endorsed by Mexican American men is unique to only Mexican culture. Interestingly, the men only recalled a few explicit messages from their mothers regarding appropriate gender behavior. It was unclear if their mothers provided fewer messages or if their lack of recollection was associated with the developmental task of separating themselves from any female dominance, including within the mother-son dyad, in order to develop a male gender identity. The covert gendered messages Gerardo and Fernando received from their parents were in the form of privileges and freedoms that were only afforded to them and not their sisters (e.g., no household responsibilities, a more lax or no curfew, no chaperone, can date at a younger age, can go away to college).

Parental differential gender role socialization practices based on biological sex were noted by all the participants, including the men. They all related that their parents had granted more privilege and freedoms to the boys while curtailing the girls' freedom and activities (e.g., strict curfew, no dating or without a chaperone, no sports that meet late into the evening) and enforcing stereotypically feminine behavior (e.g., act "feminine" and "proper," perform

household duties, do not engage in “masculine” behavior, maintain virginity; Arredondo, 2002; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Fernando and Monica also noted differential gender role socialization practices based on age. Both contended that their parents were more lax with their younger siblings about the enforcement of traditional gender roles and appropriate gender expression, which they attributed to shifting or less rigid gender role attitudes.

During this time of gender development, Monica and Gerardo also had to navigate the domestic violence in their homes. Their narratives suggest that they adopted roles in the home reflective of the parentification of children in domestic violence homes. According to Flores-Ortiz (2004), in domestic violence homes, there is an “overreliance on one child, usually the eldest, to help raise the other children, become mother’s confidant or protector...or mediate family disputes...[these children] feel they must take care of everyone else at the expense of their own independence, well-being, and emotional health” (p. 277). Gerardo served as his mother’s ally and protector. Monica experienced further parentification and adopted the role of “surrogate parent” in the home. These roles contributed to their understandings of gender and sexual violence, as revealed in their narratives.

Messages from other socializing agents. Other socializing agents, such as peers, the media, church, and school provided participants with messages that further supported traditional gender roles. There is a dearth in the literature regarding the influence of peer messages and/or peer pressure on the gender development of Mexican Americans, thus this study contributes insight into the role and potential influence of this socializing agent. The women received messages from peers that highlighted the importance of appearance and heterosexual relationships to female identity. They also received messages that encouraged women to be

sexual yet reprimanded them for being “too sexual,” thus creating a double bind for women. Monica and Leticia recognized this double bind and reflect on the thin line between peers’ labeling them as “plain,” a “nerd,” or a “prude” versus a “slut” or a “whore.”

The messages the men received from peers appeared to further maintain the sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia ingrained in the home as well as promote antifemininity, emotional restrictiveness, virility, strength (through violence or competition), fearlessness, and male dominance. The emphasis was on not behaving “like a girl,” not displaying “feminine” qualities, and on “having as many women as possible.” Fernando and Gerardo also indicated they had to “prove” their masculinity by adopting some sort of male stance or persona (e.g., player, “cool guy”), and they had to police and coerce other men into adopting the desired male behavior. The messages Gerardo received from peers asserted men should be dominant and in control and prove their masculinity through violence, which supported the violence he witnessed at home.

The socializing messages participants received from Mexican and U.S. media also promoted traditional gender norms. All four participants reported that both forms of media sexualized and objectified women and then rendered them as “sluts.” Fernando and Monica, perhaps due to their knowledge about gender inequality and oppression, discussed how these media messages contributed to the virgin-whore dichotomy. They all exposed the manner in which the media negatively portrayed women as “vulnerable,” “weak,” “helpless,” “defenseless,” and “victimized” and as needing to be “comforted,” “saved,” “rescued,” and “seduced” by men. They also reflected on how the media, particularly films, promoted token resistance. Additionally, Leticia and Monica noted they received messages from the media that reinforced the importance of appearance and heterosexual relationships to female identity.

Similarly, Fernando and Gerardo acknowledged media messages that equated virility with manhood and cast men into the archetypes of the “cool guy” or “player.” Both the men and the women commented that the media, particularly television, had shaped and conveyed to them both Mexican and U.S. mainstream cultural norms around gender that supported traditional gender role ideology and had been an influential part of their gender role socialization processes. The role and influence of the media reported by female participants is consistent with that in the literature (Rivadeneira & Ward, 2005). However, this study provides new insight into the media influence on men’s understandings of gender (e.g., *telenovelas*, Spanish movies and primetime comedies), which has not been tapped into by other studies.

The influence of religion on the gender development of Mexican Americans has been largely unexplored in the literature. In this study, the influence of religion, primarily the Catholic Church, was mentioned briefly regarding the importance of virginity and the evils of pre-marital sex, particularly for women, although Fernando indicated he too had been encouraged by his parents and the church to preserve his virginity until marriage. Although briefly mentioned, the impact of these messages appeared to be forceful due to their impact on these participants’ conservative sexual behavior. Leticia further asserted that the Catholic Church recreated traditional gender roles and dynamics, including sexual compliance, through religious tutelage and the modeling of appropriate gender behavior by parishioners.

Catholicism played an additional role in Fernando’s gender role socialization since it was the setting of his schooling. He recalled how the nuns encouraged emotional restrictiveness, aggressiveness, antifemininity, and heterosexism among the boys and had them police each other to ascertain they were engaging in what they deemed to be gender appropriate behavior. Leticia also recalled receiving differential treatment at school associated with her gender, with teachers

discouraging her from considering a career in the sciences because science was “harder for girls to understand.” Insight as to the influence of early school experiences on gender development is missing in the literature and further needed.

Gendered messages across borders. Many of the messages Monica and Fernando received before and after migration were similar, but the context was different. The bulk of the gendered messages Monica had received in Mexico were from her paternal grandmother and aunts, who policed each other and other women in the family to adopt appropriate gender behavior. Once in the United States, her father became the primary socializing agent, especially as her mother’s gender attitudes and behavior began shifting, and he policed Monica’s behavior. Fernando reported he and his sister received the same gendered messages before and after migration, but he saw a curtailment in his freedom and activities once in the United States due to his parents’ concerns about safety in the neighborhood. However, both Monica and Fernando became aware of the different gender experiences of their counterparts in Mexico when they turned 15-16 years of age. Monica learned that girls at the age of 15-16 were already marrying and starting a family in Mexico. Fernando observed his 15-16 year-old counterparts join the workforce and start having sex. They both expressed surprise as to how divergent their experiences had become from those of their counterparts in Mexico as well as relief that they did not have to assume such responsibilities so early in life.

Gender socialization theories. Participants’ experiences of gender role socialization illustrated the importance of not only the parent-child dyad, but also the marriage and sibling subsystems, to the gender role socialization process, thus supporting the use of a family systems model of gender development (McHale et al., 2003). Similarly, participants considered their experiences of gender role socialization within the larger contexts in which their families were

embedded (e.g., extended family, neighborhood, community, U.S. mainstream culture, Mexican culture), thus necessitating an ecological perspective to gender development (McHale et al., 2003). Participants' recollections of gender role socialization included observational learning and modeling, direct tutelage, and enactive experiences, which are all elements of a social cognitive theory of gender development (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Reid et al., 1995). Thus, the gender role socialization theories employed to frame this study appear to have been warranted and supported by the data and interpretations rendered.

Transgressing and Negotiating Gender

Despite their experiences of traditional gender role socialization, all four participants transgressed expected gender behavior, thus challenging the prevalence, pervasiveness, and rigidity historically attributed to Mexican traditional gender role ideology (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Casas et al., 1995; Falicov, 1998; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Niemann, 2001, 2004; Quiñones Mayo & Resnick, 1996; Russel y Rodriguez, 1997; Valentine & Mosley, 2000). The backlash suffered or feared by participants as a result of such transgressions and the lack of alternate and available models of womanhood and manhood have made negotiating gender challenging for all four participants. They were all at different stages in negotiating gender and continued to struggle to redefine themselves at the time of this study.

The women transgressed traditional gender roles both openly and covertly. Leticia openly challenged her parents' expectations and differential gender treatment of her vis-à-vis her brothers (e.g., by "speaking out" and "debating" with them), but her parents refused to negotiate their expectations or treatment of her (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006, p. 51; Hurtado, 2003). In contrast, Monica was unable to directly challenge her parents for fear of creating conflict in a

domestic violence home. However, they both covertly broke rules and began to create their own “personal cultures of resistance” (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006, p. 52), which centered primarily on their pursuit of a college education. The women transgressed expected female behavior by (a) refuting the *quinceañera* as a rite of passage; (b) ignoring and defying social expectations around appearance (e.g., needing to look a certain way to obtain and maintain a boyfriend and meet social standards of beauty); (c) leaving home to attend college; (d) repudiating marriage and motherhood as essential to their identities as women; and (e) endorsing non-traditional notions of womanhood. They suffered backlash from family and peers (both childhood and contemporary peers) who endorsed more traditional notions of gender for their subversion of gender norms and expectations. At the time of this study, the backlash continued. Additionally, both women struggled with the importance they should place on a romantic relationship in relation to other aspects of their lives.

The men’s transgression of traditional gender roles was less public and more on an attitudinal level. They both reported having an early awareness of differing gender norms and expectations for men and women. Gerardo and Fernando recounted how their sisters publicly defied traditional gender norms and expectations, but, like Leticia, their open defiance did not lead to any changes in their parents’ expectations or treatment of them. They also disclosed witnessing the backlash their sisters experienced from family and friends. The men credited their sisters, girlfriends, and other non-traditional Latinas in their lives for prompting them to analyze and challenge their own gender role attitudes and redefine their notions of manhood. As a result, they both endorsed less traditional/more feminist attitudes about gender. However, Gerardo continued to uphold some traditional attitudes toward women (e.g., women need to act decent and respectful) and sexuality (e.g., token resistance, men as initiators of sexual behavior)

that reflected the traditional gender norms and expectations communicated to him by his father. Gerardo's and Fernando's gender transgressions were not as public as the women's for fear of backlash from family and peers. Rather than risk experiencing backlash from his peers for not complying with traditional gender role attitudes and behavior, Gerardo developed two personas, a public persona that he presented to other men and through which he attempted to connote power and control and a private persona that he presented to the women in his life and through which he struggled to embody more egalitarian values. Although not two distinct personas, Fernando also struggled to communicate and embody an alternate form of masculinity to his immediate and extended family for fear they would disapprove of his redefinition of gender.

The domestic violence in Monica's and Gerardo's homes also contributed unique challenges to their negotiation of gender. Neither of them wanted to assume the gender role modeled by their same sex parent, which augmented the difficulties in forging a different definition of gender as well as adopting different roles in heterosexual relationships. For example, Gerardo aspired to be more egalitarian in his relationships with women and disavow himself of the male stance he had to assume in the presence of other men, while Monica struggled to find a balance in her relationships with men between dependence (mother) and dominance (father).

An Agenda for Future Research on Gender Roles and Socialization

Problematizing the relationships among gender role ideology, attitudes, and behavior. Participants' subversion of traditional gender roles (i.e., *machismo*, *marianismo*) and their pursuit of alternate definitions of womanhood and manhood illustrate the discrepancy that may exist among gender role ideology, attitudes, and behavior for Mexican Americans (Del

Castillo 1993, 1996), as well as the erroneousness of the literature that blindly equates these constructs (i.e., ideology, attitudes, and behavior). However, the association that emerged between these constructs was not linear. Participants' transgression of traditional gender role ideology did not uniformly transform participants' gender role attitudes as exemplified by Gerardo's continued endorsement of a subset of the traditional gender role and sexual attitudes he was socialized to endorse. Similarly, attitudinal changes did not always translate into less conservative/more feminist behavior among participants. For example, Monica and Leticia endorsed feminist sexual attitudes for others but were more conservative about their own sexual behavior. Similarly, Gerardo and Fernando struggled to establish more egalitarian relationships with women, despite their endorsement of more egalitarian attitudes. These inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviors may be the result of cognitive dissonance caused by holding conflicting ideas about gender. More research using cognitive dissonance theory is needed to more fully understand this phenomenon. Perhaps this dissonance is part of the transformative process from more traditional to more feminist or non-traditional understandings of gender.

Gender role transformative factors. Although the factors that propelled participants to redefine gender and that supported them in these efforts are somewhat idiographic in nature and visible in their gender histories, three factors (i.e., migration, economics, and higher education) appeared to have been instrumental to all participants' transformation of gender. These factors seem to be interlinked, influencing the presence and impact of the others.

Parental or familial migration to the United States in search of better economic and/or educational opportunities set the stage for participants' subversion of gender. Although this study did not measure or directly explore the influence of acculturation nor did participants use this term when analyzing their experiences, they did attribute their non-traditional understanding

of gender to being “first generation Mexican American” or “bicultural” or having migrated to the United States. Economic needs required participants’ mothers to join the workforce, even for brief periods of time, allowing participants to observe their mothers in additional roles than those traditionally ascribed to women (e.g., provider) and become more independent. For Leticia, pursuit of economic opportunities led her family to migrate to various diverse communities during her childhood and adolescent years, which exposed her to different gender norms and expectations based on class and race/ethnicity. Participants migrated away from their communities in pursuit of a college education, where they were exposed to differing notions about manhood and womanhood and found support systems that enabled them to continue transgressing and negotiating gender. Thus, these processes of migration in addition to other events that occurred in participants’ families compounded and allowed participants’ transformations to occur.

The potential transformative influence of migration and higher education on participants’ understandings of gender is consistent with the inverse relationship between increasing levels of education and acculturation and decreased endorsement and adherence to traditional gender norms among Mexican Americans found in the literature (Barkley & Salazar-Mosher, 1995; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Phinney & Flores, 2002; Rivadeneyra & Ward, 2005; Valentine & Mosley, 2000). It is important to note, however, that these transformations entailed a migration away from Mexico and away from participants’ communities, the latter of which created tension for participants when needing to interact with and/or re-integrate into their families and communities. Further research is needed to assess if such transformations are possible within the boundaries of Mexican American communities in order to discourage the creation of a cultural

dissonance and rift between college-educated and blue collar Mexican Americans living in the same communities.

Men's feminisms. The longstanding myth promoted by the media and the social sciences is that *machismo* is innate to and pervasive among Mexican/Mexican American men (Gutmann, 2000). Gerardo's and Fernando's narratives of gender transgression and negotiation challenge that claim. Their struggles in redefining the notion of manhood and masculinity allow us to witness their transformation of masculinity ideology into men's feminisms. The juxtaposition of their alternate and organic gender development processes with the more static notions of manhood exemplified by their fathers illustrate the multiple masculinities that exist among Mexican American men. These differing masculinities are not isolated to Mexican American men, but also visible transculturally among men in Mexico (Gutmann, 1997, 2000).

Interestingly, Gerardo and Fernando credited their burgeoning feminisms to the non-traditional Latinas in their lives who openly subverted traditional notions of femininity and valiantly weathered the accompanying backlash and have served as their guides and allies in their subversion and redefinition of manhood. More research is needed to further understand the factors that propel men to challenge their male privilege and pursue nontraditional gender identities that cultivate men's feminisms.

Adopting Feminist Attitudes Toward Sexual Violence

The process of adopting more feminist attitudes about sexual violence was in many ways parallel to participants' processes of gender development and oftentimes intersected with their experiences of gender. When considering the origins of participants' understandings of sexual violence, Leticia, Gerardo, and Fernando indicated their awareness of sexual violence

commenced at college. Prior to college, they reported receiving messages from the media and their communities that conveyed and encouraged the adoption of rape mythology (e.g., stranger rape myth, victim blaming, women deserve to be raped, women cry rape). All three indicated having endorsed rape mythology prior to developing more awareness on the issue. Two of them continued to struggle to reject some of those messages at the time of this study. Interestingly, although participants had been critical about and rejected media messages supportive of traditional gender roles, they had accepted and endorsed media messages that promoted a more conservative understanding of sexual violence. Their narratives suggested that they were not exposed to alternate discourses about sexual violence until college, which is when they encountered conflicting messages that forced them to question and challenge the messages they had been socialized to believe regarding sexual violence. Monica received similar messages from the media and her community; however, her understanding of sexual violence was further shaped by her own experiences of lived and witnessed sexual violence (e.g., child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, marital rape in the home).

As a result, there were varying degrees of rape myth acceptance among participants. No one endorsed the myth that some women deserve or secretly want to be raped. Three of them disbelieved the myth that women sometimes cry rape, but they still allowed for it to be true. Gerardo, however, fully endorsed this myth and attributed the likelihood of this situation (i.e., women cry rape) to images he had been exposed to by the media. Similarly, the media played a role in Gerardo's and Leticia's endorsement of the stranger myth (i.e., rape is committed by a stranger versus an individual known by the victim) and in Leticia's endorsement of additional rape mythology and traditional attitudes about rape, thus suggesting the power of the media in shaping attitudes about sexual violence. Everyone except Gerardo indicated they would never

blame the victim or doubt her credibility. Gerardo believed credibility was based on the situation and the woman's behavior and motivation (e.g., alcohol) at the time of the incident.

Participants' exposure to issues of sexual violence during college had allowed them to begin developing a more feminist/less conservative understanding of sexual violence. Rather than reducing the construct of sexual violence to rape, all four participants defined sexual violence as a continuum of unwanted sexual behaviors with varying levels of severity. They included sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and examples of both non-normative (e.g., stranger rape, child sexual abuse) and normative rape (e.g., marital rape, alcohol-facilitated sexual assault in college settings) along this continuum, which was consistent with the expanded conceptualization of sexual violence utilized to frame this study. However, while they all condemned the influence of gender norms and expectations on women's consent to unwanted sexual behavior, only Fernando believed sexual compliance constituted sexual violence. Monica and Leticia indicated they knew women who had experienced an alcohol-facilitated sexual assault on campus, and they shared how these women struggled to label their experiences of unwanted sexual behavior as rape because those experiences, primarily hook-ups, were inconsistent with their rape scripts (see literature review; Littleton et al, 2009). Leticia and Monica noted the lack of consent in these situations and asserted that such experiences did constitute rape, were all too common, and were not reported or discussed on campus. Monica and Gerardo associated marital rape with the domestic violence and alcoholism they had witnessed in their homes.

To varying degrees, all four participants engaged in a critical analysis of sexual violence. Gerardo and Monica were able to engage in a social justice and feminist analysis of sexual violence that considered the impact of constructs such as power and privilege, male dominance,

and gender inequality on the incidence and impact of sexual violence, which is consistent with the feminist and sociocultural theories of sexual violence used to frame this study. They both believed that the engagement of men as allies to women and the deconstruction and redefinition of gender would reduce the incidence of heterosexual expressions of sexual violence. Fernando was able to consider sexual violence on a systemic and global level. Leticia demanded that institutions (e.g., school, workplace, church) play a role in effecting change around gender norms and expectations and male-female dynamics. They all believed change was needed at a cultural, institutional, interpersonal, and personal level and thus required the commitment of all. Their acknowledgement that sexual violence is legitimized by gender roles and scripts that establish adversarial gender dynamics was also consistent with feminist and sociocultural theories of sexual violence.

Fernando and Gerardo identified some of the struggles they encountered in being allies to women and further addressing sexual violence. They both shared instances in which they had struggled to step in and be allies to women in cases of sexual harassment. They initially rationalized their inaction by stating they were concerned about making incorrect assumptions regarding the undesired nature of the comments they witnessed and about speaking for the women involved. However, they later confessed knowing such behavior was inappropriate, and they acknowledged that their concern about stepping-in was fear it would threaten the male stance or persona they assumed when in the company of other men. Thus, the struggles that prevented Gerardo and Fernando from engaging in more supportive behaviors toward women in situations of sexual violence were related to their challenges negotiating and redefining gender. Gerardo and Fernando also shared that they sometimes struggled to differentiate between foreplay and sexual coercion because the behaviors involved (e.g., men as initiators, male

persistence, token resistance) were consistent with the sexual scripts they had been socialized to follow rather than scripts indicative of sexual violence, which are struggles men have been found to consistently cite in studies (Littleton and Axsom, 2003).

Overall, all four participants held more feminist/less conservative views about sexual violence. However, Gerardo did endorse more conservative attitudes than the other three participants and the inconsistencies in his understanding of sexual violence, as with gender, were visible. A relationship appeared to exist between his increased endorsement of rape mythology and of rape-supportive attitudes and his endorsement of masculinity ideology, which is consistent with the literature (Good et al., 1995; Truman et al., 1996).

Participants attributed their perspectives on sexual violence to education (e.g., college rape education workshops), experiences with sexual violence (e.g., self and significant others), the media (provided more conservative attitudes), and social norms (provided more conservative attitudes). They expressed concern about people in their communities who were unable to attend college and therefore were not exposed to different perspectives on sexual violence. As with gender development, more research is needed to understand how traditional attitudes about sexual violence in participants' communities can be shifted without the transformative potential of higher education.

In considering the relationship between gender roles and sexual violence, participants contended that traditional gender roles established male-female dynamics that encouraged and allowed sexual violence to occur. More so, they asserted that traditional gender roles were used to blame women for their experiences of unwanted sexual behavior. Lastly, they maintained that gender norms and sexual scripts influenced how Mexican American communities defined and understood sexual violence.

When reflecting on the influence of their experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understandings of sexual violence, participants indicated they held less conservative views about sexual violence because they held less traditional gender role attitudes. They believed that had they endorsed more traditional gender role attitudes their perspectives about sexual violence would be similar to those of their communities, which they described as more conservative.

Reflections on the Research Process

The knowledge Leticia, Gerardo, Fernando, Monica, and I co-created and that I narrated in these pages is invaluable to several fields of study. However, the research process and my relationship with participants were invaluable to me as a feminist researcher and as a Mexican American woman. I was astounded by the safety and trust we were able to create within the research relationship, which allowed participants to disclose such intimate, painful, and/or shameful experiences as child sexual abuse and sexual harassment; domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicidality in the family; the longing for deeper relationships with others, primarily parents; past and current struggles in adopting more feminist/less conservative perspectives about gender and sexual violence; the backlash experienced from family and peers; the policing of others' behavior; the identification with men who may perpetrate sexual violence; and the inaction to end violence against women. The interviews were intense, full of memories and emotions participants had never disclosed or allowed themselves to fully experience. They oscillated between semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and time-limited counseling sessions. There were tears (it was strange to have someone cry in their first interview), sadness, disappointment, longing, and anger, but also laughter and hope. Many times

I found myself weaving some of the clinical skills I use as a therapist (e.g., reflecting, summarizing, empathy, interpersonal processes) into my interviewing and facilitation skills as a researcher. Similar to the resulting narratives, my relationship with participants became rich and multidimensional.

Many of the experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation that the women shared resonated with my own, and it was sometimes difficult to confine my shared experiences to my reflexivity journal rather than claim part of the discourse we were creating around these topics and find some validation and further insight into myself. It was fascinating to listen to male experiences of gender role socialization because, as a woman, you can only observe and critically analyze male privilege and displays of manhood, but you do not have access to the experiential component of manhood and to the internal struggles men face in navigating gender. I felt I was being let inside “the other’s” world, like I was being allowed to know some of the inner workings of what it’s like to be male. I soon became aware of some of my assumptions and stereotypes about the opposite sex and the influence of the media on my preconceptions. It felt like a parallel process. One of my assumptions was that the women would be more aware and critical about their gendered experiences and identity. However, it was the men who engaged in a deeper and more critical examination of themselves as gendered, both inside and outside the research relationship (e.g., they would examine their behavior between interviews and reflect on the topics discussed). Included in such gender analysis were conversations about what it felt for them to be engaging in such analysis with a woman. They both reflected it was easier to discuss these topics with a woman rather than a man because they did not have to assume a male stance and therefore could be more candid and authentic in their presentation and perspectives. In contrast, the women did not reflect on any commonality based on gender.

Another noteworthy reflection is on having as a participant someone with whom you already have a relationship in another capacity. I was surprised to learn such intimate and painful details of Monica's life. Such information placed into context her emotional distance and tough exterior. Our research relationship added another layer to our relationship, but did not redefine it. I am accustomed to having dual relationships with people (e.g., counseling vs. outreach, research vs. outreach) and feel I navigate them well. However, for a researcher unaccustomed to dual relationships, managing this additional information may prove more challenging.

Contributions and Limitations of the Study

The contributions of this study include additional knowledge and insight into (a) some of the gender role socialization practices and gender development processes of Mexican Americans, (b) the transgression of traditional gender role ideology and negotiation of gender among Mexican American men and women, (c) Mexican American perspectives on sexual violence, and (d) the influence of Mexican American experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation on their understanding of sexual violence. This study challenges the prevalence, pervasiveness, and rigidity historically attributed to traditional Mexican gender role ideology and the equating of gender role ideology with gender role attitudes and behavior present in some of the existing literature. Further, this study considers the impact of migration and education on gender role socialization and negotiation.

This study has some limitations. The narratives presented in this study are the product of my sample, methods, and theoretical framework. The gender histories that were co-created and narrated are only part of the grand collection of experiences, stories, and narratives about gender

and sexual violence present amongst Mexican Americans in the United States. I am not suggesting these stories represent or are generalizable to all Mexican Americans.

This study did not employ a random sample, but rather, participants self-selected for the study based on their interest in exploring their experiences of gender role socialization and gender development. The small sample of four participants was comprised of first generation, college educated, working class Mexican Americans in the Midwest. Further research needs to be conducted with a larger sample of randomly selected individuals of differing education, acculturation, and socioeconomic levels, generational status (from recent immigrants to multiple generations in the United States), and geographical regions. Also, this study only included the experiences of heterosexual-identified individuals. Further research needs to be conducted with Mexican Americans who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgendered to obtain more insight into their experiences of gender role socialization and of adherence or negotiation.

The life history methods employed in this study relied on participants' recollections and recreations of past events. Potential disadvantages to this method are memory lapses and difficulties recalling what was taught and by whom. Further research can include perspectives from various family members, peers, or other socializing agents (e.g., teachers) to complete, corroborate, and deepen the data. Artifacts (e.g., photos, videos, journals, yearbooks, etc.) can be used to elicit additional memories that can help to more fully and accurately recreate participants' gender histories.

Lastly, this study was framed by feminist, sociocultural, and sex role socialization theories of rape. Although participants were unaware of this framework, I did give primacy to emerging data that supported these theories and used a feminist lens in analyzing and braiding the emerging knowledge. However, participants were included in the analysis of their

experiences and production of knowledge and corroborated my interpretations and analyses. I also used reflexivity memos to document my assumptions and biases during the research process and reflected on how they could be impacting my process of gathering, combing, and braiding the data. However, the use of this framework may have still influenced this study's findings. Thus, further research is needed to corroborate the findings and/or use of these theories when considering Mexican Americans' experiences of gender role socialization and negotiation and the influence of those experiences on their understanding of sexual violence.

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Appendix A
Screening Form

Date of screening: ____/____/____

Code: _____

Verbal consent to participate in screening: Provided Refused

Gender: Male Female Other _____ Age: _____

Ethnic identification: Mexican American Mexican Mexicana/o Chicana/o
 Other _____

Sexual orientation: Heterosexual Other

Are you available for five interviews and five weeks of journal writing? Yes No

Do you consent to having the interviews audiotaped? Yes No

Can you tell me a little bit about your interest in this study?
Interested in engaging in the research process? Yes No

Can you tell me a little bit about where you grew up?
Some schooling and upbringing in Mexico? Yes No
All schooling and upbringing in the U.S.? Yes No

Since telling stories about your life is a part of this study, could you tell me about some event that happened in your family that you think was interesting?

Pick a person in this story and ask: How do you think X experienced this event you just told me about? Would anyone have seen this event differently?

Basic critical thinking skills? Yes No Basic storytelling skills? Yes No

Meets inclusion criteria? Yes No Disposition: Exclude Include Wait List

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Interview 1: Family composition, history, and gender roles and dynamics

Provide information about the topics to be addressed in the study.

Provide information on participant's role (e.g., participate in five interviews and five weeks of journaling, the verification and negotiation of emerging results).

Provide information about interview logistics (e.g., length, tape recording, check-ins at the beginning and end of each interview, collection of journals at the beginning of each interview).

Provide information related to the research process (e.g., confidentiality, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to refuse to answer particular questions or discontinue their participation, potential risks and benefits, compensation).

Obtain informed consent and provide copy for their records.

Interview questions:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your family? For example, who makes up your family? What are their educational backgrounds and current occupations? Where do they live?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood? For example, where were you born? Where did you grow up? Are there any memories or stories that particularly come to mind when you think about growing up in X?
- When did your family immigrate to the United States? Can you tell me a little bit about how that decision was made and about the process of immigrating to the US, whatever feels comfortable for you to share? [Be aware that comfort level and sensitivity are particularly important if their family is here illegally or if there is some shame around stories of migration.] Can you tell me a little bit about how things changed in your family after they migrated to the US (e.g., was there a shift in family composition, dynamics, or roles)? [Be aware that if the participant's family has been in the US for several generations the participant may not know details of their family's migration stories.]
- Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' relationship? For example, what are their roles and responsibilities in the relationship and family (e.g., who does what in terms of parenting, household work, money management, etc.)? Whose job takes precedence or is more important than the other's? How was that determined? Who has the power, authority, and prestige in the family? How was that determined?

- How do you think your mother models gendered behavior? Your father? What do you consider to be gendered behavior? How do you define or recognize such behavior?

Check in with participant to identify and address any discomfort or distress resulting from interview.

Interview 2: Gender role socialization

Provide a summary of last week's interview and some of the themes that emerged.

Ask participant for feedback on the accuracy and completeness of these themes. Engage participant in analysis process.

Collect journal entries for the past week.

Interview questions:

- What messages did you receive from your parents about how to be a man/woman? What did your parents teach you about how boys and girls should behave? About what it means to be a man or a woman? These messages could have been verbal statements, rules, or unspoken expectations. (These messages can be about appropriate dress/appearance, toys/play, activities, roles, chores/responsibilities, behaviors, or attributes). [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did they give your siblings about how to be a man/woman? Were they the same or different messages? What type of gendered behavior did you see your siblings display? What type of messages did your siblings give you about how to be a man/woman? About how boys and girls should behave? Were their behaviors consistent with the messages they were giving you? How did they model gendered behavior? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from friends/peers about how to be a man/woman? About how boys and girls should behave? Were their behaviors consistent with the messages they were giving you? How did they model gendered behavior? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from mainstream culture about how to be a man/woman? About how boys and girls should behave? From Mexican culture (e.g., quinceañera)? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from the media (e.g., TV, movies, music, internet, gaming, advertising, magazines, and newspapers) about how to be a man/woman? About how boys and girls should behave? [Address each form of media separately.] Can you tell me about a character or figure from TV or the movies that you liked and related to growing up? Was

that character an image of the ideal man/woman for you? Did you see that character as a role model? Who were your role models/heroes? How about now? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]

- Did you receive any messages about how to be a man/woman in school, church, the military, or sports? About how boys and girls should behave? What were some of these messages? Who would you see modeling this behavior? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What do you think defines a man? A woman? What is the ideal man? The ideal woman? How should they behave? What should be their roles, within relationships and in society? Do you think there are other ways of defining and/or being a man or a woman? [Note and discuss any inconsistencies between their definitions and perspectives and the messages they received from various socializing agents.]
- How well do you meet your definition of a man/woman? How have you had to negotiate the messages you received growing up on how to be a man/woman and your own thoughts, beliefs, and desires to create your own gender identity? [Note and discuss any inconsistencies between messages received and personal beliefs and desires.] How have others (e.g., parents, sibling, family, friends/peers) responded to the gender roles and behaviors you have decided to adopt (e.g., social sanctions/punishment, incentives/rewards, positive or negative reinforcement; including affective reactions and evaluative comments)? Have you wanted to challenge some of the messages you received growing up and adopt a different set of gender roles and behaviors but have not done so because you are concerned of negative consequences? How do you know these might be some of the consequences? How is the threat of these consequences communicated?

Check in with participant to identify and address any discomfort or distress resulting from interview.

Interview 3: Sexual Socialization

Provide a summary of last week's interview and some of the themes that emerged from that interview.

Ask participant for feedback on the accuracy and completeness of these themes. Engage participant in analysis process.

Collect journal entries for the past week.

Interview questions:

- What messages did you receive from your parents about sexuality, specifically about dating, courtship, and sex? What did they teach you about how men and women are expected to

behave in dating and sexual situations? What were their expectations as to how you should behave (e.g., appropriate age, gender, rules, roles, behaviors)? Remember, these could have been verbal statements, rules, or unspoken expectations. (These messages could be about virginity, promiscuity, birth control/pregnancy, image/reputation, family disgrace, shame, and embarrassment.) How did your parents react to your emerging sexuality (e.g., body changes, changes in appearance/dress, dating)? Did they make any rules or restrictions around issues of sexuality? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]

- What messages and restrictions did they give your siblings around issues of sexuality? Were they the same or different? What type of sexual behavior did you see your siblings display? What type of messages did your siblings give you around issues of sexuality? About how men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? Were their behaviors consistent with the messages they were giving you? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from friends/peers around issues of sexuality? About how men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? Were their behaviors consistent with the messages they were giving you? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from mainstream culture around issues of sexuality? About how men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? From Mexican culture (e.g., issues of virginity and purity)? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- What messages did you receive from the media (e.g., TV, movies, music, internet, gaming, advertising, magazines, and newspapers) around issues of sexuality? About how men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? [Address each form of media separately. Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- Did you receive any messages around issues of sexuality at school, church, the military, or sports? About how men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? What were some of these messages? Who would you see modeling this behavior? [Pay attention to and comment on any contradictory messages or behaviors.]
- How do you think men and women should behave in dating and sexual situations? What should their roles be in those situations? Should men and women follow different scripts and engage in different behaviors? How would these behaviors be different or the same? Consider: At what age do you think it is appropriate for men to have sex? For women? What should be the context of sex for men (e.g., relationship, hook-up, paid)? For women? What is the appropriate gender of men's sexual partners? Of women's sexual partners? Why should men engage in sex? Why should women engage in sex? Who should initiate sex? What should be the outcome of sex for men? For women? [Note and discuss any inconsistencies between their definitions and perspectives and the messages they received from various socializing agents.]

The remaining questions may be of a more personal nature. Remind participant they are not required to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable and that their stipend will not be jeopardized if they choose not to answer some of these questions.

- What is your assessment of your level of knowledge and comfort with sexuality? How have you navigated and negotiated dating situations? Can you give me some examples of some of your dating experiences? How have you negotiated sexual encounters and behaviors? Can you talk a little about how you have made decisions around issues of sexuality and what some of your experiences have been, whatever feels comfortable for you to share?
- How have you had to negotiate the messages you received growing up around issues of sexuality and your own thoughts, beliefs, and desires to create your own sexual identity? [Note and discuss any inconsistencies between messages received and personal beliefs and desires.] How have others (e.g., parents, sibling, family, friends/peers) responded to the sexual roles and behaviors you have decided to adopt (e.g., social sanctions/punishment, incentives/rewards, positive or negative reinforcement; including affective reactions and evaluative comments)? Have you wanted to challenge some of the messages you received growing up and adopt a different set of sexual roles and behaviors but have not done so because you are concerned of negative consequences? How do you know these might be some of the consequences? How is the threat of these consequences communicated?

Check in with participant to identify and address any discomfort or distress resulting from interview.

Interview 4: Understandings and reactions to sexual violence

Provide a summary of last week's interview and some of the themes that emerged from that interview.

Ask participant for feedback on the accuracy and completeness of these themes. Engage participant in analysis process.

Collect journal entries for the past week.

Interview questions:

- When I say the term "sexual violence," what comes to mind?
- How would you define sexual violence?
- What scenarios and behaviors do you think constitute sexual violence? [Explore, in detail, the scenarios and behaviors identified by participants.]
- What makes these scenarios and behaviors examples of sexual violence?

- What do you think are some of outcomes or consequences of sexual violence (e.g., physical, emotional, psychological, legal, social)? For women? For men?
- (How) should the incidence of sexual violence be addressed in our community?
- (How) should the outcome of sexual violence be addressed in our community?
- Who should take responsibility and how?
- What has informed or influenced your definition(s) and understanding(s) of sexual violence?

Many people think that sexual violence is a continuum and that various scenarios and behaviors constitute sexual violence. You have already listed some of the scenarios and behaviors believed to fall along this continuum. I will now ask you to consider a few more. [Ask questions about forms of sexual violence not yet discussed (e.g., rape/sexual assault, sexual compliance, and sexual coercion).]

- Rape comes to mind for many people when they hear the term “sexual violence.” What scenarios and behaviors do you think constitute rape?
- Who do you think is responsible for rape? Does responsibility vary according to scenario? Can you think of a scenario in which the woman is responsible for the rape she suffered?
- Some people think that women sometimes deserve to be raped, that they ask for it or want it? What do you think? Can you think of a scenario in which the woman deserved to be raped?
- Some people think that women sometimes cry rape but were not really raped. What do you think? Can you think of a reason for why a woman would cry rape? What makes a rape scenario and/or victim credible? What would make you believe a woman’s story of rape?
- Some people think that women are traumatized by experiences of attempted or completed rape and that they need to recover from those experiences. What do you think? Can you think of a reason for why a woman would need to recover from such an experience? How do you think she would go about recovering from that experience?
- What do you think of how family and community typically treat the victim? The rapist? How do you think family and community should treat the victim? The rapist? How would you treat them (or have treated them)? How do you think you would react (or have reacted)?

Check in with participant to identify and address any discomfort or distress resulting from interview.

Interview 5: Understandings and reactions to sexual violence and wrap up/conclusion

Provide a summary of last week's interview and some of the themes that emerged from that interview.

Ask participant for feedback on the accuracy and completeness of these themes. Engage participant in analysis process.

Collect journal entries for the past week.

Interview questions:

- Last week we talked about sexual violence being a continuum, with various scenarios and behaviors constituting sexual violence. You identified and we discussed in detail some scenarios and behaviors believed to fall along this continuum. We will continue that conversation, and I will ask you to consider a couple more scenarios and sets of behaviors. [Ask questions about forms of sexual violence not yet discussed (e.g., rape/sexual assault, sexual compliance, and sexual coercion).]
- Some people think men can “convince,” pressure, or coerce women into having sex. What do you think? Can you think of a scenario in which a man coerces a woman into sex? What does he use to coerce her into sex (e.g., threats, intimidation, lying, continually asking/insisting on sex, verbal/emotional/psychological abuse, alcohol and other drugs, social customs/expectations, obligation/duty)? Why does he resort to coercion? How is this different and/or similar to rape? Do you think sexual coercion is a form of sexual violence? Why or why not?
- Some people think women consent to sex because they feel they have to and not because they really want to engage in sex. What do you think? Can you think of a scenario in which a woman may give in and engage in sexual behavior that she doesn't really want? Why would she feel the need to comply and give in to sex (e.g., pressure from social norms regarding marriage, gender roles, or sexuality)? Would men know the difference between sexual behaviors engaged in by women due to sexual desire versus sexual compliance? Why or why not? How is this different and/or similar to rape? Do you think sexual compliance is a form of sexual violence? Why or why not?

Check in with participant to identify and address any discomfort or distress resulting from interview.

Provide information about the analysis process and ask them if they would like to be contacted once the analysis is complete to provide feedback and negotiate the final draft of the results.

Arrange for collection of last set of journal entries.

Appendix C

Journal Guide

You will participate in five weeks of journal writing as part of your participation in this study.

You will be asked to write in your journal after each interview and reflect on a few of the topics we talked about during the interview.

In addition, you can use your journal as often as you'd like to record any thoughts, feelings, and/or impressions about the topics and experiences we have been discussing and/or about the research process itself. It will be your journal about your participation in this study.

You can use your journal to:

- * Record your thoughts on some of the stories or experiences you shared or topics we discussed during the interview.
- * Share additional stories or experiences that you think might add to what we talked about in the interview.
- * Start making connections between the stories/experiences and topics we discussed during the interview.
- * Reflect on the research process itself and our work together.

Journal Prompts – Interview 1

Reflect some more on the gender dynamics that exist (have existed) between your parents and how your parents display (have displayed) behavior that illustrates how to be a man or a woman.

How do you think their behavior has affected your understanding of gender and your expectations of yourself as gendered?

How do you think their behavior has shaped your notions or expectations of how women and men should behave, and in what situations?

How do you think their behavior may be impacted by culture, whether Mexican culture and/or mainstream U.S. culture?

Journal Prompts – Interview 2

Reflect some more on the messages you received growing up about how to be a man or a woman, particularly messages you received from (1) Mexican cultural traditions, (2) movies, (3) television, and (4) music.

Compare some of these messages with those you received from mainstream U.S. culture, if different.

(How) have you had to negotiate the messages you received growing up on how to be a man/woman with your own thoughts, beliefs, and desires to create your own gender identity?

How have others (e.g., parents, sibling, family, friends/peers) responded to the gender roles and behaviors you have decided to adopt?

Journal Prompts – Interview 3

Reflect some more on the messages you received growing up about how men and women are expected to behave in sexually charged situations.

How do you think those messages have influenced your understanding of sexuality and your expectations of how men and women should behave in sexually charged situations, including yourself?

(How) have you had to negotiate the messages you received growing up around issues of sexuality with your own thoughts, beliefs, and desires to create your own sexual identity?

How have others (e.g., parents, sibling, family, friends/peers) responded to the sexual roles and behaviors you have decided to adopt?

Journal Prompts – Interview 4

Reflect some more on how you define “sexual violence,” on the scenarios and behaviors that you think constitute sexual violence.

What do you believe has influenced your definition(s) and understandings of sexual violence?

What are your perceptions about and reactions to men who engage in the behaviors that you identified as constituting sexual violence? What has influenced those perceptions and reactions?

What are your perceptions about and reactions to women who have experienced some of the situations and behaviors that you identified as constituting sexual violence? What has influenced those perceptions and reactions?

Journal Prompts – Interview 5

Reflect some more on the various forms of sexual violence we have been talking about.

How do you think Mexican culture affects our understandings of and reactions to these various forms of sexual violence?

How do you think the messages you received about being a man and a woman affect your understandings of and reactions to these various forms of sexual violence?

How do you think your current attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality affect your understandings of and reactions to these various forms of sexual violence?

Appendix D

Recruitment Materials

Ads for Newsletter, Emails, Listservs, and Facebook

Research participants needed. Men and women who identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o, or Chicana/o and as heterosexual are needed for a dissertation study that explores the messages they received as children about appropriate gender behavior, current attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality, and perspectives on sexual violence. Individuals who qualify for the study will participate in five individual interviews and five weeks of journal writing. You will receive \$15 for each interview, plus an additional \$15 if you complete the study, for a total of \$90. If you are interested and to see if you are eligible, please contact Iris Carrillo at iycarril@uiuc.edu.

Male research participants needed. Men who (1) identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicano, or Chicano, (2) identify as heterosexual and (3) had some schooling and upbringing in Mexico are needed for a dissertation study that explores the messages they received as children about appropriate gender behavior, current attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality, and perspectives on sexual violence. Individuals who qualify for the study will participate in five individual interviews and five weeks of journal writing. You will receive \$15 for each interview, plus an additional \$15 if you complete the study, for a total of \$90. If you are interested and to see if you are eligible, please contact Iris Carrillo at iycarril@uiuc.edu.

Research Participants Needed

Do you identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicana/o, or Chicana/o?

Do you identify as heterosexual?

Do you enjoy telling stories and sharing your perspectives with others?

Would you like to earn up to \$90?

Then...this study might be for you!!

If you would you like to participate in a study that looks at the messages you received growing up about how to be a man or a woman, your attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality, and your perspectives on sexual violence, then...

Contact: Iris Carrillo at iycarril@uiuc.edu for more information.

Individuals who qualify for the study will participate in five individual interviews and five weeks of journal writing. Participants will receive \$15 for each interview, plus an additional \$15 if you complete the study, for a total of \$90.

Tear-off info about study.													
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MALE Research Participants with Some Schooling or Upbringing in MEXICO Needed

Do you identify as Mexican American, Mexican, Mexicano, or Chicano?

Do you identify as heterosexual?

Do you enjoy telling stories and sharing your perspectives with others?

Would you like to earn up to \$90?

Then...this study might be for you!!

If you would you like to participate in a study that looks at the messages you received growing up about how to be a man, your attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality, and your perspectives on sexual violence, then...

Contact: Iris Carrillo at iycarril@uiuc.edu for more information.

Individuals who qualify for the study will participate in five individual interviews and five weeks of journal writing. Participants will receive \$15 for each interview, plus an additional \$15 if you complete the study, for a total of \$90.

Tear-off info about study.													
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Appendix E

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study being conducted by Iris Carrillo, MA, and James Hannum, Ph.D., from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This study will explore the messages you received as a child on how to be a man or a woman, your attitudes and behaviors around gender and sexuality, and the relationship between these experiences and your understandings and reactions to sexual violence. The information you provide will contribute to an increased understanding of these research areas and may be utilized to develop interventions that can reduce the incidence of sexual violence and create a more supportive environment for survivors of sexual violence in our community as well as in society at large.

You will participate in a series of five interviews, all of which will be conducted in Room 188, Education Building. Each interview will last about 1.5-2 hours and will be audio recorded for purposes of data analysis. The audio recording of the interviews is required for participation in the study. One interview will be scheduled per week, so we will meet for a total of five weeks. You will also do some journal writing to record your thoughts, feelings, and impressions about the topics and experiences we are discussing in the interviews and/or about the interview process itself. At the end of data analysis, you will be given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the study's findings. We would meet for about an hour to discuss your feedback.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions you find uncomfortable and to discontinue your participation in an interview or the study at any time without having to justify yourself and without penalty or loss of the benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Some of the topics we will discuss are personal and may thus be emotionally stressful. However, I anticipate that any distress you experience will be very temporary, and we can always proceed to a different question or take a small break. I will check-in with you at the beginning and end of each interview to see how you're doing, but please feel free to come to me at any time if you are experiencing any discomfort or distress so we can address your concerns as soon as possible. On the positive side, this study may help you gain some insight into the role gender has played in your life and some of the choices you have made as well as insight into your perspectives and understanding of sexual violence.

You will be awarded a \$15 stipend for each interview in which you participate. If you complete all five interviews and five weeks of journaling, you will receive an additional \$15; thus you can be awarded a total of \$90 for your full participation in this study. You will receive the full stipend for an interview even if you refuse to answer particular questions or discontinue your participation in the interview or the study. You will receive your stipend at the end of each interview. You will receive the additional \$15 for completing the study at the end of the last interview.

Your participation in this research study is strictly confidential. None of the information you provide will be linked to you. I will assign you a code, and all of the information you provide

(e.g., audio recordings, journals, transcribed quotes, written feedback) will be labeled with that code and will be stored in a locked cabinet in my office, to which only I will have access. Any identifiable information will be blacked out of journals, transcribed quotes, or written feedback. Documents that have some identifiable information on them (e.g., consent form, screening form, emails) will be stored in a locked cabinet in the office of my academic advisor, who is supervising this research. Only he and I will have access to those documents, and there will be nothing in those documents to link you to the information you have shared with me.

The interviews will largely remain in audio form. No audio recordings or audio clips will be disseminated. Only quotes that I think will help explain or illustrate the study's findings will be transcribed into written form and included in the results section of the study, but these quotes will not have any identifying information that can link them back to you. The study's findings will be disseminated through my dissertation and potentially through conference presentations and professional journal articles.

All five interviews will be covered under this initial consent agreement, but if at any time during or after this study you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me at (217) 344-7818 or via email at ycarril@uiuc.edu, or my advisor, Dr. James Hannum, at (217) 244-0574 or via email at jwhannum@uiuc.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@uiuc.edu.

Iris Carrillo, MA
Ph.D. Student
Investigator

James Hannum, Ph.D.
Advisor
Responsible Project Investigator

If you agree with the following statements, please provide your signature and today's date at the bottom of this form:

- I am at least 18 years of age.
- I have read and understand the above information and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- I will be given a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant Signature

Date

Appendix F

Referral Information Form

The perspectives and experiences you share as part of your participation in this study may bring forth feelings and thoughts that you may want to discuss or explore further. You may want to contact one of the following units/agencies to inquire about and access the services that best meet your needs. Please feel free to ask me for more information about these units/agencies and the services they provide. You can reach me at (217) 344-7818 or iycarril@uiuc.edu.

Counseling Center

300 Turner Student Services Building
610 E. John Street
Champaign, IL
(217) 333-3704
Call at 7:50 a.m. for a same-day appointment.

The Counseling Center provides brief individual, couples, and group counseling to students for various concerns, including sexual trauma (childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, etc.), relationship problems, family difficulties, eating and body image concerns, and alcohol/substance abuse. Some of the available groups include:

Women's Empowerment Group

This unstructured group is for women who have experienced interpersonal trauma either as an adult or as a child (e.g., child abuse, sexual assault, abusive relationships, emotional abuse, bullying, etc.). The overall focus of the group is to help members move toward increasing empowerment in their own lives. This is accomplished in large part by encouraging group members to develop empowered relationships during the group time with one another. The group is open to graduate and undergraduate women. Diversity in the composition of the group is valued (e.g., along the lines of race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, social class, type of experience, etc.).

Men's General Therapy Group

This is an interpersonal process group for men that aims to facilitate awareness of oneself and one's style of relating with others through experiential means. The focus is on challenging the traditional socialization norms that frequently lead men to seek power and dominance over their external world while ignoring their internal experience. Some of the issues addressed will be independence and dependence, intimacy and autonomy, strength and vulnerability, and responsibility and choice.

Office of Women's Programs

300 Turner Student Services Building
610 E. John Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 333-3137

The Office of Women's Programs provides crisis intervention, information and referral, supportive counseling, individual advocacy, and support groups on a variety of issues, including rape/sexual assault, abuse in relationships/dating abuse/domestic violence, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination.

Rape Crisis Services Office

310 West Church Street Suite 103
Champaign, IL 61820
Phone: (217) 355-5214
24-Hour Hotline: (217) 355-5203

The mission of Rape Crisis Services is to deconstruct rape myths and empower sexual assault victims and survivors through crisis intervention, education, advocacy, activism and counseling. RCS also works with victims' and survivors' supportive friends and family members, allied professionals, and the community at large to end the culture of sexual violence.

Mental Health Clinic

McKinley Health Center
1109 South Lincoln Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 333-2705

The Mental Health Department at McKinley provides evaluation and consultation for a variety of emotional and behavioral difficulties. Short-term psychotherapy and medication treatment are provided, when indicated.

Psychological Services Center (PSC)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
505 E. Green Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 333-0041

PSC offers therapy and treatment for a variety of psychological difficulties, including sexual trauma. All therapy and counseling services are offered on a sliding scale that depends on your income and family size.