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Jennifer Marie Vazquez  
An Comparative Qualitative  
Study of Marianismo:  
Mexican and Mexican-  
American Women's  
Perspectives on Their Latina  
Values, Women's Roles and  
their Parents' Influence

## ABSTRACT

The research study had three goals. First, the study explored and compared adherence to Marianismo values in Mexican women born in Mexico and Mexican-American women born in the U.S. The hypothesis was that Mexican women would endorse more Marianismo values because Mexican-American women who are born, raised and educated in the U.S. are more likely to adopt more American values. Second, the study gathered and compared the women's perspectives on cultural differences between U.S. and Latino culture views of the women's role. Third, the study sought to further understand the relationship between acculturation and Marianismo to ascertain differences and patterns through four likert-type questions based on theory of acculturation adaptations by Berry (1980).

The study used a qualitative method, semi-structured interviews with seven Mexican women and seven Mexican-American women recruited in Northern California. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and coded by themes.

Major findings showed differences and similarities between the two groups endorsement of Marianismo values such as differences in how they viewed their roles. The Mexican women viewed their role as mother and in terms of duties, and Mexican-American women viewed their role as independent and discussed ambitions of education

and career. The groups also differed in their view of a “good woman”. The groups were similar in messages received from parents about sex and marriage, and viewing their mothers as sacrificing. The groups differed in their perspective on cultural differences. Further research is needed to explore the relationship of Marianismo and biculturalism and to explore positive aspects of Marianismo.

A COMPARATIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MARIANISMO:  
MEXICAN AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S  
PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR LATINA VALUES,  
WOMEN'S ROLES AND PARENTS' INFLUENCE

A project based upon an independent investigation,  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2007

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother Maria, a strong pillar in my life. Thank you mom for all your dedication, your unconditional love and support throughout my many years of schooling, I couldn't have accomplished this without you. And I also would like to dedicate this thesis to my sisters Yolanda, Susana and Rosie, thank you for your support, humor and unconditional love. You all are the light of my life. I love you all very much.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore Marianismo endorsed beliefs and behaviors in Mexican immigrant women and Mexican-American women. The study was a comparative exploratory study on the differences and similarities between the two groups' endorsement of Marianismo. Marianismo is a cultural and social construct on the idealized role of Latina women modeled after the Virgin Mary. Tenets of Marianismo are characterized by Latinas' beliefs and behaviors such as self-denial, maintaining their virginity for marriage, subjugation to the men in their lives, sacrificing for their children, endurance of suffering from their husbands, and putting the needs of others first.

Many of the studies done on Marianismo have found that it negatively impacts Latina's mental health (Caceres-Dalmau, 2003; Vazquez, 1998). Other studies have found that Marianismo and acculturation are not dependent on each other or parallel each other (Orlandini, 2000). A review of the literature found only one qualitative study on Marianismo done by Ruiz (1998) which was the only study that did a comparison of Marianismo on Mexican immigrant and Mexican American women. Most studies tend focus on the negative aspects of Marianismo. However, Murguia (2001) studied the positive types of Machismo and Marianismo and found that healthy gender roles are associated with psychological well-being and that the majority of the sample endorsed positive types of gender roles.



This study's purpose was to gather qualitative data on Marianismo among Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American women and compare the two groups. Additionally, another goal was to understand how each group perceives cultural differences between Latino and "Anglo" American cultures' view of the role of women. One final goal was to further understand the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation through questions based on the varieties of adaptations acculturation work of Berry (1980).

Research on Latino gender roles and values is important because there are many misconceptions about them. Given that the Mexican population is growing in the U.S. it is likely that many mental health providers will interface with and serve Mexican immigrant and Mexican-Americans. It will be important for social workers and other mental health providers to understand the values and gender role beliefs of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans. Understanding the gender role beliefs of Latinos can help clinicians increase their cultural sensitivity to working with this population. Specifically, understanding Marianismo, the woman's gender role construct, can aid clinicians to work within a framework of empathy and understanding that can address issues and conflicts that Latinas might experience around their Latina values, family, identity and gender roles.

Furthermore, literature and research on Marianismo tends to focus on the negative aspects of Marianismo. Marianismo values such as being dependent on the husband, being family oriented, putting others needs first, and being passive contradict many values found in U.S. culture such as being independent, being self-sufficient, being focused on yourself, being competitive, and being assertive. Therefore, Latinas'

Marianismo behaviors can easily be interpreted as weaknesses or pathologized. It is important for mental health professionals to be aware of how Marianismo is impacting their clients and which aspects of their gender role beliefs to affirm and which to address if they are negatively impacting their clients functioning.

The importance of this study is that it will contribute to the small body of qualitative studies on Marianismo, and contribute a comparative study of Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American women, as there are not many. Furthermore, a review of the literature did not find studies that addressed participants' perceptions of cultural differences between Latino and American cultures' view of women. This information is significant for research because it provides perspective on how Latinas view the two cultures of which they navigate. Also, it provides information on what the participants might struggle with as they navigate the two cultures' and each cultures' differences in expectations of women. Lastly, it is important to understand the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation as previous studies have found they are independent. This study sought to understand the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation using acculturation questions based on Berry (1980) theory on acculturation as varieties of adaptations.

The next chapter of this study will examine the literature on Marianismo and discuss Latino culture, identity, and acculturation. Chapter Three will define the methodology used in this study. Chapter Four will discuss the findings of the study. And the last chapter will integrated the findings with the literature on Marianismo.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Given that Mexicans are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States, it is likely many social workers and other mental health professionals will work with Latinos in their practice. With engagement and treatment of this population it is important to use culturally sensitive approaches. Frevert and Miranda (1998) report that, "...most theories of counseling are susceptible to cultural biases, since they represent the culture for which the theories originated (p. 301)." Therefore, having a lens of understanding the Latino cultural values of this population is necessary and can enhance a clinician's understanding of Latino culture and their values. This research project is focused specifically on the Latina traditional gender role called Marianismo. Marianismo is a social and cultural construct of the idealized traditional woman's role modeled after the Virgin Mary, in which women practice behaviors and beliefs that encourage self-denial, subjugation to men in their lives, sacrificing for their children, and putting others' needs first before their own. It is a martyr-type complex.

This chapter will first look at how Latinos are defined as a culture. Then the focus will shift to discuss the roles in Latino families with emphasis on the woman's role. Next, a brief description of other Latino values will be discussed. Following will be a brief discussion on the impact culture has on Latina identity. Finally, an examination of some of the research on Marianismo will be provided as well as the research of acculturation as it relates to Marianismo.

The term Mexican woman and Latinas will be used interchangeably in this paper. This research paper will focus primarily on Mexican and Mexican-American cultures.

### *The Latino Population*

“Latinos are individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race” (Frevert & Miranda, 1998, p. 292). According to the U.S. Census Bureau data, Latinos make up 14.2 % of the national population, a number that is steadily increasing.

### *The Latina Woman Socialized in the Home*

McGolderick, Garcia-Preto, Hines and Lee (in McGolderick, Anderson, & Walsh, 1989) report on the role of Hispanic woman. Women are raised as virgins until marriage, and men are raised as “machos”. Women are “taught to repress or sublimate their sexual drives” (p.177). They are trained to be “extremely modest”, but also must be “sexually attractive and seductive in a passive and virginal way in order to attract a good husband”. Being a wife and mother is a high priority for women. Men are “encouraged to know about sex, and be seductive and experienced” (p.178). Latina women are expected to assume the responsibility for taking care of the home and children and “keeping the family together”. They are often obligated to “sacrifice themselves” in order to accomplish their duty. McGolderick et al. (1989) also note that the ‘sacrificial role’ of the Latina is rewarded and reinforced by society’s admiration.

The authors also point out that Latina wives “assume power behind the scenes” because she tends to develop strong relationships with her children and other family members often forming alliances with her children against her husband who is perceived as authoritarian. Although McGolderick et al. (1989) discussed the concept of

“machismo” in Latin American culture, they did not discuss the concept of “marianismo”. However, the characteristics of Latina wives mentioned above are all characteristics of Marianismo.

### *Marianismo and Machismo*

An underlying cultural religious value, Marianismo is deeply engrained in Latinas and impacts their behaviors and ideals. Marianismo is the complement of Machismo. . Evelyn Stevens an ethnographer who coined the term Marianismo, in her Essay “Marianismo the other face of Machismo” posits that Machismo is “a way of orientation which can most succinctly be described as the cult of virility. The chief characteristic of this cult are exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships” (Stephens, 1979,p. 4). Some critics argue that such a view on Machismo is based on western biases and state that Machismo is rather about a “Caballero’s” (a gentlemen’s) need to protect his family and home. Furthermore, Lopez’s (2004) qualitative in-depth interview study on daughters’ sexualities with 20 immigrant Mexican men found that most of the fathers were most concerned with protecting their daughter from a sexually dangerous society and wanted their daughters stay and school and be educated. She found that fathers were most preoccupied with their daughters’ safety and getting an education rather than the preservation of their daughters’ virginities.

Moreover, “Machismo is a central ingredient in the identity formation of men and it serves to guide men in their orientation to relationships, work, motivation, sexuality, and commitment” (Frevert & Miranda, p. 298). Being a compliment, Marianismo can be understood as also “a central ingredient in the identity formation of women used to guide

women in their orientation to relationships, work, motivation, sexuality, and commitment”.

Marianismo views women as spiritually superior to men, and therefore, able to endure all suffering by men (Comas-Diaz, 1991 b.). Marianista women also have some form of power; they control the care of the home, and family and socializing of the children. Marianismo involves a martyr complex on the woman’s part, self-sacrificing herself for the needs of her children and family. Furthermore, Stephens describes the marianista role which includes Latina women are obligated to be pure and virginal prior to marriage and that they have a divine position (like the Virgin Mary) and must intercede with God on behalf of their husbands’ moral corruption (Stephens, 1973).

Gil and Vazquez (1996) who are psychotherapist located in New York, and who have extensive experience working with Latinas clients, wrote a book titled *The Maria Paradox: How to merge old world values with new world self-esteem*. They write: “Marianismo is about sacred duty, self-sacrifice, and chastity. About dispensing care and pleasure, not receiving them. About living in the shadows, literally and figuratively, of your men-father, boyfriend, husband, son-your kids and your family (p.7).” Gil and Vazquez liken the marianista women to a “cloistered nun” who instead of being married to God, is married to “an all too human male who instantly becomes the single object of her devotion for a lifetime” (p.7).

Ruiz (1998) in her research extrapolates five characteristics of Marianista women as is described by Evelyn Stevens:

1. Self Denial;

2. Unlimited patience with the men in their lives;
3. Submissiveness to the males of the family (e.g., fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons);
4. The belief that men are to be forgiven for their behaviors because they are just “little boys”;
5. That women should be chaste before marriage and not enjoy sex even in marriage. (Ruiz, 1998, p. 3).

Also, Gil and Vasquez (1996) identify what they call, “The Ten Commandments of Marianismo”:

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

Bracero (1998) connects Marianismo to Stoic philosophy. He identifies three main doctrinal points of Stoicism that modern historians interpreted: (a) divine predestination, or fatalism; (b) self-mastery via individual will; and (c) indifference to

external influences. Bracero links the cultural value theme *controlarse*, he defines as “cultural ideals of self-containment and the conscious control or suppression of negative emotions such as anger or any other unacceptable impulses” (p. 266). Bracero connects these three concepts of *controlarse* and stoicism and Marianismo. He views Marianismo is not so much an “attitude of learned helplessness” but rather an attitude of “learned Stoicism”.

#### *Other Latino Values*

There are other Latino values that impact the belief system of many Latinos found in literature. Frevert and Miranda (1996) discuss Latino cultural values such as the conception of time and fate from the Latino perspective. They discuss that Latinos are more oriented in the present, which contrasts to Middle-class Caucasians who tend to be more oriented toward the future. Frevert and Miranda also discuss that Latinos believe in fate; for example, they may believe in luck, or in God’s will, or in bad wishes of enemies. They also discussed that “...Latinos openness toward the acceptance of fate has been reinforced by racism and consequent economic oppression (p. 295).”

Furthermore, Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Hanna (1979) in their study on 26 Cubans and 26 Anglo-Americans that were recruited from an outpatient mental health clinic in Miami they administered the Values Orientation Scale. The researchers found that the Anglo Americans had a tendency to value individuality over “lineality” in interpersonal relations. And the opposite was found for Cuban participants. Moreover, the results showed that Anglo-American participants had a tendency to value “mastery over nature” and preferred to “plan for the future” which differed from the Cuban



participants who had a tendency to adhere to “subjugation to nature” and had a “present time orientation” (p.623).

Additionally, three other Latino values to consider are the following which are defined by Andres-Hyman, Ortiz, Anez, Paris and Davidson (2006):

*Familismo* (Family Values and the Value of Family) is an allocentric cultural value that stresses attachments, reciprocity, and loyalty to family members beyond the boundaries of the nuclear family.

*Dignidad y Respetto* (Dignity and Respect) Dignity (honor) and respect refer to a cultural value that underscores a reverence for all forms of life, particularly the intrinsic worth of humanity. ...However, *respetto* promotes “equality, empathy, and connection” in every relationship, even within those perceived as hierarchical (quotation marks in the original) (p. 696).

Such Latinos values may come up in a clinicians work with Latino clients.

Additional, such Latinos values may also come up as themes in studies on Marianismo as they may simultaneous be impacting a Latinas view of her goals, or her role as a woman.

#### *The Psychological Impact of Marianismo on Latinas*

Marianismo is a deeply embedded cultural and religious value that is accepted and practiced by women and reinforced by a male dominated society. The impact of having such deeply embedded cultural ideals and practicing it unconsciously can have a psychological impact on Latinas that can lead to depression and anxiety. According Bracero (1998) in his experience with Latina clients were that they had feelings and complaints of “unrelenting loneliness, bitterness over unrecognized and unappreciated years of self-sacrifice, feelings of guilt and inadequacy over difficult financial and family

situations, and rage and humiliation over husbands' or lovers' unfaithfulness or physical or emotional abuse or neglect" (p. 267). Another researcher found that her clients had a consistent failing to overcome chronic negative self-perception (Dazzo, 1998, p.160). According to Frevert and Miranda's (1998) review of the literature on mental health issues of Latinos they found that Latinos tend to express psychological distress somatically. Latinos immigrants regardless of gender are prone to depression and anxiety (although they would not name their problems as depression), and prone to somatization. Abad and Boyce (1979) findings on the most common symptoms of Latino immigrants in the U.S. were:

depression, anxiety, somatic concerns, hallucinations, and actual or feared loss of control. Patients rarely report depression as such, but rather complain of symptoms of insomnia, eating problems, fatigue, headaches, body aches, feelings of weakness and exhaustion. Similarly, anxiety, in and of itself, may not be recognized by patients although manifested in reports of heart palpitations, dizziness, and fainting. Anger (*coraje*) may be expressed as nervousness or malaise... The most widely pervasive single theme reported by the patients we have seen has been that of the actual or feared loss of impulse control. (as cited in Frevert & Miranda, 1998, pp. 302-303).

Interestingly to note from the quote above is that the single most pervasive theme that came up for most immigrants was feared loss of impulse control or in other words, fear of inability to *controlarse*.

#### *Studies on the Impact of Marianismo on Mental Health*

Vazquez (1998) study explored Marianismo in Latinas as it relates to silencing the self behaviors (based on silencing the self theory) and as it relates to depression, and relationship satisfaction. The study correlated a measure for silencing the self behaviors and attitudes with the Beck Depression Inventory. The study also investigated the relationship between participants' relationship satisfaction and depression. The study

hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between depression and identification of the Marianista gender role (p. 4). Another hypothesis was that women who reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction will have higher levels of depression regardless of the gender role identification. The last hypothesis stated that amount of education will negatively correlate with endorsement of Marianista gender role. Forty-five participants who Latina women, and had a diagnosis of depression were recruited from a mental health center. Forty-one Latina women were recruited from a community center that sponsored adult education programs that provided classes in English as a Second Language. All of the participants reported Spanish as their first language.

Instruments used in the study include short demographic questionnaire; The Silencing the Self Scale; The Beck Depression Inventory; The Inventory of Attitudes towards Men and Women; The Relationship Assessment Scale (Vazquez, 1998, p. 38). Vazquez describes the components of the Silencing the Self Scale and the rationale behind its four subscales:

- (a) *externalized self-perception* which refers to judging the self by external standards;
- (b) *care as self-sacrifice* refers to securing attachments by putting the needs of others before the self;
- (c) *silencing the self* refers to inhibiting one's self-expression and action to avoid conflict, and the possible loss of relationship, and
- (d) *the divided self* refers to presenting an outer compliant self to live up to feminine role while inner self grows angry and (p. 38).

The results of Vazquez's (1998) study found that when the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS) was used as the measure of depression and the Inventory of Attitudes

Towards Men and Women (IAMW) as a measure of Marianismo it yielded a “significant moderate correlation between beliefs in traditional, Marianismo, sex role and silencing the self in Latina women” (p. 43). To test for hypothesis two the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RAS) and the BDI while controlling the (IAMW) yielded a negative correlation which meant “the happier women are in their relationship, the less depressed they are” (p. 43). When the STSS was used in place of the BDI as a measure of depression the finding “indicated a negative statistically significant relationship of weak strength” which meant that “The more women silenced themselves, the less satisfied they were with their intimate relationships” (p. 43). For hypothesis three, variables in the demographic information were controlled to see how the various demographic factors differ from each of the two groups. The results found that level of education impacts gender role beliefs that are endorsed.

Vazquez (1998) notes limitations of the study included both subject groups were homogeneous within each other, noting that many the subjects were of low Socio-Economic Status. She also notes that a measure of acculturation may have provided additional information about the subject pool. She also reports that the groups were heterogeneous in that the mental health clinic group was primarily from Puerto Rican decent and the community center group was primarily from Mexico. The cultural differences between the two ethnic groups may contribute to differences in responses as well considering there are differences among Latinos from different countries.

The effect of Marianismo extends beyond the generation that actually adheres to it. Caceres-Dalmau (2003) compared Latina students’ perception of their mothers’ Marianismo with that of their Caucasian college peers’ perception of their mothers’

Marianismo. The Latina students lived in the U.S. were either born in the U.S. or emigrated to the U.S. Additionally, the researcher believed that the Latina college students would have more Anxious Somatic Depression according to the level of their perception of maternal marianismo. Anxious Somatic Depression was defined as, “a syndrome characterized by anxiety, nervous attacks, distress, headaches, insomnia, eating problems, body image dissatisfaction, stomach cramps, and dysphoria. The following were the researcher’s hypotheses:

1. One hypothesis stated that women of Hispanic background, in comparison to mainland U.S. peers, will report higher degree of Anxious Somatic depression.
2. The second hypothesis stated that women of Hispanic background, in comparison to mainland U.S. peers are more likely to perceive their mothers as having traditional Hispanic gender role ideology (Marianismo).
3. The third hypothesis stated that there will be a direct relationship between the daughters’ level of anxious somatic depression and the daughters’ perception of the level of their mothers’ marianismo.

The instruments that were used in the study were: Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D); Symptom Checklist-90-R (SCL-90-R) Anxiety Subscale; and a scale were created that looked at Mother’s Perceived Role Ideology. Some of the questions on the Mother’s Perceived Role Ideology include:

*Question 1*

How much did your mother feel that a ‘good’ woman has to sacrifice and devote her life to her children?

## *Question 2*

How much did your mother feel that a woman was suppose to tolerate whatever her husband's behavior was?

Caceres-Dalmau (2003) analyzed data from 75 Latina students and 35 Caucasian students. Of the Latina participants, 35.2% were of Dominican Republican decent, 15.7 were of Ecuador decent and 13.7% were of Mexican decent the remaining were of other Hispanic origins. The finding were that for hypothesis one, there were not significant differences in levels of depression among U.S. and Latina subjects. On further analysis the finding did not support the hypothesis that Latina participants would report more Anxious Somatic Depression than their U.S. peers. The second hypothesis was supported which stated that Latinas are likely to perceive their mothers with more Marianismo than their U.S. peers. Lastly, the third hypothesis was found that there is a correlation between the Latina participants' perception of their mothers' Marianismo and their report of Anxious Somatic Depression. In fact, of the Latinas that scored high in their perception of their mothers' Marianismo, they were nine times more likely to report Anxious Somatic Depression than the Latina participants who scored low in their perception of their mothers' Marianismo.

Orlandini's (2000) study explored the loss of the Marianista gender role as the Latinas acculturate. The study did not find that acculturation and Marianismo "parallel" each other or that they are "dependent" on each other (p.81). However, other findings did emerge from the data analysis. The researcher recruited participants ages 18 or older who grew up in Spanish speaking countries and currently lived in Miami, Florida and participants ages 18 or older who are U.S. born of Latino decent. The researcher's

hypotheses were that there would be an effect as the Latina abandoned Marianista gender role and adopted more American values. The study suspected that levels of depression would increase with levels of Marianismo. Instruments used in the study were the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI); the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics and a short two question Marianismo and American gender role in which participants were asked to rank themselves on a five point-Likert scale. Orlandini recruited a total of 155 participants for the study. The mean age was 35. Most participants were from Cuba or born in the U.S. Participants in the study were educated, with 49 attending graduate school, 43 attending college. And the large portion of the group made an annual income of \$50, 000 or more. The majority of this population identified their religion as Catholic.

The researcher suspected that levels of depression would increase with levels of Marianismo. Instruments used in the study were the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI); the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics and a short two question Marianismo and American gender role in which participants were asked to rank themselves on a five point-Likert scale. The results found that there was a strong positive correlation of the participants' adherence to Marianismo values and the participants' level of depression. Orlandini (2000) explained that the findings meant that the longer a Latina lived in the U.S. and endorsed Marianismo values the more she would suffer depressive symptoms. Furthermore, the researcher explained that the less acculturated the Latina was, the more likely she would adhere to Marianismo values. Also the less education, income, religious beliefs and supports the Latina had, the more likely she would endorse Marianismo and suffer from depression.

### *The Impact of Culture on Identity Development*

Moreover, culture impacts one's development of identity. According to Hoare (1991), "identity is constructed from within the person and the culture in which it is forged (as cited in Frevert and Miranda, p.291). Dazzo (1998) describes this cultural imprinting on the individual with use of social construction theory, "Social construction theory postulate that every culture transmits the knowledge of what "the world is, as well as one's place in" (p.160). Dazzo goes on to say that culture gives powerful messages about gender and a child is socialized into gender roles. Furthermore, "consensual reality" is described as how the "individual integrates what she has learned into a coherent pattern of thought and beliefs: a social and emotional navigational system" (Dazzo, 1998, p.161).

Thus, the Latina immigrant living in the U.S. has to integrate values, norms and messages from her own culture of origin and from a new culture, U.S. culture. In addition to integrating cultural values she is also integrating gender role values from both cultures. She may have to contend with being "double minority" resulting in a "struggle to adapt to unequal and decidedly non-mutual relationships in discourses constituted by racism and sexism, where connections and isolations are experienced daily at both personal and group-systemic levels" (Bracero, 1998, p. 267). In addition to dealing with racism and sexism women also are confronted with other forces of reality. According to Comas-Diaz (1991 a.) she writes, "Women of color's realities encompass the interaction of multiple variables, including, but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexual orientation, religion, and sociopolitical forces" (p. 605).



Furthermore, it is important to discuss ethnic identity conflicts that Mexican-American's face that may differ from their Mexican counterparts. Rodriguez (1994) in her book titled, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and empowerment among Mexican-American women* describes the conflict ethnic identity conflict Mexican-American face in being apart of two very different cultures. She writes,

Although they cross back and forth between these dual identities, they sometimes feel so terribly unaccepted—orphaned. Some do not identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and some do not identify with the Mexican-American cultural values. Mexican- American women are a synthesis of these two cultures with varying degrees of acculturation, and with the synthesis comes conflict (p. 63).

#### *Theories of Acculturation*

Szapocznik & Kurtines's (1980) discuss the bicultural paradigm of acculturation they reported, "Biculturalism postulates that Anglo-American culture is incorporated without losing Latino traits (as cited in Murguia, 2001, p. 64). Szapocznik & Kurtines's continued, "This view assumes that acculturation has a fluid quality allowing individuals to be more Latino oriented in one context and more Anglo-American oriented in another context (as cited in Murguia, 2001, p. 64)." Frevert and Miranda (1996) review the literature in discussing Latino value orientations. They discuss research which found that Latinos who assume a "bicultural identity as correlated to positive mental health, whereas, other research has found that high acculturation and a giving up the native culture values and traditions leads has a negative impact on mental health. Likewise, they discussed research that has shown low acculturation and rejection of the host culture leads to marginalization, oppression and a negative impact on mental health. Thus, a bicultural identity is optimal for Latinos living in the U.S.

Berry's (1980) work titled, *Acculturation Varieties of Adaptation* discusses four types of adaptations which: are Assimilation, Integration, Rejection, and Deculturation. The following was used to develop the acculturation questions for this study which used Murguia's (2001) review of Berry's four adaptations of acculturations:

Acculturation, according to Berry (1980) consisted of various directions in which change could occur: assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. Assimilation refers to the relinquishing of one's cultural identity and assuming the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of the majority group. Integration involves maintaining one's cultural identity while also incorporating components of the majority group. By the process of rejection, individuals withdraw from the larger society while maintaining their cultural identity. Finally, the deculturation process denotes lack of cultural and psychological contact with one's culture as well as with that of the larger society (as cited in Murguia, 2001, p. 65).

Padilla and Perez (2003) provide an overview of acculturation research and reported that the importance of Berry (1980) acculturation view is that it recognized multicultural societies, and people and provided a view of the acculturation process being viewed as reversible meaning people to revert back to their native cultural heritage.

#### *Other Studies on Marianismo*

Ruiz (1998) conducted an ethnographic qualitative study on Marianismo on Mexican and Mexican-American women. She recruited women who were living in the Southern Texas area. Surprisingly, both groups identified themselves as independent, while viewing their mother in the more traditional help giving role. Ruiz (1998) raised some good questions in the review of the literature on Marianismo to which she noted that there have been no studies done with women who were not seeking therapy. She also reports that no studies focused on the messages Latinas receive from significant others regarding their roles. She also found little had been written from a Mexican or Mexican American's experience with Marianismo. Ruiz (1998) used an interview guide

of 11 open-ended questions that were based on the 10 commandments of Marianismo (Gil & Vazquez, 1996) and other research on Marianismo. She recruited based on two criteria: the subjects spoke English and were of Mexican or Mexican American descent. She used a snow ball sampling method and recruited 20 subjects to be interviewed.

Ruiz's (1998) study found that there were some differences and some similarities. It appears that both populations saw themselves as "independent". Mexican-American subjects saw their mothers' role as "self-sacrificing" whereas Mexican subjects viewed their mothers as "homemaker and submissive wife" (p. 71). Both populations discussed desires to be married and to advancing in education. Most subjects described their relationship with their mother as close, some Mexican-American subjects even described the mother-daughter relationship as "best friend," on the contrary, some Mexican subjects described their relationship with their mother as "not a close one". Surprisingly both subject groups report that their fathers' were interested in them receiving an education and becoming self-sufficient. Some Mexican subjects also described their fathers as expecting "special treatment from the women around them" (p. 72).

Differences between the two groups occurred around the issue of feeling guilt towards parents regarding family demands and expectations which was expressed more in the Mexican population (e.g. such as having parents spend money for their college, not being close enough for their mother, or not doing enough for their mothers). In the Mexican-American subjects, only a few indicated some guilt toward their relationship with their parents, while several did not display feeling of guilt toward their parents. When the participants were asked if their families sought any outside help, participants of both groups reported that outside help was not sought because things were taken care of

in the family with the exception of some Mexican-American women reporting that their families did consult with a priest.

Ruiz (1998) discussed the limitations of the research. The interview guide had too secondary probing questions in some sections and too few in others. Ruiz reported that the interview guide needed improvement in design. She also reported the researcher's lack of fluency in the Spanish language as a limitation of the study. She also reported that it would have been helpful if the subject pool represented more of middle age group. This researcher noted another limitation of the study was that the inclusion criteria required that the women had to speak English since speaking English could influence acculturation among the Mexican subject pool group. Ruiz recommended a questionnaire be designed that measured Marianismo and that could be used with a larger sample.

Marano (2000) created a comprehensive questionnaire that captures the adherence to Marianismo beliefs and behaviors in Latinas, which she called the Latina Values Scale (LVS) that includes 40 items measured on a likert-type scale. The Latina Values Scales was found to be statistically significant. Melendez (2004) revised the Latina Values Scale developing the Latina Values Scale Revised Version, a 28-item questionnaire measured on a likert-type scale. The Latina Values Scale Revised Version was translated into Spanish; the original Latina Values Scale had not been translated into Spanish. The Latina Values Scale Revised Version was also found to be statistically significant.

Furthermore, Ruiz-Balsara (2001) explored gender beliefs about Machismo and Marianismo among Hispanic males and females to develop an understanding of gender roles about this population. The study utilized the following instruments: Familism

Scale; Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS); Inventario de Masculinidad y Femenidad (IMAFE) [Masculinity and Feminine Inventory]; Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Construct Short Form (MACC-SF), Machismo Scale. 192 Latino and Latinas were recruited for the study, who were age 18 or over, in the Central and Northwest Arkansas, and San Diego County, California. The largest age group fell in the bracket of 30-39. The research used the IMAFE submission scale to measure Marianismo, and the Ruiz-Balsara (2001) notes that submission is only one aspect of Marianismo (p. 191). Therefore, one limitation of using the IMAFE instrument is that it only measured submission beliefs in the participants; thus, neglecting other behaviors of Marianismo that could potentially be endorsed by the participants. The acculturation scale BAS was used and the results determine what categories participants belonged to, either the low-accultured or the highly-accultured.

Ruiz-Balasara's (2001) had five hypotheses which included:

1. Hypothesis one stated that the endorsement of machismo (as a cultural construct) would be higher among male than female respondents. This hypothesis was found to be correct demonstrated by the male participants scoring higher than the female participants.
2. The second hypothesis stated endorsement of machismo beliefs would be high among the participants that were in the low-acculturation category than for those in the high acculturation category. The results were that the hypothesis was true, the low acculturated participants did endorse machismo beliefs more than the high-accultured participants.
3. The third hypothesis stated that the endorsement of machismo beliefs would be

high among the least educated participants than the participants with more education. The findings were that participants with less than a high school education endorsed more machismo than those with college education.

4. The fourth hypothesis stated that the endorsement of submission (one characteristic of Marianismo) would be found among women who were in the low acculturation category than the women in the high acculturated category. The results were that the submission scores were not significant. Women in the low acculturated category ( $m= 1.94$ ) did tend to have higher scores than those in the higher acculturated category ( $m=1.82$ ).

5. The fifth hypothesis stated that the women with less education would be more likely to endorse Marianista beliefs by only measuring the endorsement of submission than their more educated counterparts. Female participants with less than a high school education had slightly higher submission scores ( $m=1.93$ ) than their female college educated counterparts ( $m=1.79$ ) but submission scores across education categories did not differ significantly.

The results found that there was no significant difference of the participants' endorsement of marianismo and their level of education. However, the results moved in a predictable direction, higher among less educated and acculturated respondents. One limitation of this study is that it measured Marianismo based on one characteristic which was submission. Submission may vary in degrees; thus, this may be why there were no significant differences found between education levels and marianismo adherence in participants. The results of the Masculinity and Femininity Scale found that respondents do not exclusively endorse gender-type traits in describing themselves (p. 193).

Moreover, Murguia (2001) explored psychological well being and Marianismo and Machismo among Hispanic people. The researcher had three goals, to assess adherence to machismo and hembrismo (femaleness) and marianismo. The second goal was to assess the relationship of the gender roles to acculturation. Thirdly, the study investigated the relationship of gender roles and acculturation as predictors of psychological well being. The research consisted of a pilot study and a main study. In the main study the researcher recruited from local Latino organizations, agencies and a technical college and university that served Mexican-descended people in the Wisconsin region. The data was analyzed for 247 participants that were recruited. Of the main study sample, N=160, 65.6% were born in Mexico. The rest were born in the U.S. Education levels appeared to be spread across the board with 19% (n=47) reported having some college or (N=44) 18.0% having completed a college degree. The next highest group of participants completed either high school (n=39, 16%) or a master's degree (n=36, 14.8%). 31 participants (12.7%) had middle school education and 7% (n=17) had an elementary education & the same amount had a 2 year college education. 11 participants (4.5%) had a PhD degree. Only two participants reported having no formal education. Nearly three-quarters of the participants were employed. Nearly a quarter of participants annual income was \$45,000 or over. The frequently reported income range was \$20, 000-\$24, 999 (n=34, 15.7%).

The instruments used in the main study were: the Masculinity Femininity Personality Trait Scales; three subscales of the Socio-cultural Premises Scale; Machismo Subscale; Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican American-II; and the Scales of Psychological Well-Being.

The results of the Murguia (2001) study were that the majority of participants adhered to Chicano machismo and Chicano hembrismo which is positive gender role beliefs in contrast to the pathological gender role beliefs. Also, the majority of participants endorsed bicultural identification. Moreover, the participants generally agreed to positive statements regarding their psychological well being. Also, the male participants strongly endorsed pathological machismo than their female counterparts. Interestingly, there were no differences found between men adherence to pathological Marianismo beliefs specifically the belief in female abnegation and virginity prior to marriage than their female counterparts. The study also found that there was no correlation between the female participants' income level and their endorsement of pathological Marianismo. Finally, the study found that the endorsement of positive values and aspects of gender roles machismo (for males) and hembrismo (for females) were the largest predictors of psychological well being. The researcher noted that this finding supported the ancient Aztec belief about adhering to gender roles within the cultural context enhanced mental health.

#### *Critiques of Marianismo*

Lastly, this paper will discuss the critiques of Marianismo to alternative views on Marianismo. Ehler (1991), who studied Marianismo in Mayan women tries to “debunk” Marianismo and provides three points as to why it does not exist:

1. While female subordination is present, it comes in many different forms and in varying degrees of subordination
2. Women's behavior vis-a-vis men is not merely a response to machismo, but is a survival strategy emerging from female economic, social and sexual



dependence

3. Gender relations are not a static construction of ideal roles, but evolve and change with the material conditions of women's lives, and over the life span of each woman

Although, Ehlers points are well taken, it minimizes the great influence Catholicism has had on many Latin American countries including Mexico. The veneration of the Virgin Mary a principle belief in Catholicism and the bases for the model of the ideal woman's role of Marianismo has greatly influenced Latino cultures perception of what an ideal woman should be. Nonetheless, holding both views of Marianismo is helpful for literature and research to better understand the phenomenon, and to ensure that a group of people are not being stereotyped. Also, the social work field's perspective takes into account larger systemic problems and oppressions that impact the individual; thus, it is important to keep Ehlers critical points in mind when exploring Marianismo.

#### *Summary*

This chapter has reviewed the research on Marianismo in Latina women. Studies have linked Marianismo as correlating with the depression and anxious somatic symptoms. A study even found that even a daughters' perception of her mother having Marianismo can impact her own psychological well being. There has been some research that has explored the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation which have not found that they are independent of each other or are parallel to each other. However, the same study noted that the longer a Latina has Marianismo and is living the U.S. the more likely she may become depressed or the less acculturated she was the more likely she is

to endorse Marianismo. There was one study that focused on positive Marianismo and positive Machismo, which found it lead to positive well being. Furthermore, research on acculturation has found that having a bicultural acculturation adaptation leads to positive mental health. There have not been many qualitative studies done on Marianismo, or on comparing Mexican and Mexican American women's endorsement of Marianismo.

After reviewing the literature, it appears that there is a need for more qualitative research on Marianismo. Also, research that compares adherences to Marianismo between Mexican and Mexican women is needed. A review of the literature has found that previous research have not examined participants' views on Latino culture and American culture's views on the roles of women. Having such information can provide insight in to the complexities of navigating two culture and gender role perceptions that many Latina's are faced with living in the United States. There is also a need to better understand the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation.

This study will contribute to the small body of literature on Marianismo by gathering qualitative data and exploring and comparing Marianismo in Mexican and Mexican American women living in the United States. Also, cultural differences will be examined for differences and patterns in both groups and between both groups. Lastly, this study will seek to better understanding the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare the cultural and gender role construct of Marianismo in Mexican immigrant women who now live in the U.S. and Mexican-American women who were born in the U.S. Throughout this study and for purposes of this study the term “Mexican women” is used to denote the Mexican women who were born in Mexico and now live in the U.S. and the term “Mexican-American women” is used to denote the women that were born in the U.S. who are of Mexican decent. The hypothesis of the study was that Mexican women would adhere to more Marianismo beliefs and behaviors than their U.S. born counterparts. Due to Mexican-American women being raised in the U.S. such exposure to the U.S. cultural values throughout their lives in all facets of their lives ( i.e. education, work, friends, media) they are more likely to have integrated more American values than their Mexican counterparts who were raised in Mexico and influenced by Mexican cultural values. Thus, the Mexican-American women would endorse less Marianismo beliefs and behaviors and more American values than their Mexican counterparts.

Another, goal of the study was to explore and compare the beliefs of participants about cultural differences between Latino culture and “Anglo” American culture view the role of women. A review of the research did not find that other Marianismo studies have explored participants’ thoughts on cultural differences view on the woman’s role which is important to understand because such differences may create conflict for Latinos living in

the U.S. as they navigate both the Latino and U.S. cultures. Lastly, the research sought to understand the relationship between Marianismo and acculturation as past studies have found them to be independent of each other. This was done through four acculturation questions that consisted of “I” statements about acculturation that were posed to all of the participants and provided on paper, at the end of the interview in which they scored their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point-likert-scale.

### *Research Method and Design*

The design of the research is a qualitative comparative study, which includes a 19- item demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview of 14 questions, of which the last four were the four acculturation questions scored on the likert-type scale. All materials for this study were available to participants in either English or Spanish. A snow ball sampling was employed. The 19-item demographic questionnaire (Appendix D and Appendix E) was used to gather background information on participants (e.g. their age, ethnic identification, do they have children, marital status, sexual orientation, native country, age of immigration to U.S., longest period living in U.S., education level, parents highest education level, parent’s native country, annual family income, type of employment and religious affiliation). The majority of the interview guide questions derived from (Ruiz-Balsara, 2001) demographic questionnaire for this study’s demographic questionnaire questions #1, #7, # 8, #10, #11, #12, #14, #16. Questions #6 and #15 were derived from (Murguia, 2001). The last three questions asked the participant about the language/s she spoke, and two other questions regarding the participant’s language preference, and language fluency modified from the Marin Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics, in order to find if there are patterns of acculturation

and adherence to Marianismo based on the language differences of the participant. Speaking the Spanish language can connect the participant to her parent's Mexican culture (if the participant was born in the U.S.) or her own native Mexican culture (if the participant was born in Mexico). Conversely, not speaking English may hinder acculturation into U.S. American culture.

The interview guide (Appendix F, Appendix G) was semi-structured to ensure that all topics were discussed. The interview guide questions were based on the review of the literature on Marianismo as well as Marianismo scales such as the Latina Values Scales (Marano, 2000) and the Latina Values Scale Revised Version (Melendez, 2004) which aided in the development of questions for this study's interview guide. More specifically some questions were taken from other research and adapted for this research; such as this study's interview guide questions (#1, #2, #9) were based on another qualitative research, that of Ruiz's (1998) interview guide questions and the first parts to of questions #6 and #10 of this study's interview guide derived from the Mother's Perceived Gender Role Ideology Marianismo Scale (found in Caceres-Dalmau, 2003).

Thus, the interview guide questions focused on gathering data that is specific Marianismo behaviors and attitudes. Question #1 asked about a woman's role, #2 asked about goals in life, #3 asked about tradition, questions #4, #5 & #9 asked about messages from parents about marriage, being independent and messages about sex. Question #6 asked about how much their mother felt a "good woman" has to sacrifice her life for her children and it followed with a question about what the participant thought a "good woman" was. Questions #7 and #8 were regarding putting others needs first and expressing oneself in close relationships and to authority figures. Question #10 was

regarding mother toleration of abuse/infidelity by her husband and it followed with a question about the participants view on a wife tolerating such behaviors. Question #11, was regarding perceived cultural differences in role of woman among the Latino and “Anglo” American cultures. The last section of the interview guide questions #12 through #15 were four likert-type questions that attempted to capture the phase of acculturation based on the theory of (Berry, 1980).

In addition to gathering qualitative data on Marianismo, the interview gathered data on acculturation. A review of the literature on Marianismo found that most of the research used instruments to gather data on acculturation such as the Marin-Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics; however, a review of the literature did not find other Marianismo studies gathering qualitative data on acculturation. The researcher purposefully made the four acculturation statement questions close ended and measured on a likert-type scale to focus the participant’s responses to their experience of acculturation in order to directly gather the participant’s perceived acculturation level and the likert-type scale provides room for a range of responses on a continuum, the likert-scale key was adapted from the Silencing the Self Scale (found in Vazquez, 1998). Each of the four acculturation statement questions was followed with a question that asked the participant if their response to the statement has caused any conflicts in their life, which allowed the participant space to reflect on her response and this allowed the researcher to gather qualitative data on acculturation.

The four acculturation statement questions were based on Berry (1980) theory of acculturation based on the process of psychological adaptation (as cited in Murguia, 2001). Berry (1980) varieties of adaptation of acculturation consisted of various ways

adaptations can occur: assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation” (Berry, 1980, p. ). The research based the four acculturation levels on the descriptions of assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation phases found in Murguia (2001). The participant was provided a copy of the four acculturation statement questions for their viewing when the researcher was at the point in asking, which followed the final qualitative questions on the interview guide questions. The copy of the acculturation questions were provided to the participants to assist them in thinking about the questions and viewing the likert-type scale responses (Appendix G, Appendix I). The four acculturation questions consisted of “I” statements about acculturation that were posed to all of the participants and provided on paper for the participants, at the end of the interview in which they scored their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point-likert-scale.

Some modifications that were made during the interview process were that the researcher changed the vocabulary after asking the interview guide question to reframe the question and to ensure participants’ comprehension of what was being asked. For example, question #1 asked the participant how they perceived their role as a woman the researcher followed it with a reframed question that asked: “How do you see your role as a woman” and did so with other questions with vocabulary that was not easily understood by participants. Limitations with this interview guide will be discussed in the Finding Chapter under limitations.

### *Sample*

A total of fifteen women of Mexican decent were interviewed in May 2007, seven were Mexican women who were born in Mexico and now living in the United States and seven were Mexican-American women who were born in the United States, an additional participant did not meet the inclusion criteria for the study because both her parents were not of Mexican decent; thus, only fourteen interview and demographic questionnaire data were analyzed for purposes of this study. The criteria for the study required that participants were age eighteen or older; the participants were of Mexican decent, the participants' parents were both of Mexican decent and participants' spoke either English or Spanish, or both languages. Exclusion criteria for purposes of this study were if a participant's parents' were not both of Mexican decent. For example, if a participant's mother was Mexican and her father was Guatemalan the participant would not meet the criteria for the study. Participants were similar in socio-economic status, education, and religion. The Mexican group was homogenous in that all were married or had been married before and all had children. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix C, Appendix D) was used to gather background information on participants.

Upon approval from Smith Colleges Human Subjects Review Committee the research proceeded with recruitment from a social service agency in Northern California and the researcher recruited participants from a local church she attends. The researcher enlisted the help of a point of contact person from local agency. Once written permission was obtained from the director of the agency and Smith College School for Social Works Human Subjects Review Committee the researcher proceeded with the recruitment process. The agency executive director was the main contact person at the agency and



she allowed the researcher to post a flyer and allowed the researcher to recruit at two groups by speaking to group members at the start of the groups which were a Spanish speaking domestic violence group and a Spanish speaking parenting group. When the researcher spoke to the people attending the two groups she introduced herself, informed them about the purpose of her research project, of the topic of the research and handed out flyers. From the two groups, only two women from the domestic violence group volunteered to participate and provided the researcher their phone numbers. The researcher contacted the two women within one to two days of the initial in person contact. The researcher did not receive any responses from the posted flyer or the other flyers that were given to group member in either of the two groups.

With the agency's executive officer permission, the researcher proceeded to recruit staff who worked at the agency which included two administration staff and a program director. This yielded three staff participating in the study. A total of five participants were recruited from the local social service agency. One of these participants did not meet the criteria for the study because only one of her parents was of Mexican decent and their data was not analyzed.

The researcher attempted to recruit from a local Catholic Church and had obtained verbal permission from the parish's pastor; however, due to the pastor being ill it was difficult to obtain written permission from the pastor to allow recruitment to occur. The researcher abandoned the efforts at recruitment at the local Catholic Church once friendly staff reported that the pastor was difficult to get a hold of due to his illness and was reluctant to provide written permission because he thought verbal consent should suffice. Due to time being of the essence, the researcher recruited participants from a local

Protestant Church she attends which is predominantly made up of Latinos, after getting verbal consent from her pastor (the church's pastor). This was done through an announcement the researcher made to the congregation at the end of a church service and also by having flyers placed at the entrance of the church for people to take. The researcher had attempted to recruit from a sister church that is affiliated with the local church; however, such efforts were also futile since the point of contact person was busy and could not find participants. The researcher recruited a total of seven participants from her local church.

The researcher at that point had twelve participants of which one did not meet inclusion criteria, thus there were eleven participants but in order to increase the sample size to fifteen and to vary the sample the researcher asked friends and a family members for participants they can refer for this study that are their friends or acquaintances. This yielded three additional participants which brought the sample to fourteen participants who met inclusion criteria for this study.

All of the participants that were recruited for this study were informed about the purpose of the study: they were informed that the researcher was a student in the Masters of Social Work program at Smith College School for Social Work and the research is for the Master's Thesis research project that is a partial-fulfillment requirement to graduate and were informed participants the nature of the research topic but not told that it was specifically about Marianismo; Marianismo is not well known to many Latinas and the researcher did not want to skew the research data collection by introducing a new term to participants; however the participants were informed that the research was about Latina values and their role as a woman and the influence of their family. The majority of the

participants received a flyer that provided information about the research project with exception to the three participants that were recruited through personal acquaintances of the researcher.

If the potential participants agreed to participate the researcher arranged to meet them to first read, ask questions and sign the consent form, then complete the demographic questionnaire, and lastly participate in the interview. The participants that were recruited through the social service met with the research at the social service agency, in a quiet room that allowed for privacy at the prearranged date and time. Participants that were recruited through the church were interviewed in their homes, since the researcher was acquainted with the participant and this was a convenient way for the subjects to be able to participate. For participants that were recruited through the researcher's personal acquaintances the researcher contacted the participant by phone to explain the study and answer any questions and when the participant agreed to participate the researcher arranged a date and time to meet with the participant and the mutual acquaintance at the participant's home. The mutual acquaintance met the researcher at the participant's home on the scheduled appoint date and time to facilitate the initial contact and as a safety precaution. Once contact was facilitated the mutual contact left and the participant and researcher continued on with the research process (e.g. signing of consent form, the completion of the demographic questionnaire and the audio-recorded interview).

### *Ethics and Safeguards*

The confidentiality of participants was protected by not using the participants name or any other identifying information (name of children, name of work place, name

of place participant was recruited from) in interview notes and transcriptions of audio cassettes, or on labels of audio cassettes. Instead in the transcription in brackets was stated that (name of son was given) or (name of work place provided) and tapes and data were labeled with a number (1-15) that corresponded to each of participants followed by a letter (a or b) to aid in quickly distinguishing which of the two group categories (Mexican or Mexican-American) the participant belonged to based on what was their country of birth (Mexico or U.S). After the three years have expired, all the materials will be destroyed when no longer needed.

The benefits for participants included the opportunity to discuss and share their story about their culture, their family and their values. The study also helped participants look at their role as a woman and reflect on their cultural values and reflect on the values of the dominant culture. After the interview, the researcher stopped the audio recording and asked participant's how it was for them to participate. Many of the participants stated that the topic was important and a few mentioned that it got them thinking about things they had not thought about before and one younger woman said it was fun. An additional benefit is that participants were informed via the flyer, that their contribution would benefit the research on Latina women. The potential risks to participants included that the topic of questions (cultural values, their role as a woman, and parent influence) may bring up feelings or memories that are painful for the participant. Participants were informed of such risks and were given a resource list along with the consent form, should any feelings come up for them that they need to talk about with a professional.

### *Data Collection*

The data was collected in two forms from participants: via the demographic questions and during the audio taped interviews. The demographic questionnaire took participants' approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Some of the demographic data is displayed on tables 1.1 to 1.4. The audio taped semi-interviews was structured, and ranged from approximately 35 to 50 minutes which included mostly open ended questions with four close ended questions. The researcher took some notes of relevant themes during the interview but mostly listened and asked participants questions. During the interview, participants were asked a series of 10 qualitative questions on Marianismo, the one qualitative question on cultural differences followed by the four acculturation questions. The data was transcribed, analyzed and coded by the researcher for themes. The information of the participants such as the demographic questionnaires, and the signed consent forms was stored separately from the transcribed interviews to ensure that confidentiality of participants was upheld as stated in the Informed Consent form (Appendix A, Appendix B).

### *Data Analysis*

The research collected in the audio recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed by themes. Analyzing the data by themes is an approach used in qualitative research. The data was coded by highlighting and writing on the transcriptions of the audio-recordings and then placed into charts for easy viewing of the data and participant responses. Additional themes were also noted such as references to poverty or economic difficulty. Quotes were used in the findings section to illustrate the points being made. The data presented in the next chapter compares the findings both the Mexican and Mexican-

American group to one another to note differences or similarities between the groups with quotations are provided that illustrate the themes found.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this project was to explore the cultural construct and gender construct of Marianismo thought to be a phenomenon found in Latinas that is characterized by self denial, subjugation to men, placing the needs of others first, and sacrificing for her children. This project examined if specific characteristics of Marianismo were endorsed by participants who are Mexican women born in Mexico who emigrated to the U.S. and Mexican-American women born in the U.S. through qualitative interviews. For this study, the term “Mexican women” will denote Mexican women who were born in Mexico and now are living in the U.S. The term “Mexican-American women” will denote participants were born in the U.S. and who are of Mexican decent. The hypothesis of this study is that Marianismo characteristics will be endorsed more in the Mexican women than in their Mexican-American counterparts.

The interview guide questions asked how the participants viewed their roles as women; how their mothers viewed a mother’s role; and how their father’s viewed a daughter’s role. Other questions asked participants what were their professional and personal goals and what goals their parents had for them. Another set of questions asked about topics such as their views of infidelity and abuse, communication with others, putting other’s needs first, messages they received from parents about marriage and sex, and cultural differences. In the final part of the interview guide participants rated

themselves on a five-point likert-scale based on acculturation phases. This final part of the interview will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

There were fourteen participants; seven Mexican and seven Mexican-American. A fifteenth participant did not meet all the criteria for the study because both her parents were not of Mexican decent; thus, the data from the participant was not examined. For easier examination of the data, the Mexican and Mexican-American woman were split into two categories (group A and group B) based on if they were born in Mexico or born in the U.S., in order to note any differences or similarities in Marianismo adherence between the two groups.

The study is a comparative exploratory study, between Mexican and Mexican-women and their Marianismo values. The women were asked questions that tried to elicit Marianismo themes the participant adhered to. The data is organized by the Marianismo question-topics, which make up the main headings. Under each of these heading, the data is displayed by groups (Mexican or Mexican-American). Additional themes that the data demonstrated that are not necessarily indicative of Marianismo factors are also provided. Next, qualitative data collected on the participant's perception of cultural differences is provided and displayed by group. Lastly, the four likert-type questions on acculturation phases will briefly be discussed, and the data is displayed in tables and displayed by group.

### *Demographic Information*

#### *Mexican women*

The Mexican women in this study are made up of seven women, five of whom were recruited through a Protestant church. Thus the majority of the women 71% (n=5),



identified their religious affiliation as Protestant. Two women were recruited from a domestic violence group at a social service agency. One woman's religious affiliation was Catholic, and the other did not affiliate with any religion. Two of the women in this group were a mother and daughter dyad. All identified as heterosexual. Currently, four were married, and one was divorced, and one was separated and one was single. One of the women graduated from college, two of the women had attended college, three graduated from high school, and one did not graduate high school.

The annual family income of the Mexican group ranged from \$20,000 to \$60,000, with the majority falling between \$20,000 to \$50,000 (see table 2.1). Four of the women, were employed and three were not employed. Their job types included "house wife" for the three non-employed women. As for those who were employed, two worked in childcare, one worked in house cleaning, and one was a driver. All of the Mexican women identified Spanish as their only fluent language.

All of the Mexican women in this group were born in Mexico, and immigrated to the U.S. between the ages of 20-36. The youngest participant in the Mexican group was 20 years-old and she immigrated at the age of 14. The longest period of time the participants have been living in the U.S. ranged from six years to 23 years. Two of the women had been living in the U.S. between 20-23 years; two women had been living in the U.S. between 9-10 years, and three women had been living in the U.S. for 6 years. All were first generation immigrants including the mother and daughter dyad who immigrated together. Lastly, all the women described their ethnic identity as "mexicana" or Mexican.

*Mexican Immigrant Women*

Table 1.1: *Ethnicity, Children, Occupation & Education Level*

<i>Ethnicity identified as:</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
American	0
Hispanic	0
Latina	0
Chicana	0
Mexican	7
Mexican-American	0
Latin-American	0
Other	0
<i>Do you have children?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Yes	6
No	1
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Driver	1
House Cleaning	1
Child care attendant	2
Not employed/housewife	3
<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Less than High School	1
Some High School	0
High School Graduate	3
Some College	2
College Graduate	1
Other	0

*Mexican Immigrant Women*

Table 1.2: *Generation Immigrated to U.S., Migration Age, Longest Period Living in U.S., and Plans to Live in U.S. Permanently.*

<i>Generation Immigrated</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
My Generation	6
Parents	0
Grandparents	0
Great-grandparents	0
Don't Know	0
Parents and Grandparents	0
<i>Migration Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
14-19 years old	1
20-25years old	1
26-29years old	1
30-35 years old	2
36-39years old	1
<i>Longest Period lived in U.S.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
6 years	3
9-10 years	2
20-23years	2
<i>Plans to live in U.S. Permanently</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Yes	5
No	1
Don't know	1

### *Mexican-American women*

Unlike the Mexican women, the Mexican-American women in this study were typically younger, and all identified as being single meaning none had ever been married and all were without children. All identified as heterosexual. Only two participants in this group were recruited from the Protestant church; thus this allowed for more variation in the sample. There were four participants who were Catholic and three who were Protestant. The women in this group were slightly more educated than the Mexican women with two being college graduates; two who had attended college or were presently attending a college; two who graduated from high school and one who did not graduate high school. For annual family income, two women did not answer this question on the demographic questionnaire form. The rest of the women's income ranged between \$40,000 to \$80,000+, with the majority falling between the \$40,000 to \$70,000 which is higher than the Mexican cohort. The majority of the women were employed; with six who were employed and one who was an unemployed college student. Their jobs consisted of mainly administrative type of work with three being admin/receptionist; one being security specialist; one coordinator; and one was a program manager in the social work field.

All identified speaking English fluently; five identified as being bilingual in Spanish. The Mexican-American women in this group varied in how they described their ethnic identification. It should be noted that the demographic questionnaire instructed them to choose only one ethnicity. Only one woman (n=1) actually identified as Mexican-American; two women (n=2) identified as Chicana; two women (n=2) identified as Hispanic; and one woman (n=1) marked "other." All of the women in this group were

born in the United States. The majority (n=5) of the women were first generation Mexican-Americans, meaning both their parents were born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States making them first generation Mexican-Americans. For one woman, both her parents were born in the U.S; the other woman's father was born in the U.S. and her mother was born in Mexico.

*Mexican-American Women*

Table 1.3: Age Range, Marital Status, Children & Religion

<i>Ages Range</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
18-20	2
21-25	2
26-30	1
31-35	1
36-40	0
41-45	1
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Married	0
Separated	0
Single	7
Divorced	0
Widowed	0
<i>Do you have children?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Yes	0
No	7
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Catholic	4
Protestant	3
None	0
Other	0
<i>Generation Immigrated</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
My Generation	0
Parents	4
Grandparents	1
Great-grandparents	0
Don't Know	1
Parents and Grandparents	1

*Mexican-American Women*

Table 1.4: *Ethnicity, Income, Occupation & Education Level*

<i>Ethnicity identified as:</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
American	0
Hispanic	2
Latina	1
Chicana	2
Mexican	0
Mexican-American	1
Latin-American	0
Other	1
<i>Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
No Response Given	2
\$40, 000-\$50,000	1
\$50,000- \$60,000	2
\$60,000-\$70,000	1
\$80,000 and over	1
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Admin/receptionist	3
Coordinator	1
Security specialist	1
Program manager	1
Not employed/student	1
<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Less than High School	0
Some High School	1
High School Graduate	2
Some College	2
College Graduate	2
Other	0

### *The Goals of the Women*

Each woman was asked what goals she had for herself, personal goals or professional goals. The majority of the Mexican women's goals were related to their roles as mothers. The majority of the Mexican-American women's goals were about educational and career ambitions, and to one day have a family.

#### *Mexican Women*

The majority of the women had their goals focused on their families and primarily on raising their children; more specifically this was a theme of the women whose religious affiliation was Protestant. A 26 year-old mother of two young children stated,

Well my goals are nothing more that to better my family. To see my children grow older. That they are well in their lives, physically, spiritually, and economically. Those, I think, are the greatest goals that I have.

Some had goals to improve their English and get an education to acquire a good job. A goal for a 36 year-old married mother of two adult children was to learn English. One goal of a single woman, age 20, was to get an education. A newly separated 35 year-old mother of two, who was recruited from the domestic violence group stated,

Well, my goal is to learn English well. And then study something, if I plan to stay here in this country. I have to be prepared to have a good job, different from the one I can do now that doesn't need education.

Another woman recruited from the domestic violence group, a divorced mother of three, was proud of herself because she had met all of her goals, which included having children, having employment, buying a car, having had owned a house with a now ex-husband, and achieving being educated as a teacher.



### *Mexican-American women*

The Mexican-American group was homogeneous because the participants were all single and without children. Compared to the Mexican group, the Mexican-American group was slightly more educated. Like some of the Mexican women, these women had educational and professional goals. However, for the Mexican-American women they were more focused on the future and wanted to achieve professional and educational aspirations prior to having a family of their own. A 31 year-old woman who is a graduate student said,

Some of the personal goals that I have are basically at the professional level. I want to gain more experience in my field, organizational development. I hope in the future, probably five to six years from now, to work in that particular field, to put into practice what I learned. I also want to have my own business, and I definitely want to get married. I hope that happens (slight laughter). But if that doesn't happen I guess that (the goal) will be at a more personal level. To have my own family and be able to experience what it is to be in a relationship that is so committed.

One forty-one year-old woman discussed her professional goals as well as coming to terms with unaccomplished goals at this point in her life. She said,

Personal life: I want to raise my cats until their fifteen, twenty maybe. I don't have any kids, so my goals as a woman are to be happy and accept who I am—my personal life. I'm not involved with anyone personally right now. To just be happy....I'm highly educated but at the same time I had to deal with issue in my life....So I'm thankful for who I am today....Sometimes I wish I had kids, but not really. I have a niece that I adore so. And I like traveling and so on.... Professionally, I would like to continue educating others, and I want to do it on a more higher platform, meaning seminars, possibly writing a work book. I do that a little bit now. I go educate other agencies, for judges, ...for foster homes, ...but I want to do it at a higher scale. But part of me is just happy with what I'm doing now. It's vital.”

### *Perception of Their Role as Women*

The women were asked how they perceived their role as woman, which is important to know to see if there are any links to Marianismo values. Most of the

Mexican women had a tendency to describe their role in the traditional woman's role which differs in comparison to how the Mexican-American women described their role.

#### *Mexican women*

The majority of the Mexican woman saw their role linked to motherhood and responsibility in seeing that their children grow up to be good human beings. For example, one 35 year-old mother discussed the importance in socializing and raising her children so that they become a vital part of society. She said,

My role as a woman is very important not only for the family but for society. It's us as mothers that raise our children with moral basis. And we influence them so they can be good students and become professionals, which will benefit them and it benefits the society.

There was one woman who defined her role differently than the rest of the woman. The 44 year-old woman, a domestic violence survivor, said she saw herself as, "A strong woman. I have a strong character. I have overcome and moved forward with my three children..." There were two women that did not provide substantial data to this question.

#### *Mexican-American women*

The Mexican-American responses to how they viewed their role as a woman differed from how the majority of the Mexican women had responded. The Mexican-American woman did not describe their role in terms of the traditional woman's roles as did many of the Mexican women. The Mexican-American women defined their roles in terms of being independent, strong, or educated.

The next statements made by the women reflect how this group redefines the role of the woman. One 41 year-old woman said, "I perceive my role as a woman in terms of

being nurturing, highly educated and being a vital part of society. Yeah, that's very empowered." While a 27 year-old woman discussed her role as being independent, she said, "My role is working. Very strong, independent, not relying on anybody. I'm very independent. I don't depend on anybody."

One educated 31 year-old saw her role as balancing various roles, which included financially supporting her family of origin who migrated from Mexico to live with her, while she attended graduate school and worked a full-time career, she replied:

I think (it's) very challenging, that's mainly I guess because I see myself caught between many different roles like what I have to do at school, at work (and) at home. I see myself as head of a household even though I'm really not one."

One 19 year-old, undergraduate student, seemed to oppose being defined as a woman and preferred to see herself as an individual. She stated,

...I don't see myself as simply as a woman, but ..More as an individual, as a person and I have the same responsibilities as anybody else. I have to work to pay my bills, just like everybody else. I have to go to school to get a job just like everybody else. So I don't just see myself as a woman. If you ask me if I have any womanly responsibilities or if because I'm a woman I have the responsibility of getting married that's another question. But I think the role of a woman is not so clear anymore.

#### *Their Mothers' Role*

The women were asked about how their mothers' viewed a woman role. Many of the women in both groups discussed their mother's view of a woman's role in a traditional woman's role. There were a few exceptions in both groups where their mothers were not perceived in the traditional role. Another question that was asked to the women that is incorporated into this section asked how much did their mothers feel that they had to sacrifice for their children.

### *The Mexican women*

Many of the Mexican women's mothers had traditional roles. From the woman's stories and comments it was apparent their mothers sacrificed a lot to help their family. The majority of the women (n=5) did view their mother as sacrificing for her children. Two other women did not provide substantial information for the question that asked how their mother viewed their roles but did provide enough information about their mothers sacrificing for their children. One of these women seemed opposed the question about how much her mother sacrificed and said her mother did not view it as a sacrifice but did everything out of love.

A 36 year-old woman of four children viewed her mother as sacrificing. She said,

My mom never talked about her sacrifice but it was great. My mother got married at age twenty and my father was about forty-five (years old) and it was always hard for her. We were ten (children) but she abnegated herself and took care of us. But she never said that she sacrificed herself or anything.

There were two women who did not see their mother as sacrificing for their children. Both these women's mothers did not fit the traditional woman's role completely. One of these women, a 44 year-old single mother, viewed her mother as "strong, but very dominating". She stated, "Well I don't know how much she would sacrifice herself, because she more so liked accommodations--because my father had money. So she liked things easy." A 59 year-old woman described her mother working outside the home frequently to help the family with additional income and she too did not perceive her mother as sacrificing. She said,

In those times that I'm talking about, I was born in (the late 1940's), the women were housewives. They did not do any other thing but to bear children, make the

food, wash, and iron. My mom was not exactly that type of woman. ...No, my mother worked what she mainly did was business to bring money (home). For example, with friends at the market she would sell them jewelry, or shoes—up to food, eggs, dresses, purses. So that was the type of business my mom did on her own. ...That was the way she found a little money. And she would leave the house, maybe it was to get a break from the children too.

Some women saw their mother's role as more difficult than their roles because they felt their mother endured more hardship in the home with their husband. One woman stated,

I think for my mother it was more difficult. That life was even harder for her because my father is a man who is machista. Even though he maintained the household, she stayed and took care of us. She saw her work as attending to the family and that was it. I believe she did not have the opportunity to do more things that she has the capacity to do.

Most of the women seemed to perceive their role differently than that of their mother. For example, one 26 year-old mother who had described her role as meeting the needs of her husband and children which is a traditional woman's role, viewed her mother's traditional role as "old fashioned". She said,

Well my mom was a person that was very submissive. Maybe you can even call her old fashioned (giggles). She was always under my father—doing um—well under him—doing what he said, with what he asked. I'm different....In the manner that I know that a man and a woman have the same rights. The rights to make our own decisions as individuals, responsibilities and liberties, but always need to maintain respect one to another.

#### *Mexican-American women*

Like the Mexican women, just about all of the Mexican-American women 85% (n=6) saw their mother's role as a more traditional one in caring for the children but one difference is that the majority of the women's mother's in this group also worked outside the home. One 19 year-old high school graduates said,

Just-just takes care of us. She's not the head—I wouldn't—I wouldn't consider my mom as head of the household because she does depend on my other sisters—I mean my mom works but they handle all the accounts, everything. So then my mom basically works and takes care of the kids and that's it.

All of the women in this group viewed their mother as sacrificing for her children.

A 23 year-old woman described her mother as still sacrificing for her adult children:

Well I could still see it how she sacrifices for me and my brother. Doesn't matter how old we are. (It) doesn't matter (that) my brother (is) married already, she would still sacrifice herself for my brother and for me because I think that for her, her children are everything, her everything. And she would do anything for her children...

The majority of women in this group, 85% (n=6) had mothers who immigrated to this country from Mexico. Thus these women likely saw their mother contend with the challenge of adapting to the U.S. dominant culture.

One woman 23 year-old viewed her mother as having fewer opportunities:

...because she (mother) came from Mexico, I don't think she has the same opportunities because she doesn't understand English very well. ...And she came here to work. Because I think that's, you know, what she needed to do to survive here...I think she has less opportunities, but her role as a woman is of course like a mother—take care of her children, and of course like a wife and ...working.

A 31 year-old woman saw her mother's role as more difficult in comparison to her own role because her mother had to work outside the home and come home to work too. She said,

I think for my mother it was a little more difficult than it was for me to one degree. And I think that, that has to do with the fact that she was married, had children and she worked. And on top of everything she had to come home and take care of all the home chores. And you know, my father was not so flexible as I would expect someone in my generation to be if I were married.

Lastly, only one woman described her mother as independent even though her mother also was a housewife, and did perceive her mother as sacrificing for her children. She also discussed other independent women in the family who influenced her. She said,

...But my dad had to work in the United States so she lived by herself for a very long time (in Mexico) so that caused her to be very independent. She didn't have to ask for permission where she was going or what she was doing. I guess she took a lot of responsibilities that I guess belonged to my Dad. So again, I don't think she sees any clear-cut responsibilities because she had to do both. ...I guess that is why I think along the same lines. Because I grew up with very independent women who didn't stick to ordinary roles that women are given.

...All my aunts went to college (or) to the university. I grew up with them picking (out) their clothes to go to work. I grew up with them taking me to their offices. Driving me in their cars. There were not the typical women that stayed at home. They were different sort of women (that) I grew up with.

#### *The Fathers View of Their Role*

The women were asked how their father's viewed their role as women. Many of the women in both groups discussed that their fathers encouraged them to study and get a good job.

#### *The Mexican women*

There were three women who were not able to answer this question. One of these women, a 36-year-old mother, did not respond to this question because her father left the family at an early age. Another 26 year-old woman reported that her father respected his daughters but there was not a lot of communication between father and daughter; thus, she did provide additional data. Another woman who is 59 years-old did not receive any advice from her father because her parents were primarily focused on survival. She said,

It was that those were other generations, other generations, other mentalities, and also they (her parents) did not have much education. Well, a little less than myself. And so those were other times, and in those times I do not believe that

my dad was a “machista”. He was loving. And we were nine woman—all woman living in the house. And he was the only man.

The other four women discussed their fathers as wanting them to be independent or to get an education. A 44 year-old single mother mentioned that her father’s goals for her were that she be independent, have a family, and better herself. She expressed gratitude for the lessons her father taught her. She also shared,

...He made us (she and her siblings) very independent. He didn’t like that we always depended on him. He would push us, “No, no, no, you all do it on your own—you all do it—because I’m not going to help you all your life... That’s why I want you to study, to work and to do things on your own.

A 35 year-old woman discussed her fathers goals were that she graduate from the university and have a good job. She said,

My dad, I think it may have been hard for him being machista and not having male children because he only had three daughters. But he always encouraged us to study. He told us it was the most important thing. And he wanted us to be women that are decent, religious. I think that was the most important.”

#### *Mexican-American women*

There were three women in this group as well who could not provide an answer to the question. One of the women did not respond to this question because she had no “contact” with her father. Another woman had difficulty in answering the question regarding how her father viewed her role because she and her father have a relationship in which they don’t communicate much because of “boundaries”. One middle aged woman, whose father was deceased, recalled that he was domestically violent toward her mother and abused alcohol; thus she did not know if he really had goals for her.

Like, the Mexican women, there were four Mexican-American women who also stated that their fathers also encouraged them to study or become independent.



A 27 year-old explained how her father perceived her role: “I think the same (way) as I do. To be independent. Not to rely on a man. To take care of myself.” A 19 year-old undergraduate commented that both of her parents had “high expectations” of her and wanted her to be a “successful person”. She also said about her father, “...He never really stated that I had any responsibilities at home. He just expected me to go to school and do well in what I did. He never really outlined my responsibilities as a woman.”

### *What a “Good Woman” Means*

This section is about how the women define what a “good woman” was for them. This question was posed to the women to find out what their beliefs about what a “good woman” is for them. The Mexican group attributed mostly traditional values to what a “good woman” meant for them such as being a dedicated wife and mother or in terms of virtues a woman should have. However, the Mexican-American group had a less traditional view of the role of a “good woman” which included themes of being in which many emphasized being a responsible mother as compared to the Mexican women discussing the importance of being dedicated mothers. The college educated Mexican-women emphasized the importance of self-care.

### *Mexican women*

Most of the Mexican woman described what a “good woman” is in terms of responsibility of taking care of her children. One woman said a “good woman” was to teach her children good morals in how they should behave. A single woman without children defined a “Good Woman” as follow: “I think a good woman means that a woman dedicates 100% to her children and she teaches them and dedicates time to them.” Another woman, a mother of four stated, “For me being a good woman is a good mother,

a good wife. Be dedicated to her children. Give them the best that one has and educate them.”

Other woman defined what a “good woman” was by her putting others needs first.

One woman said,

A good woman is a woman who is honest, correct. It’s a woman who does what she thinks is correct to do. That she knows that in order to reach her goals she does not need to pass over other people, nor pass over herself. ...Of course to help others always, that if it’s in our hands to do it. That’s if you can do it. Not necessarily economically but sometimes the companionship, the advice, sometimes that is real good for other people.

Another mother of two grown children stated, “To be a good woman for me, well ‘good’ covers a lot of things, to be attentive to those around you. To attend to those around you. Think about others than in oneself.”

*Mexican-American women:*

The Mexican American group discussed what a good woman meant to them. . . Many of the women (n=4) described a good woman in terms of values such as one woman the 23 year-old said, “I think a good woman is someone who first of all respects herself...so other people can respect her. And it means (to have) dignity....” Other women discussed the importance of being a responsible parent. A 27 year-old woman said, “I would think a good woman would just be there. ...Of course, not being out with your friends, not going out to parties...But to take care of responsibilities and take care of your family as well as working.”

The college educated Mexican-American women discussed their view of a “good woman” by describing ways woman can take care of themselves and make their lives manageable. A 19 year-old undergraduate student stated, “I believe a good woman has to

compromise, but not sacrifice. Nobody has to sacrifice—I don't feel anybody should be sacrificing themselves. I feel like there's a third space like (a) middle ground for compromise.”

A 41 year-old educated professional woman described her role as growing and coming to terms with her cultural identity, and she also replied,

She follows her path and maybe the path of her mother and tries to make a new road. And also at the same time keeps some of the traditions that are important to her. I think it's a really big role to make ourselves happy. To be able to—I know many women ...my friends, in my culture that don't know how to relax or be who we are....

One 31 year-old graduate student described her role as finding balance and discussed her view of a woman's role in relationships which was a less traditional view and she discussed setting realistic expectations in relationships. She said,

I think that I'm a little more selfish. I think that what a good woman would do is be in balance with herself. I strongly believe if you're not in balance with yourself, you can't offer anything to anybody else. You need to love yourself. I think a good mother is a person who is able to find her own faults and try to work them out. And at the same time, try to guide her children without becoming over protective. Let them do what they have to do and correct them when they are wrong. ...Don't make decisions for them, because eventually we end up doing what we want regardless of values. ...I think a good woman would be-if your married...that you are able to listen and attend to the concerns of your significant other without trying to overrule him. And giving the person the space and the respect to take their own (or) his own decisions and be able to manage through their own struggles.

#### *Parents' Messages about Marriage*

This section discusses the messages the women in both groups received about marriage. There were a lot of similarities between the two groups about the messages they received which had themes of traditional marital values such as not having sex

before marriage or not getting divorced. There were some differences between the two groups about the marital advice they received.

*Mexican women*

Some of the women mentioned that they did not receive much advice on marriage from their parents. A couple of the women discussed that their parents worked hard to maintain the family so there wasn't a lot of communication about such topics. The women that did receive messages about marriage were based on traditional marital values, such as being a virgin at matrimony and being submissive to your husband. A 20 year-old woman discussed the messages she had received. She said,

About marriage, that I had to marry as a virgin, and that, that I had to be a virgin and I had to be married in the Church, dressed in white. And that I should always listen to my husband.

Some women received the message about divorce being wrong. A 36 year-old mother of two grown children stated,

My mom always advised me that a woman should be—she taught me to have a well established marriage. That marriage was to only happen once. For her divorce did not exist. One should conduct themselves correctly so that later on there won't be any separation.

One 35 year-old mother of two young children received a different message than the other women. She was told to avoid being in an abusive relationship. She said,

My mom, the advice she would give is to do everything contrary to what she did. That we would be educated, that we did not depend on economically on our husbands. That we did not let ourselves be abused. That we be strong, independent, fighters. She was not it, but she would encourage that we be that way.

*Mexican-American women*

Some of the traditional messages that both groups received from their parents were similar in that their parents believed in no premarital sex and no divorce. One 31 year-old woman said that messages she received were, “that you marry once, and that it’s forever. That you don’t divorce. Although, I’ve seen my family try to maintain their marriage afloat.”

The Mexican-American women’s messages that they received from their parents’ seemed more elaborate than the advice their Mexican counterparts received from their parents. Many of the Mexican-American women described their parent’s advising them to be careful in the partner they chose. For example, the advice a 23 year-old woman said,

Well actually my mom was the one (to give advice). What she tells me (is) to find someone who is a hard worker and that respects me and that first of all he loves me. ...And a person who wants to better himself. Not be in the same place. You know that he has hopes, desires...to better himself.

A 27 year-old woman, whose parents were both born in the United States replied,

Not to get married for the wrong reasons like if this guy has money. If I were to have a kid with this person (that I need) to be really, really in love. And know (and be certain) that, that is the person I want to spend the rest of my life with and that he will take care of me and be there for me.

Lastly, one woman’s parents encouraged her to become economically independent she said,

I think (the messages were) very mixed. They I mean, they do hope—they don’t force me to find someone. I guess they want me to be independent so when I do marry I don’t have to rely on that person economically, emotionally so whatever happens in the future I can stand on my own. They do want me to find happiness. But just in case, they want me to be an independent person that can stand up to anybody.

### *Attitudes toward Abuse and Infidelity*

The next section explored this topic with the women posed with a question on how much did their mother feel she should tolerate her husband's behavior even his negative behavior such as abuse or infidelity? The responses to the questions varied. Some of the women in both groups provide general and vague responses, while others in both groups identified abuse and infidelity taking place in their homes.

#### *Mexican women*

The answers from the women varied widely. Four of the women were not able to respond to the question. A 59 year-old woman counted herself thankful not to have grown up in an abusive home. Another also reported she did not grow up in an abusive home. A woman, whose father left the home when she was young, said that she was not able to answer the question. A 36 year-old woman provided a vague response. A 26 year-old mother of two young children answered the question by stating the advice she would likely receive from her mother. She said, "My mom was always submissive. Maybe she would tell me I should endure it."

A 44 year-old woman discussed her own experience with domestic violence and discusses a particular situation in which she told her mother about it for the first time. She said her mother stated, "Give him another opportunity. He's the father of your children. He will change. (Name of the husband given) is a good person. Give him another opportunity." She said she told her mother, "No, more. Because you have not lived with what I have been living. He's the father of my children but that does not matter to me. And I left him."

Another woman from the domestic violence group responded to the question about her mother tolerating abuse or infidelity by stating in a matter of fact tone:

Okay, she endured that, abuse and infidelity. And she took it well. She would say that my father was the person that maintained us in the house. And she could not go to another place. There were three of us (daughters)... In reality, I don't know if it was for that, or because she loved him.

This same woman described her mother's not desiring that her daughters deal with domestic violence. She said,

She (the mother) would say to us (her daughters), you all I don't want you all to go through this—I ask God always that you all get good husbands, and you all don't go through anything like what I have endured.

When asked what their thoughts were on a wife tolerating such behavior most of the women provided general statements that it is wrong, or it should not be tolerated.

A 35 year-old woman said,

Definitely no. Definitely no. From the beginning, from the first time he hit her, from the first time he abused her, from the first time he insulted her—I don't know what or when he was unfaithful—I don't know when the first time would have been. From the first time, in those times I think she had a young girl (daughter), or maybe she wasn't even pregnant yet. She should have left him.

A young single woman considered the larger social context of Mexican society, and replied,

I think if I marry and my husband hits me or beats me or abuses me sexually or physically, I think it is not right. That the woman should speak out and not stay quiet. But in Mexico, the woman stays quiet out of fear and she does not talk. Because we were taught that in Mexico, the majority of the women are not educated and if they are not educated they are not worth anything. Therefore, if they leave their husbands or denounce them, or whatever, then what will the women do? She does not have another cause but only to hold her silence. And here (in the U.S.) it is much different. Here they defend women. And the government helps her. But over there (in Mexico) they don't. And for me personally, I think the woman should speak out it doesn't matter what-women can overcome. ...With infidelity, yes, it also is not just. Because if you did that to a

man, then the man would beat you, or would kill you, or do something to you. And the woman, what does she do? Nothing.

Interestingly, two women received advice from their fathers about not tolerating abuse. A 59 year-old woman stated,

For example my Dad, he always would tell us that we should endure from our husbands hunger (e.g. poverty), and this or that, but not beatings. When we started to get older he (father) would tell us that we should not tolerate beatings, no beatings from our husbands. And the home of my mother, it's a little large and he would tell us, "this house is for my daughters' the day that—don't tolerate beatings—come here this is your house." He would tell us to endure poverty but not beatings from men.

Similarly, a 35 year-old woman also said her father did not want his daughters to tolerate abuse; however, her father was himself abusive towards her mother. She said,

My Dad was a machista, but with us, the contract/role that he had with my mother was different from the contract/role he had with us. He knew his wife had to be that way but his daughters didn't. He would say my daughters will not be submitting to abuse. They will study. They need to do something so that no man could humble them.

#### *Mexican-American women*

Like the Mexican women, the Mexican-American women varied in their responses. There was one woman who acknowledged growing up in a non-abusive home. Two other women provided more general statements and did not answer the question directly. Four of them made direct references to such incidence occurring in their family of origin.

A woman, whose father is deceased, recalled two incidents in which her mother was hit by her father for intervening the spanking of another child. She said that the incidents were never "confrontational." The woman continued with discussing her



mother's tolerance of infidelity, and her reasons for tolerating it. The 19 year-old high school graduate stated,

Probably for (her mother) intervening, or for pulling him or something like that, something like that. But cheating yeah. There was cheating. ...She tolerated it for many years...she accepted it. She knew what was going on. Like she says "love is blind". ...I think she would do it more for her kids. She loved my dad a lot. She would do it for both reasons, because of her kids and because of her love towards my dad. And just traditional. You know now-a-days "he cheated on me" you know, whatever "divorce". I think it was more you know 'till death do us part'. And that's what happened. Yeah she knew what was up. All the time.

One 31 year-old woman had explained that some of her paternal uncles lived what she called "double lives" (extramarital affairs). She continued, "I guess from my mother...I got the message that it doesn't really matter how many partners, sexual partners your significant other might have, you still have to comply with whatever. Which I particularly don't agree with." She continued stating that her mother did not believe in divorce. She said,

...My mother considered it several times, and then she said that for my children I'm not going to do it. And she never did do it. I don't think it was really an option. It was an option, but I don't think it was considered seriously. And like my dad, I know my dad, even now-a-days he is too concerned about what people would say if he was to get divorced. ...I think my mom was very tolerant.

A 23 year-old woman described how her mother became more courageous over time and began to set limits with her father. She said,

...I think she learned like through experience. ...at first she would support it a lot. I think also she didn't know what other options she had. ...I think she supported it a lot all of that, but meanwhile she kept getting older, she was getting tired like of all the machista, you know, type of guy. And she started getting bold herself and not just that—she started seeing that there were other options. ...They migrated from Mexico—they're like in a whole different country, and it's hard for them. I think she was scared to ask for help because she didn't know where to look for it. ...but she kept getting bolder as... she got older...and little by little she starting stopping it. ...I think at first she supported it a lot, but then not anymore. She placed her limits, and when he passed the limits my dad knew that there were

going to be consequences for it. I think she improved a lot and that made me see that I should have my own limits too in (my) relationships.

The women were asked what their thoughts on a wife tolerating such abusive behavior from her husband. Two women were explicit that it a woman should not tolerate it. One 19 year-old high school student said,

She shouldn't tolerate it-hands on you. What guarantees you he won't ever do it again. And being in an abusive relationship is not good. Especially if she's not good mentally, especially if you have kids. ...If you see it growing up you probably—there is a possibility that you might do the same thing—hit your kids, or hit your spouse. And cheating? Much less (to be dealt with) (laughs) No.

One woman discussed the conflict of a women being in such a dilemma and pondered being in such a situation and had questioned what about one's own self-love, and values. She said,

I honestly, I don't think that anyone should withstand such bad treatment. ...If somebody cannot treat you with respect, why should you stay in the relationship where people don't respect you? I think that unless...you are truly in love or madly in love and your so afraid of letting that particular relationship go—I think that's when people must withstand—and not must, but that's why they withstand such poor treatment. But then I go back to what about me. What is the love for myself? And how tolerant I feel to let someone run me that way? ...I don't think that anybody has to over rule your life, just because you want to stay in a relationship. You have to put in first what values you have. If you value your self the most or you value the relationship the most. And why?

One woman believed it should be worked out if possible and suggested:

...may be talk about it at first but if he doesn't improve—I think we should have our own our limits as women. I think all women should have their limits and there's a limit to what a man could do to her.

A 19 year-old college student spoke of her likelihood of tolerating such a marriage for the sake of her (future) children. She said,

I think its easier for a married woman with no children to –at least I think if that were to happen to me, I really wouldn't tolerate it if I was, if I had no children.

But I think children force you to compromise more just for their stability needs. ... Their emotional (needs)—their need to be with dad.”

*Putting the Needs of Others First*

The women were asked what their thoughts were about putting others needs first, especially family before their own. Almost all of the women in this study (n=13) valued putting other’s needs first, especially the needs of their families.

*Mexican women*

The majority of the Mexican women, 85% (n=6) believed that putting other’s needs first was important. Only one woman disagreed, a 44 year-old domestic violence survivor, and did so in the context of her not enduring an abusive relationship for the sake of her children. A 36 year-old woman who believed in putting others needs first, replied, “That’s what I always try to do. To put others needs first and put aside my needs. Because to me it seems egotistical to think about oneself and not of others.”

*Mexican-American women*

Like the Mexican women, the Mexican-American women also valued putting other’s needs first before your own. All of the Mexican-Women said they thought that putting others needs first, especially that of their families before their own was important

One woman stated,

I think that’s something very common in our family because of our extended family: our nieces, and cousins, and aunts (they) are very important to us. So a lot of the times we put their needs before our own because that’s the way we grew up. We grew up to always be able to extend our hand to our family, of always providing for our family and helping our family out. So I guess, --I don’t know if that’s a tradition, but it’s a belief you always help out your family. No matter how far in the family tree they are.

### *Communication in Close Relationships*

The question that was posed to the women was how comfortable do you feel expressing your feelings in a close relationship when you know they may cause disagreement? Overall, the women would express their feelings even if it made them feel uncomfortable. Most of the Mexican women described being assertive in communication in a close relationship.

#### *Mexican women*

Many of the woman 71% (n=5) said they felt it was important even if it may be difficult. While one woman said she preferred to “stay quiet.” A 44 year-old women, discussed her attempts to share her feeling in the context of abusive relationships but withdraws because her partners have been condescending toward her. A 35 year-old discussed the importance of expressing your opinions. She stated,

No it doesn't matter. I need to say what I think. And if it's a close relationship there's even more reason to. You have to say what you feel and what you think. You cannot keep it. You cannot submerge it. You can't change it. You cannot disguise it. You have to do it. You have to say what you think and what you feel. I think that's what the other person is expecting from you.

Similarly, a 36 year-old woman also spoke of the importance of communication. She said,

I feel comfortable because much of the time communication makes more—it helps us express ourselves so other people can understand what we have inside. I feel comfortable even if the other person is not in agreement. I like to—I feel comfortable expressing what I feel.

#### *Mexican-American women*

The Mexican-American participants were also asked the question about how comfortable they felt in expressing their feeling in a close relationship when they knew it

would cause disagreement. Like the Mexican women, many of the Mexican-American women felt comfortable expressing their feelings in a close relationship. However, the Mexican-American women spoke to their personal communication style, which the Mexican women did not do. The Mexican women spoke generally about the value in communication. Because the Mexican-American women personalized their responses to the question, their answers fell on a continuum regarding the levels of comfort they have in communicating in a close relationship when it may cause disagreement.

One woman who appeared to have the least comfort discussed the value in only speaking up in serious circumstances. The 23 year-old woman said,

I think it's hard for me because I'm a person that doesn't like ...problems. ...But if it's something that I know that maybe is not right or that will bring something out to the light that would help then of course I would bring it out even though it would cause disagreement or even though it would cause pain. But I think it is important to do the right thing....

A 27 year-old woman, who was very assertive and very comfortable expressing her opinions said,

(giggles) Because I'm a very loud outspoken kind of a person—so it's on my mind I will say even if my other person does not agree. I'm still going to put my opinion out there. Because ...I was raised not to keep in—to express yourself—Let it out. Let the person know how you feel and everything. So I'm a very loud person (giggles). I get my point across to the other person.

#### *Messages from their Parents about Sex*

The women were asked what messages they received from their parents about sex. The majority of the women in both groups did not receive much information about sex from their parents.

### *Mexican women*

The unanimous reply to the question for this group was “none”. Many women discussed that the topic of sex was “taboo” and off limits for discussion. One 20 year old said,

In reality when kids are from Mexican culture there is not a lot of liberty to talk about that. They only say you should not have sex before marriage. But in reality they don't give you details or nothing. It's something confidential. It can't be talked about between parents and children.

A 35 year-old woman discussed receiving general advice. Her mother strongly discouraged any of her daughter's getting an abortion. She said,

Not much. Not much. I received more from school, even though the school was Catholic, the doctors went to give us classes, and the mother's didn't. My mom always would tell us to be careful, all the things that mothers say, and that we should be respected. And always, always would tell us that if for any reason one of us came out pregnant she would not ever forgive us if we had an abortion. She always told us that. But she did not tell us much as she should have.

### *Mexican-American women*

Most of the Mexican-American women had the same experience as the Mexican women because their parents did not address the issue of sex with them either. As one 31 year-old Mexican-American put it, “None! (laughs) You don't talk about it. You don't talk about it. And you don't talk about it...” One woman said she was told she had to wait until marriage. The common response of the women was that their parents did not address it or gave vague advice such as “You better not get pregnant” or “You better take care of yourself” but never discussing the issue further.

However, there was one woman, a 27 year-old, whose U.S. born parents did discuss the topic of sex with her. She said,

What they basically told me was that sex is shared between two people that really love each other, and basically really somebody that your going to marry—you husband. You know, I wouldn't even say someone that really loved each other because they're more like my grandmother's generation: to be married, then have your family. They don't really believe in premarital sex. That's kind of where my parents were too. But they're more like-up to date with how now-a-days you know. So they're not, you know, really but they just tell me that's not something to be giving to everybody—you just do it with one person that you really care for.

### *Cultural Differences*

A question was posed to participants about cultural differences on the perspective of the role of women, between the Latino culture and the “Anglo” American culture. The purpose of the question was to understand the participants' cultural values and beliefs regarding both cultures. Additionally, this helps give an understanding on how both Mexican women and Mexican-American women perceive Mexican culture and American culture and allows a comparison to be drawn between both groups. All of the women in this study thought that there were differences in how both cultures viewed the role of a woman. There were differences and similarities between both groups of women in how they perceived Mexican culture and American culture.

#### *Mexican women*

For the Mexican participants all noted differences between the two cultures in how each culture perceived a woman's role. One comparison topic two women discussed was the role of the mother. The Mexican women felt that Latina's highly regarded their role as mothers and demonstrated it by their sacrifice and devotion which differed in how they felt American women viewed their role as mother. A 35 year-old mother, eloquently captures the keen devotion of a Latina mother. She said,

Yes. There is a lot of difference. The Latinas we are the, the—although it might not appear to be—although it might appear that the head of the household is the

man—no it's not. It is us. It's the mother that directs everything. And it's the mother that wants you to see her every eight days even though you are already married. And it's the mother that you always seek. It's the mother that is always with you. She is unconditional to cook for you what you want; to watch your children for you; to be with you in your birth labors; for everything. And the Americans are very different, very different. . . . Once they (the children) turn 18 they (the parents) think that they are not responsible for their (children) anymore. And the Latina mothers, we think that we will be responsible for our children until death. We will always be there. It's not a burden to us. We do it with love. And I know that we are criticized for that. And to us women it doesn't matter—that does not interest us. Yes the difference is great. The Americans no, no they won't do—they won't sacrifice themselves like we do. To the contrary, for them it is easy to let go of their children, be it to go to work, be it for a divorce, or for— for many reasons. And us no, we fight for our children like ferocious animals. The difference is great.

Similarly, a 59 year-old mother, contemplated the dedication of a Latina woman while considering the draw backs to sacrificing too much for the children. She said,

(the Latina)...is more protective, more looking after her children. She sacrifices herself more for her children, for her family in general. And the "Anglo" isn't like that. The "Anglo" woman, from what I see is that they do not endure what one endures. Maybe that's good. Maybe that's good, but for the same reason they are more colder toward their children. If they have to separate or divorce they are thinking in "Me"...not thinking on their children. Maybe that is a bad thing too, since there are many Hispanic women who are abused, beaten, and cheated on and they say, "Well, I'm with him for my children". I have heard now that it is more harmful for the children to be in a relationship like that than to be separated. Yes there's a difference. I think there is a difference.

Some woman discussed positive values in the U.S. culture. A 26 year-old woman discussed equal rights for women in the U.S. She said,

Mexico goes by customs. It's something that is passed down from generation to generation. And I think that the "Anglo Saxons" have good reason. They have good reason in that both men and woman are equal and we have the same rights.

A 20 year-old viewed the U.S. as valuing women more and having more educational opportunities. When asked if she thought there were differences between the two cultures view of the woman's role she replied,



I think so. I think that here it's more liberal. And in Mexico no, no the women are worth less than here. So the women have fewer rights like in studying and unlike here (in the U.S.). The woman study's and does what she wants. And in Mexico...there are fewer opportunities, and sometimes many of the parents don't let their daughters study because they say, "Oh, your going to get married why you want to study?"

Two women made more general comments about cultural differences. One woman discussed the difference was that in the U.S. women had to work. She said,

One of the things for my family is that in Mexico the women do not work outside the home. The woman dedicates herself to her family. And here, sadly, or a good thing, she has to work (outside the home) to survive.

#### *Mexican-American women*

All of the women did see cultural differences in the roles of women. Many of the women saw the role of women in Mexico in terms of being a house wife. However, one woman did infer other Latino values such as the closeness of the family even when children are adults. The 24 year-old woman said,

Yeah, because I see that White Americans when they see their children turn 18 they want them out of the house and (to) be independent. And a lot of Mexican families they don't see that. They want them to be in the house still until they get married.

The rest of the women tended to discuss the Mexican culture's view of a woman in terms of the traditional house wife role and other cultural values were not really mentioned. For example, a 19 year-old said the following,

(The Latina woman is) ...Just a house wife. Stays home takes care of the kids, stays home, and that's about it. And the husband does all the work. But now-a-days you can't do that because they both have to work. ...And for Americans, yeah the dad works, the mom just stays home and takes the kids to practice and swimming lessons, you know what I mean? Piano lessons.

Additionally, many of the women discussed how there are more opportunities for women in "Anglo" American culture. A 24 year-old said,

Yes, I see a big difference. ...I do see Latinas, they are stay at home moms; they cook, and clean, and the dads go out to work. The “Anglo” I think they have more opportunities. And this (country) is their home. I think they know all the opportunities they have so it’s a lot different, you know. ...I think for them it’s not just (about) getting married and having kids. But they (the “Anglos”) see everything that they have and they can pick (and choose). ...I feel the Latinas it’s harder for them to choose their lifestyle and the Anglos no, I think that they –their parents have a lot to do with their decisions that they make. Like go to school, go to college then later on succeed then have a family after that.

One educated woman in graduate school who is financially supporting her family of origin who in recent years emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico stated,

The Latino culture still perceives the woman’s role as being more let’s say family oriented. Family oriented. Family oriented. You have to do everything for the sake of your family. And if your married for the sake of your children, and your husband. And that’s it. When it comes to the “Anglo” I think they are more open to accept the woman role as being more independent. And you don’t have to necessarily marry, you can live in a relationship that is free. ...Because they have more freedom, to undo things that they do. ‘You know, you got married it didn’t work, just undo it. Just get divorced. And if you have children yeah you stay in the relationship if you feel like it, if you don’t feel like it you don’t have to.’ That’s what I perceive.

Professionally, I feel that they (“Anglo” Americans) have also more support. You know they can be supported to go through college versus most Latinos like myself, we have to support ourselves if we want to pursue higher educations. In most cases (with) the “Anglos”, their parents support their studies. So they have in my opinion more chances of being successful. What do you do if you don’t have to worry about the financial aspect of your life?

One educated middle aged woman discussed the struggle for Mexican-American’s with their ethnic identity and not quite fitting in completely in either of the two cultures. She said,

Oh yes. Um, in fact I would say there is a real contradiction. I think in “Anglo” society a woman is defined by her beauty her looks, her intelligence, and her independence. ...But at the same time Hispanic women ...are defined by if they come totally Americanized or Anglosized—You’ve lost, you betrayed your culture. I been told that many times and even felt, I felt it. I even feel it myself on occasions.

Lastly, another young college student discussed the changing role of the Latina is not as pronounced as the American woman's role. She stated,

I think that "Anglo" American culture did have a traditional role for women. That's something that is evolving and it's been more clear of the change. With the Anglo culture you can see a definite change, and you could see it by decades how the change has progressed. With the Latinos you don't see it as clearly.

Both groups of women perceived cultural differences in how both cultures perceived the woman's role. The Mexican participants emphasized the importance of the Latina mother who was perceived as dedicated and sacrificing for her children more than the "Anglo" American mother. Some other themes that came up for the Mexican women included "Anglo" American women were seen as more willing to get divorced with little thought to the impact divorce has on children. In addition, some Mexican women discussed some positive values of the U.S. culture such as "opportunities" for education and employment and "equal rights" for women.

In contrast, the Mexican-Americans discussed their view of Latino culture's perception of the role of women as mainly being a traditional housewife, which many did not want for themselves. Other Latino values were not really discussed for this group. However, the Mexican Americans did also discuss certain opportunities "Anglo" Americans have such as staying home to take children to sport practices, or choosing to work. The Mexican-American women also alluded that "Anglos" have more access and knowledge of resources and opportunities that are afforded to them. They alluded to advantages of "Anglo" parents having high expectations of their daughters be more than just mothers and the ability to provide financial support to their college children which was seen as facilitating an easier life for their children to go to college. Some of the

women inferred that they did not have the same advantages due to cultural or economic dispositions.

### *Additional Themes*

There were also additional themes that came up in the responses of the women. There were some women especially in the Mexican group who discussed socio-economic-legal hardships that exist in Mexico. The women mentioned the conditions that oppress women in Mexico. For example, many women discussed the economic hardships their parents endured in order to financially maintain the family. One woman said, “Yes in Mexico, you can persevere, but only for the persons who have economic means to do so, and in my case we had low economic means. It was different.”

One divorced woman discussed the difficulty of the divorce process for a woman in Mexican to get a divorce. She said, “...because if the husband does not want to divorce-you cannot divorce. So it’s both parties not just one.”

One woman’s quote previously illustrated that women in Mexico are putting themselves at risk for retaliation if they leave their husbands, which is a demonstration that there are not enough legal protection and social support for women in Mexico caught in domestically violent relationships. Again, the woman said,

I think if I marry and my husband hits me or beats me or abuses me sexually or physically, I think it is not right. That the woman should speak out and not stay quiet. But in Mexico, the woman stays quiet out of fear and she does not talk. Because we were taught that in Mexico, the majority of the women are not educated and if they are not educated they are not worth anything. Therefore, if they leave their husbands or denounce them, or whatever, then what will the women do? She does not have another cause but only to hold her silence. And here (in the U.S.) it is much different. Here they defend women. And the government helps her. But over there (in Mexico) they don’t. And for me personally, I think the woman should speak out it doesn’t matter what-women can overcome. ...With infidelity, yes, it also is not just. Because if you did that to a

man, then the man would beat you, or would kill you, or do something to you. And the woman, what does she do? Nothing.

Many women discussed the lack of education for low income people in Mexico.

The 20 year-old who emigrated to the U.S. at age 14 said,

...Sometimes in Mexico they say that the woman can't study. Yes they give you a percentage of money, but for me I had to leave it (school). ...In my town (in Mexico), not one of the girls has finished their schooling. Not one. So I want to change that.

#### *Acculturation Questions*

Another goal of this research was to better understand the relationship between acculturation and Marianismo since past research has found the two to be independent of each other. Therefore, the four acculturation questions were created for the purposes of this study that were based on the work of Berry (1980) regarding the varieties of adaptation which are: Assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. The acculturation questions found on the last four questions of the interview guide (Appendix F) consisted of four "I" statements in which they score their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point likert-type scale. The acculturation questions are subject to how the participant interprets what is being asked. Therefore, it is not feasible to conclude a participant's acculturation adaptation level based on her response to one question, which was the original intention of the four acculturation questions. However the findings yielded interesting data and patterns that emerged with each group and between the groups.

As a result, the data will not be examined in terms of Berry's (1980) four varieties of adaptations. However, the participants' responses will be summarized briefly followed by analysis of the results of the likert-type scales.

The Mexican participant's responses are numbered 1-7 on table 2.1. The Mexican-American participants were numbered 8-14 on table 2.2.

The following are the four statements that were posed to participants to be graded on a five point likert-type scale which included the following five points,

(1) indicated Strongly Disagreed; (2) indicated Somewhat Disagreed; (3) indicated Neutral or Indecisive; (4) indicated Somewhat Agreed; and (5) indicated Strongly Agreed.

The following section explores the four questions the women were asked with a brief discussion of the participants' likert-point scale scores which they gave in response to the questions. The data is presented and separated by the two groups.

*Question 1:* I feel it is important for me to relinquish my Latina values so that I can take on more U.S. American values.

#### *Mexican women*

The Mexican participants immigrated to the U.S. as adults and have been living in the U.S. from a range of six years to twenty-six. There were two Mexican women who strongly agreed with this statement, three women who somewhat disagreed and two who strongly disagreed. Thus, the majority of the women (n=5) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement.

#### *Mexican-American women*

The majority of the Mexican-American participants differed in their response to the statement than their Mexican counterparts. The majority of the Mexican-American women were disagreed with the statement regarding if they felt it was important to relinquish their Latina values as much as possible in order to take on more American

cultural values, their responses included: the majority (n=5) of women strongly disagreed, and one somewhat disagreed, and one was neutral or indecisive.

*Question 2:* I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina culture values while incorporating U.S. American values in my life.

#### *The Mexican Women*

The Mexican women varied in their responses to the statement that mentioned the importance of maintaining one's Latina culture values while incorporating U.S. American values in one's life. Their responses included: two who strongly agreed (n=2); two who somewhat agreed (n=2); two who were neutral or indecisive (n=2); and one who somewhat disagreed (n=1).

#### *The Mexican-American Women*

The Mexican-American woman group were all in agreement with the statement to which four strongly agreed (n=4) and three somewhat agreed (n=3) that it is important to maintain my Latina culture values while incorporating U.S. American values in their lives.

*Question 3:* I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina values and avoid as much as possible interaction with U.S. American Culture

All the participants in this study either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the statement that it is important to maintain their Latina values and avoid American culture.

*Mexican women*

The majority of participants in the Mexican group (n=6) somewhat disagreed, while (n=1) strongly disagreed.

*Mexican-American women*

Similarly, the Mexican-American women disagreed overall just as their Mexican counterparts did. However, the Mexican-American group six (n=6) strongly disagreed and one (n=1) somewhat disagreed which is a slight contrast to the Mexican who had one person who strongly agreed while the rest somewhat agreed.

*Question 4:* I feel whether it is Latino culture or U.S. American culture is not very significant for at this point in my life.

*Mexican women*

The Mexican participants responded to the statement that culture whether it was Latino or U.S. American culture was not significant for them at this point in their lives with the majority of the women disagreeing with the statement, one participant strongly agreed with the statement, one somewhat disagreed with the statement and the majority five (n=5) strongly disagreed with the statement. Many of the women discussed the beauty there is in cultural values and how ones roots is embedded in their culture.

*Mexican-American women*

Compared to the Mexican group, there was more variation in the responses of the Mexican-American women to this statement. For the Mexican-American participants responses included one who somewhat agreed, one who was neutral or indecisive, one who somewhat disagreed and four (n=4) whom strongly disagreed with the statement.



In the following chapter I will elaborate on the findings and how it relates to the literature on Marianismo and this study's research questions. I will also explore the limitations of this study. I will discuss the implications of the research and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to learn about how Marianismo values impact the beliefs and behaviors of Mexican women and Mexican American women. There were fourteen participants for this study; seven were Mexican women born in Mexico, and seven were Mexican women born in the U.S. During the semi-structured interviews the women were asked questions that were based on the literature on Marianismo values. Evelyn Stephen was one of the first people to write about Marianismo. Stephens (1973) wrote, “Marianismo is just as prevalent as machismo but it is less understood by Latin Americans themselves and almost unknown to foreigners. It is the cult of the feminine spiritual superiority to and spiritually stronger than men (p. 4).” Gil and Vazquez (1996) provide ten tenants of Marianismo beliefs and behaviors which they call, “The Ten Commandments of Marianismo”:

1. Do not forget a woman’s place.
2. Do not forsake tradition.
3. Do not be single, self-supporting, or independent-minded.
4. Do not put your needs first.
5. Do not wish for more in life than being a housewife.
6. Do not forget that sex is for making babies—not for pleasure.

7. Do not be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal and physical abuse, alcohol or drug abuse.
8. Do not ask for help.
9. Do not discuss personal problems outside the home.
10. Do not change those things which make you unhappy that you realistically can change. (p. 8).

The Marianismo commandments (Gill & Vazquez) and other literature (Caceres-Dalmau, 2000; Ruiz, 1998) helped shape the interview guide questions for this study. Most of the studies on Marianismo have focused on quantitative data (Caceres-Dalmau, 2000; Marano, 2004; Melendez, 2004; Murguia, 2001, Orlandini, 2000; Ruiz-Balsara, 2001; Vazquez, 1998), but one exception is a qualitative study done on Mexican and Mexican-American women (Ruiz, 1998).

Moreover, this study also gathered qualitative data on the participants' perspectives on cultural differences in the role of women in Latino culture and "Anglo" American culture. The purpose of the question was to explore the participants' perceptions of both Latino and American cultural values and to compare the two groups of women.

Additionally, participants were administered likert-type questions to understand levels of acculturation. The hypothesis of this study is that the Mexican women will endorse more Marianismo beliefs and behaviors. The underlying reason for the hypothesis is that Mexican-Americans are more likely to have a bi-cultural identity in which they integrate U.S. values and ideals such as individualism, competitiveness, and assertiveness in their lives. In contrast, Marianismo values are about duties of being

family oriented, putting yourself last and others first, and being passive. Since Mexican-Americans are born, raised and educated in the U.S., they are more likely to have incorporated American values and beliefs into their lives in addition to the cultural values of their Mexican heritage. Unlike the Mexican American women, the Mexican women carry with them the richness of the native culture because they were born and raised in Mexico and know their language.

### *Major Findings*

The results have yielded important information that addresses the research questions. There are significant findings that demonstrate that there are differences and similarities between the two groups of women in their beliefs and values on Marianismo.

Marianismo values include beliefs such as a woman must be a virgin at marriage, a mother who sacrifices for her children, and a submissive wife who endures all her husbands' negative behavior including his emotional abuse, physical abuse, infidelity, and alcoholism. Other Marianismo values include denying oneself and putting others' needs first. Therefore, to capture Marianismo values, the women of this study were asked what their goals were and about their perceptions of their roles as women, and about their parents' perception of women's roles. Other questions included attitudes toward sacrificing for children and attitudes toward toleration of abuse or infidelity. Other questions concerned parental messages about marriage and sex. Another set of questions asked about their attitudes toward putting others' first and communicating feelings in close relationships. The major findings are organized by the two groups of women (Mexican and Mexican-American). The data is presented by topics that capture Marianismo values.

### *The women's goals*

A goal for the woman who endorses Marianismo values is to not desire anything more than to be a housewife. Most of the Mexican women in this study were homemakers and some worked outside the home. For some of the Mexican women their goals were to be a good housewife or mothers. One factor for this might be that five of the women were recruited from a Protestant church whose traditional values are perhaps enhanced by their religious beliefs. Moreover, some of the Mexican women in this study did have goals in addition to being housewives or mothers. For example, two women wanted an education in order to have a good job, two wanted to improve their English, and one had achieved all of her goals such as buying a car, and completing her education. Similarly, the Mexican-American women's goals were to be educated, have a career and afterwards start a family. Therefore, the Mexican-American woman desired education and career before marriage and children. It is likely the Mexican-American women saw their immigrant parents work hard and struggle to better their families which inspired them to persevere to improve their futures.

A difference between the two groups was that some of the Mexican women goals were oriented towards the present such as to raise their children and to be educated to have a good job. The Mexican-American women group was younger, single, and without children. Their goals were all oriented towards the future, for example, being educated, having a future career, being married one day, and having children. According to Frevert and Miranda (1996), Latinos are more oriented toward the present more than toward the past or toward the future unlike Caucasian middle-class people who are more oriented toward the future. Therefore, Mexican-Americans who are born, raised and educated in

the U.S. likely hold the American value of looking toward the future more than their Mexican counterparts who are focused on the present.

### *The women's roles*

One value of Marianismo is that a woman must be a housewife and tend to the needs of her husband and children. The majority of the sample viewed their roles as housewives or mothers, with only one exception; a woman recruited from the domestic violence group viewed her role as a "strong woman." This woman overcame great difficulties in her life which may be why she sees herself as a strong woman. The other women viewed their role in the traditional sense as mothers or housewives might be their religious influences of this group who were primarily Protestant (n=5). Interestingly enough, although some of the women worked and some had educational goals, none defined their roles by their jobs or educational goals but by their role in the family as mother or wife. A Marianismo value is to be a housewife and devoted mother which most of these Mexican women seemed to be.

Compared to the Mexican group, the Mexican-American women viewed their role as independent, strong, educated and balancing their lives. There are multiple factors as to why the Mexican-American group viewed their role differently, such as they were single without children. Other factors include being educated and having American values integrated into their lives. Also, perhaps these women have learned from their mothers about sacrificing and the sacrificing of other women in their families and realized they want to take better care of themselves. Most of the women have likely had more access to information and education about health, stress, self-care, and personal development than their mothers did.

### *Their mothers' role and sacrifice*

A Marianismo value is that a mother must be a submissive wife and be devoted to her children and even sacrifice herself for her children. Caceres-Dalmau's (2003) study about Latina college women's perception of their mother's Marianismo that found if a Latina perceived her mother as a Marianista she was nine times more likely to have anxiety and depress. It is interesting how much a daughter's perception of her mothers' Marianismo can impact her own psychological well being.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study to see the physiological impact of a daughter's perception of her mother's Marianismo, the question was posed to the women about how their mothers viewed the woman's role. Both groups of women mainly viewed their mothers as being traditional, with the exception of two Mexican women and one Mexican-American woman. Two Mexican women did not view their mother as traditional. Why these women did not view their mothers as traditional is likely due to their mothers' not fitting the traditional role of women; one worked outside the home frequently, and the other was described as domineering inside the home. As for the one Mexican-American, she did view her mother as strong even though her mother was a housewife; however, it was her mothers' attitude toward independence that influenced this woman's view of her mother. Also, this woman did view her mother as sacrificing. Therefore, all twelve participants viewed their mothers' role as sacrificing for their children which is very significant.

The Mexican women viewed their mothers as sacrificing largely because they endured economic hardship and perhaps machista husbands. Similarly, the Mexican-American women viewed their mothers sacrifice as due to their working in the home and

outside the home to provide additional income for the family and perhaps their endurance of their machista husbands. For these reasons both groups viewed their mothers' roles as more difficult than their own. Moreover, the Mexican-American women viewed their mothers' role as traditional as well, even though most worked outside the home. Again, this may be attributed to their mothers' outside employment which their daughters might have viewed as an extension of their mothers' sacrifice since the mothers continued to be housewives at home as well. Additionally, some Mexican-American women spoke of their mothers' disadvantages because they did not have opportunities for education or a career.

#### *Father's view of their roles*

There is not much literature in Marianismo about the relationship of the father and daughter in Mexican culture. Also, the literature about the Marianismo tenet is peculiarly silent on the expectation of a father and daughter relationship in Latin American culture. Therefore, it is unknown precisely what a Marianismo value would hold regarding the relationship between a Mexican father and his daughter. However, the Latino father is typically viewed as "macho" and viewed as a "provider and protector of the family" (McGoldrick et. al, 1989, p. 179). Lopez (2004) said, "Mexican men have been traditionally misrepresented in or omitted from fatherhood scholarship, sexuality, and reproductive health-related research, and immigration studies (p. 1118)." According to Lopez's (2004) qualitative in-depth interviews with 20 immigrant men, fathers were most concerned with protecting their daughters from the sexual dangers in society and desired that their daughters improve their socio-economic status.



Moreover, Ruiz's (1998) qualitative study on Marianismo with Mexican and Mexican-American women found that most of the women's fathers in the study wanted their daughters to have an education. Additionally, this study supports the view that fathers care for their daughters' education and well being. There were eight women in this study, four in each group, who said that their fathers encouraged them to be educated and independent, which challenges the negative assumptions about Mexican fathers.

However, a few women in both groups of this study either did not communicate much with their father or their fathers were absent from their lives. Why some of the women and their fathers did not communicate much might be found in the response of one of the Mexican-American participants. The participant said that she and her father did not communicate much because of "boundaries." It is likely fathers and daughters' communication is obstructed by individual "boundaries" upheld by negative assumptions about Latino fathers and what are perceived as cultural norms. Perhaps the Mexican father internalizes the negative assumptions about him in Mexican and American societies and feels incapable of emotionally connecting to his daughter. A third reason could be found in the insight of one of the Mexican participants who said her father had a different contract/role with her than with her mother; thus, although she discussed that her father was abusive to her mother he was very protective and encouraging with her. Hence, even though some Mexican men may have abusive patterns with their wives, these patterns do not necessarily transfer to their relationships with their daughters. However, some daughters in this study did not perceive their fathers as machistas at all but as loving men.

### *What a “Good Woman” Means*

A Marianista woman would be considered a “good woman,” she puts others needs first, is passive, virtuous, and submissive to her husband and dedicated to her children. However, what the women of this study perceive as a “good woman” is very important. Their responses to the question what does a “good woman mean to them was very telling in what they highly value and expect of themselves. The majority of the Mexican women discussed a “good woman” in terms of her virtues such as dedication to her children. It is likely that the veneration of the role of mother is a source of pride for many Mexican mothers. These women center their lives and its importance on raising their children. Many of the women are not college educated or do not have a career. Those that worked did not discuss their jobs as part of what it means to be a good woman. Perhaps the woman do not have fulfillment in their work as they do being a mother.

On the other hand, the Mexican-American women’s description of a “good woman” was not an emblem of perfection and a sacrificial mother. These women had a more relaxed view of the role of a mother. Some discussed a “good woman” as a responsible mother who is “just there” for her children and guides her children but allows them to make mistakes. None of the Mexican-American women discussed that a “good woman” needed to dedicate herself to her children.

Another interesting finding was that the educated Mexican-American women described a “good woman” in terms of taking care of herself and making her responsibilities manageable. For example, one woman emphasized the need to “compromise” instead of “sacrifice”, another discussed the need to make yourself happy, and another discussed being in balance with yourself. Perhaps as a result of their

education, these women have become aware of the importance of self-care and therefore have set realistic expectations for themselves which is also likely a skill they needed to get through the demands of school work as well.

*Attitudes toward tolerance of abuse and infidelity*

A value of Marianismo is that women must endure the negative behavior of their husbands. One of the first people to write about Marianismo was Evelyn Stephens. Stephens (1973) writes in her essay the value a Marianista has in enduring her husband's negative behavior: "Beneath the submissiveness, however, lies the strength of her conviction—that men must be humored, for, after all, everyone knows that they are *comoninos* (like little boys) whose intemperance, foolishness, and obstinacy must be forgiven because "they can't help the way they are (p. 9)".

The question that was posed to the women asked how much did their mothers' feel they must tolerate their husbands' negative behavior including abuse and infidelity. The question was followed up with another question that asked about their thoughts on wives tolerating such behavior. Overall the responses from the women varied. There were some women one in both groups who provided general remarks and did not address the question directly.

Another interesting theme also emerged from the Mexican group. Two women in the Mexican group discussed that their fathers advised them not to tolerate abuse from their husbands. One woman said her father's advised her to get educated so that she would not need to endure the abuse of her husband; ironically, this father was described as *machista* and abusive to her mother. The other woman's father advised her not to tolerate beatings from her husband and told her she could return home any time to live

with her parents; this father was described as “loving.” Their fathers’ were likely concerned about how prevalent domestic abuse was and the powerlessness their daughters would experience if caught in an abusive marriage. The fathers’ probably wanted to prevent their daughter’s from being stuck in a domestically abusive marriage; therefore, they encouraged them to be educated to empower their daughters to be financially independent from their future spouses.

Some women in both groups, one in the Mexican group and four in the Mexican-American group, directly noted abuse or infidelity occurring in their family of origin. When the women were asked about their attitudes toward a wife tolerating abuse or infidelity, some to the Mexican women directly opposed it. Although all the participants felt abuse and infidelity was wrong, surprisingly, most of the Mexican-American women did not directly discuss leaving the marriage but contemplated reasons why a woman might stay in an abusive marriage and discussed solutions such as “working it out,” “talking about it,” or “setting limits.”

Some potential reasons why the Mexican-American women who self-described themselves as independent, strong, and educated, and would not immediately leave an abusive or unfaithful marriage are that some of the women’s mothers modeled such endurance or maybe due to the women not believing in divorce, a value their parents’ upheld. Also, their religious beliefs may impact they’re not believing in divorce. Interestingly, one Mexican-woman said that she would likely endure it for the children to be with their father. This perhaps supports Stephen’s (1973) belief that women endure men’s negative behavior because men are viewed as imperfect and not able to help themselves.

### *Messages from parents about marriage and sex*

The women in both groups received the message from their parents that divorce is wrong and a woman must be a virgin at marriage. The Mexican women received messages about marriage from their parents about the importance of traditional sexual mores such as a woman must be a virgin at marriage, be submissive to their husbands and never divorce. Regarding sex, all of the women did not receive much advice about it, if any at all. Some received vague information such as “take care of yourself”. A few Mexican women discussed how their parents were busy with working and providing for the family so there was no time for such discussions to occur.

The messages about marriage the Mexican-American women received from their parents were more elaborate and focused on selecting the right man. Like the Mexican women, the Mexican-American women received no messages or vague messages about sex such as “take care of yourself” or “don’t get pregnant.” It is interesting to see that although both received messages about the importance of being a virgin at marriage and not divorcing that there was not much discussion between the women and the parents about such topics. It was apparent sex was a “taboo” topic that seemed would make many of the parents uncomfortable to discuss it with their children.

### *Attitudes about putting others first, and communication in relationships*

One value of Marianismo is to put others’ needs first before your own. The women in this study were asked what were their thoughts on putting others needs first, especially family before their own. All of the women (n=14) stated they do put their families needs first before their own. This value may also intersect with another value called familismo, another cultural value. “*Familismo* is an allocentric cultural value that

stresses attachments, reciprocity, and loyalty to family members beyond the boundaries of the nuclear family (Andres-Hyman et al., 2006, p. 695).” The women and their families likely emphasize cultural bonds and harmony in families by providing support for one another. Moreover, the majority of the women in both of the groups stated they felt comfortable in expressing their feelings in a close relationship even if it may cause disagreement. This is very significant since the value of communicating your feelings in a close relationship contradicts the Marianismo value that a woman is passive and does not express her needs or feelings because she is expected to put other people and their feelings before her own.

#### *Other Themes that Emerged*

A theme that came up in this study was the socio-economic and legal hardships women face in Mexico. Thus, there are combinations of factors that keep women oppressed in Mexico. Many of the participants referenced the economic hardships their parents went through. Several women mentioned how difficult it was for low income people to access education. One divorced woman spoke of the strict divorce laws in Mexico that only permit a divorce to occur if both parties agree to it. There were no protections under the law or resources to help women that are victims of domestic violence. One of the women eloquently discussed the husbands’ retaliation if their wives decided to leave. The participants also mentioned how many women are economically dependent on their husbands.

Ehler (1991), who studied Marianismo in Mayan women tries to “debunk” Marianismo and provides three points as to why it does not exist:

1. While female subordination is present, it comes in many different forms and in varying degrees of subordination
2. Women's behavior vis-a-vis men is not merely a response to machismo, but is a survival strategy emerging from female economic, social and sexual dependence
3. Gender relations are not a static construction of ideal roles, but evolve and change with the material conditions of women's lives, and over the life span of each woman

Ehlers (1991) brings up some key arguments against Marianismo. This researcher agrees with Ehler regarding the socio-economic-legal oppression in societies and its impact in shaping women's behavior. However, this researcher also takes into account the historical influence of Catholicism in Latin American countries, like in Mexico. Catholic influence in Latina America is very prevailing and long established. The veneration of the Virgin Mary and "La Virgen de Guadalupe" are iconic cultural emblems in Mexico.

There is an interconnection between both Mexican's systemic oppression of woman and the historical authority and influence of Catholicism in shaping woman's behaviors and beliefs about their role as women. Due to the socio-economic-legal systems that are in place in Mexico which oppress women, women must learn to adapt to living in a society that devalues their status as women and fails to protect them. However, at the same time the cultural value of Marianismo idealizes the role of the women. Marianismo is based in Catholicism's veneration of the Virgin Mary, who is the model of what a woman should be. Women are seen as "morally superior to men" and

able to endure all suffering inflicted by men (Stephens, 1973, p.9). Therefore, the researcher believes it is a combination of oppressive systems and the veneration of women rooted in Catholicism that shape and influence the behavior and beliefs called Marianismo in Latinas. Marianismo idealizes women's endurance of suffering from the men in their lives. Therefore, the status of women is "uplifted" and valued because of their endurance of suffering which in many ways is a paradox.

Although there are certain aspects of Marianismo that have a negative impact on women, research and literature must be careful not to pathologize traditional values of Mexicans and other Latin Americans via a biased binary thinking that U.S. American values are superior to that of other cultures. As previously mentioned, U.S. American values often conflict with Marianismo values.

#### *Findings on Cultural Differences*

The participants of this study were asked if there were any differences between how Latino culture views women's roles and how "Anglo" American culture view women's roles. The Mexican participants highly appreciated the richness of their culture and its values such as the role of the mother who loves and dedicates herself to her children and continues to do so throughout their entire adulthood. American mothers were perceived as not willing to sacrifice to the same length and depth as Mexican women. The Mexican women also discussed positive opportunities in the U.S. such as being able to get education and having equal rights to men.

The Mexican-American women spoke to the Latino culture's emphasis on the woman traditional gender role as being a housewife, which many did not desire to be themselves. The women implied that the patriarchal society of many Latino cultures



imposed traditional gender role expectations on women which oppress them. These women did not discuss the richness of Mexican culture and values in their responses as did the Mexican women. When discussing the American culture, the Mexican-American women described the opportunities for education and jobs and the privilege that American women can choose to work or not. But they also alluded to economic and social oppressions that interfere with Latino's accessing some of the same types of privileges, such as education, that are afforded to White Americans.

The differences between the two groups were very interesting. The hypothesis of this study was that the Mexican women would adhere more to Marianismo values. In posing the question about cultural differences it appears that the Mexican women did adhere to their Latina values while the Mexican-American group discussed the traditional women's role and implied how it can be oppressive to women. Also, when the Mexican-American women discussed American culture they talked about the oppression of Latinos, while the Mexican women discussed cultural differences in values and practices and opportunities found in the U.S.

It is likely that for the Mexican women cultural differences in values and practices are most notable to them because they were born in raised in a different country with different cultural beliefs. These immigrant women also noted the opportunities found in the U.S. because it is in stark contrast to what is available to them in their native country. The Mexican-American women interact regularly with the Dominant culture in their jobs and education and likely have noted oppression of Latinos in not having equal access to certain opportunities such as education.

### *Findings for the Acculturation Questions*

The acculturation questions, the last four questions of the interview guide (Appendix F) in this study were based on the work of Berry's (1980) four adaptation of acculturation. Four likert-type questions consisted of statements that reflected Berry's four varieties of adaptations which he called: Assimilation, Integration, Rejection, and Deculturation. Each of the four acculturation questions in this study addresses one of the acculturation adaptation in Berry's theory. Regarding the acculturation questions used in this study, it would not be feasible to conclude a participant's acculturation adaptation level based on one question that attempts to capture the level of acculturation that is asked to her as was the original intention of using the acculturation questions. The acculturation questions are statements which are subject to how the participant interprets what is being asked. Another finding that emerged occurred with one participant whose both parents were born in the U.S. This participant did not necessarily view herself as Latina or as having Latina values. Therefore, acculturation questions may not be useful for people who have been apart of the dominant culture for at least two generations in their families.

The acculturation questions did yield important information about the participants and interesting patterns emerged within the groups and between the groups. The findings point to both groups moving toward a more bicultural model, of maintaining their Mexican culture while integrating U.S. culture into their lives, which the acculturation questions based on Berry's (1980) acculturation adaptations were not made to capture specifically.

The four questions were graded on a five-point likert- type scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree.

The following are regarding the four questions or statements posed to the participants.

*Question 1: Assimilation*

The majority of the Mexican women (n=5) agreed that they believed in the need to relinquish much of their Latina values in order to integrate American values into their life. This is likely due to their desire to learn English in order to be more integrated with the U.S. culture since they are immigrants. Two women strongly disagreed noting no need to give up their culture to take on U.S. culture.

There was an opposite response from the majority of the Mexican-American women, most strongly disagreed (n=5) and one somewhat disagreed (n=1) with the statement. The researcher believes that this group strongly objected to relinquishing their Latina values because they are interested in maintaining their parents' cultural heritage. Furthermore, they already have incorporated American values into their lives. Only the second generation Mexican-American was (neutral or indecisive).

*Question 2: Integration*

The statement about maintaining one's Latina values while incorporating U.S. American culture into their lives received the most varied responses. Among the Mexican women, two strongly agreed, two somewhat agreed, two were neutral or indecisive and one somewhat disagreed. Perhaps for those that were neutral or indecisive or the participant that somewhat disagreed with the statement, they may have felt uneasy about stating that they want to maintain their culture as perhaps they may feel it is showing defiance to the mainstream culture. Four Mexican-American participants did

agree with the statement about maintaining their culture while incorporating U.S. American values.

*Question 3: Rejection adaptation*

All of the women disagreed with the idea of isolating themselves from their U.S. culture in order to maintain their own values with most of the Mexican women “somewhat disagreeing,” and most of the Mexican-Americans “strongly disagreeing”. The differences may be due to the Mexican-Americans being more integrated into U.S. culture, compared to their Mexican counterparts. Also all of the Mexican women spoke only Spanish.

*Question 4: Deculturation adaptation*

The majority of the women (n=12) disagreed with the statement that culture, whether it was Latino or U.S., was not significant for them in their lives. The majority of the women felt that culture was significant for them. One second generation Mexican-American with U.S. born parents said she was “neutral or indecisive”. She discussed not really thinking about such issues or her Latina culture. The longer a Mexican family’s generations are living in the U.S., the greater likelihood of the descendents maintaining Latino cultural values diminishes. Moreover, one Mexican woman strongly agreed that culture was not significant for her.

*Strength and Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research*

One limitation of this study is that the sample population is small and cannot be generalized to the rest of the population. Also, half of the participants in this study (n=7) were recruited from a Protestant church in which the researcher attends. Five of the participants recruited from the Protestant church were in the Mexican group. The

majority of the participants in the Mexican group being protestant was a limitation because their religious beliefs may influence their role as women and impact the results of the study. Also, seven participants knowing the researcher is a limitation because it may have influenced the way the participants choose to answer the questions. Two women appeared particularly guarded in responses which did not allow for a lot of data to be collected in some of their responses. Another participant in the Mexican-American group was obtained through a snow-ball sample of mutual acquaintances. This participant also appeared guarded and very brief in her response. Also, this participant noted the vocabulary was hard to understand. The researcher had reframed the questions using other vocabulary words for all participants during the interview process.

Additionally, the interview guide needs to be redesigned. For example, some of the vocabulary used in the interview guide may not be applicable to urban populations. The researcher reframed questions to aid participants' understanding of the questions. There were some of the questions that could be more open-ended.

Further, the differences between the two groups of women are another limitation. The Mexican group was homogeneous in having children and being currently married or married prior. The Mexican-American group was homogenous in that all were single, most were young, and without children. These differences between the groups could have also contributed to some of the differences between the two groups' responses.

One strength of this study is its focus on Mexican and Mexican-Americans to explore varying degrees of Marianismo; however, the applicability to other cultural groups is limited. Another strength of the study is that it examined the relationship between acculturation and Marianismo through the use of a four statements created for

this study based on the work of Berry's (1980) varieties of adaptations theory of acculturation. It is unknown, how useful the questions are considering their limitations which include the participants may interpret the statements in different ways so concluding a participant's adaptation style is not conclusive. Also, the four statements may not be applicable to people who were born in the U.S. and assimilated to the culture. The questions regarding maintaining Latina culture values and integrating U.S. culture yielded responses displaying a more bicultural adaptation. Therefore, future research on Marianismo can explore it using the bicultural identity theories instead of acculturation theories.

Another strength of this study was the exploration of the beliefs of both groups of women regarding their perception about "Anglo" American culture's view on women compared to the Latino culture's view on women. This was important because perceptions of both groups toward both cultures emerged and there were differences between the groups.

Future, recommendations for research as was suggested by Murguia (2001) would be to explore positive aspects of Marianismo, and to tease out which aspects of Marianismo are helpful to women. Also, as mentioned in the Methodology section, there were two mother daughter dyads in this study which may be a limitation in that the women mother-daughter pairs may share similar belief passed down from mother to daughter. However, there appeared to be trends between transmission of values whether of Marianismo or independence; thus, future research focusing on mother-daughter dyad and examining the transmission of positive and negative Marianismo from mother to daughter would likely yield interesting and very informative results. Lastly, Marianismo

research can also explore differences in Marianismo adherence in first generation, second generation and third generation Mexican-Americans born in the U.S. For example, there was one participant whose both parents were both born in the U.S., who reported that she saw herself as independent and not as aware of Latina culture.

### *Clinical Implications for Social Work*

A review of the literature on Marianismo found that most research has looked at the negative implications of Marianismo on Latinas mental health by examining Marianismo in relation to anxiety and depression (Caceres, 2003; Vazquez, 1998). Although, research has focused on the negative implications of Marianista behavior on a Latinas psychological well being, this research study captured cultural differences in the view of women in Mexican and American culture, the sense of pride the Mexican women expressed in their role as dedicated mothers and sacrificing for their children.

Therefore, it is important for clinician to distinguish both the harmful impact Marianismo has on women such as beliefs and behaviors that may cause low self-esteem or depression from the positive Marianismo beliefs and behaviors such as being a dedicated mother. As was suggested by a participant, there should be compromise and not sacrifice. Thus, clinicians empowering Latina women by affirming the cultural values while also opening up space for compromise when such good intended behaviors are negatively impacting self-care and self-nurture.

Furthermore, providers working with Latino populations should be sensitive to how their clients define their roles as women. Clinicians should understand that the traditional woman's role is not fixed but alters and changes with each woman and how she interprets her world and herself. Also, understanding that there are varying degrees

of submission is also important. Lastly, awareness of the Chicano (Mexican-American) ethnic identity issues such as not quite fitting in either culture which one middle aged woman express.

### *Summary*

The major findings of the study suggest that there are differences in adherence to Marianismo beliefs and behaviors among Mexican and Mexican-American women. However, there were also similarities between the two groups such as the messages they received about divorce being wrong, or the messages about traditional sexual mores. Also, interestingly, almost all of the participants viewed their mothers as sacrificing for their children, where the two groups differed was that the Mexican women felt compelled to also dedicate themselves to their children, and the Mexican-American did not report sacrificing for their future children was necessarily but discussed a mother needing to be responsible for her children. Furthermore, the groups differed on their perspective on what a “good women” means, the Mexican group discussed qualities of a “good woman” such as having virtuous and dedication to her children. Whereas, the Mexican-American group discussed what a “good woman” meant based on her being a responsible mother and those who were college educated discussed a good woman in terms of practicing self-care and making life manageable.

Such findings illuminate how the role of women is being redefined by each generation, given that the Mexican group was overall older than the Mexican-American group. Furthermore the questions on cultural differences also found some interesting differences between the two groups. The majority of the women discussed the traditional role of women in Latino culture and some alluded to it being oppressive; while also



alluding to socio-economic oppression of Latinos in the U.S. because they do not have access to the same privileges as “Anglo” Americans. The Mexican women appreciated values of their Latina culture and noted the differences of such values compared to U.S. norms and behaviors and discussed opportunities offered in the U.S. such as equal rights to men, and education. Interestingly, the most of the women’s fathers encouraged them to be educated and independent which supports other research findings.

It is my hope that the major findings of this study will help social workers and other mental health professionals working with Mexican and Mexican American clients or with Latinos to further understand the effect of the cultural construct of Marianismo on the psyches of Latinas and the roots of Marianismo in Catholicism; to see that there are various degrees of submission and how Mexican women view their role as women; to develop culturally sensitive practices that empower Latinas in their cultural beliefs while bringing an awareness of the importance of self-care in addition to caring for others; to not pathologize Marianismo beliefs or behaviors because they differ from U.S. cultural values; to recognize Mexican-Americans need empowerment and advocacy to access resources like education to better their lives; and to recognize Mexican-Americans will be in different places with their ethnic identification with their Mexican heritage depending on factors such as how long their family generations have been living in the U.S.

Lastly, it might be helpful for social workers to consider the idea of Gil and Vazquez (1996) who strived to help Latinas “merge old world traditions with new world self-esteem” and help Latinas develop a new Marianista role which they described as “a competent, assertive, self-assured and empowered Latina, into *la nueva marianista*”

(p. 15). It appears that the participants in this study were in fact developing the role of la nueva marianistas.

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Appendix A  
Informed Consent Form

April 2007

Dear Potential Research Participant:

My name is Jennifer Vazquez and I am a student at Smith College School for Social Work in Northampton, Massachusetts. I am conducting a study on Latina values and Woman's roles in Mexican and Mexican-American women living in the United States. Your perspective is important and valuable to further the development of research on Latina's and their values and gender role. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Master's of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work and possibly for future presentation and publication on the topic.

For purposes of this study, I am interested in interviewing Mexican and Mexican-American women who are living in the United States and born either in Mexico or in the United States, whose both parents are of Mexican decent, and who are at least age 18 or older and who speak either English or Spanish.

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to answer a questionnaire, which asks some basic and personal questions about you (for example: your age, do you have children, your marital status, your religion, your education level), which will take about 15 minutes to complete. Following the completion of questionnaire you will have a discussion with me answering some questions about how you perceive your role as a woman, how your parents perceived your role, and questions about how you perceive your cultural values. The interview process will take approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes. The interview will be audio-taped for purposes of collecting the information.

There are some benefits to participating in this study; however, there is no payment for your participation (that is there is no monetary benefit). If you decide to participate, the information that you will be contributing may help improve and expand mental health services to Latina woman. I believe that such services could improve and with your participation we can aide in this endeavor. Participating in this study could be an opportunity to discuss your story and reflect on it. My hope is that you enjoy the experience in discussing your story and in doing so you realize that with your story you are contributing to an area of knowledge that is very important but not well studied or recognized. I want to thank you before hand because the information you will be sharing with me because it will help me in my progress to better serve others as a social worker. My intention is to work with the Latino community after I graduate and that is why I choose this topic for my Master's thesis with the purpose in expanding the literature on how a social worker or therapist can provide effective services to Mexican and Mexican-American women.

I understand and respect the sensitivity of this topic. It is for this reason and for ethical reasons of my profession, that I will maintain your responses to the questionnaire, and the interview discreetly from all other people in which your identity is protected at all times. I will be the only handler with the data including transcripts; if any person assists with the transcription of the interview they will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. All identifying information on the questionnaires or in my records will be removed from the data. In this way, confidentiality will be kept when transcribing and recording data from interviews. I will keep the signed consent forms separate in a locked file from all other data collected. My research advisor will have access to the data only after identifying information has been removed. I will retain the consent forms, audio tapes, transcripts, and completed questionnaire for three years in a locked files. After, the three years have expired all the materials will be destroyed when no longer needed. Some illustrative quotes will be used for my thesis, but will have no connection to identifying information including your name to protect your confidentiality. The data will be used for my thesis, and may be used for future presentation and publication.

You may, or may not, feel uncomfortable or stressed during or after talking about your life being a Latina living in the United States and your past experiences and memories of your family. I am giving you a list of references with names, and phone numbers of agency resources where they offer services in English and Spanish where you can go to consult should you have any problem.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have a right to refuse to answer any question, or ask me to withdraw you from this study at any time without any repercussions: before, during or after the interview until May 21, 2007 when the report will be written. Should you decide to withdraw from this study all the material that pertains to your participation will be destroyed. You can contact me directly. My information is included below.

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Jennifer Vazquez  
510 828-4978  
[jvazquez@email.smith.edu](mailto:jvazquez@email.smith.edu)

## Appendix B Forma de Permiso

Abril 2007

Estimado participante:

Mi nombre es Jennifer Vazquez, y soy una estudiante de maestria en trabajo social en la Universidad de Smith College School for Social Work, en Northampton, Massachussets. Estoy realizando un estudio sobre los valores Latinas y la papel de mujer con mujeres Mexicanas y Mexicanas-Americanas que viven en los Estados Unidos. Su perspectiva es importante y valioso para el desarrollo de estudios sobre Latinas y sus valores y papel de mujer. Yo voy a usar este estudio para completar mi tesis de maetria y quiza otras presentaciones o publicacion.

Para el proposito de este estudio, yo estoy interesada en entrevistar mujeres que viven en los estados unidos que son Mexicanas nacidas en Mexico o Mexicanas-Americanas nacidas en los Estados Unidos, quienes padre y madre son de etnicidad Mexicana o Mexican-Americana, quien tenga 18 anos o mas, y quienes hablan ya sea Espanol o Ingles.

Su participacion consistira en contestar un cuestionario sobre informacion personal por ejemplo (su edad, donde nacio, tiene hijos, cual es su religion, su nivel de educacion) que toma aproximado 15 minutos para completar y despues una platica conmigo contestando algunas preguntas aserca de su experiencia siendo Latina como percibe su papel de mujer, y como percibio sus padres sobre la papel de mujer y como es para ti siendo Latina y viviendo en los Estados Unidos-la platica durara como una hora o una hora con 15 minutos.

Espero que usted pueda participar en este estudio y compartir de sus experiencias y pensamientos sobre siendo una mujer Mexicana or Mexicana-Americana viviendo en los Estados Unidos y sobre sus valores culturales y papel de mujer. Hay algunos beneficios en participar en este estudio pero no se le pagara su participacion (o no habra ningun beneficio monetario). Si usted decide participar, la informacion que usted comparta podra mejorar y expandir los servicios de salud emocional/mental para mujeres Latinas. Yo pienso que estos servicios pueden ser mejorados, con su participacion y su experiencia podemos lograr esto. El participar en este estudio puede ser una oportunidad de contar su historia y reflexionar en ella. Espero que usted disfrute el compartir su historia y se de cuenta que con ello ha contribuido a una area de conocimiento que es muy importante per no siempre reconocida. De ante mano le quiero agradecer porque la informacion que usted comparta me ayudara con mi progreso para apoyar servir major manera a otros, como trabajadora social. Mi intension es trabajar con la comunidad Latina despues de graduarme, y he escojido este tema para mi tesis de maestria con el proposito de expandir la literature sobre como un trabajador social o terapeuta puede prestar servicios efectamente a mujeres Mexicanas y Mexicana-Americanas.

Yo entiendo y respeto la sensibilidad de este tema. Por esa razon y por eticas de mi carrera, voy a mantener sus respuestas del cuestionario y entrevistas de una forma discreta a toda persona, de tal manera que su identidad este protegida en toda momento. Yo sere la persona principal en manejar la informacion, incluyendo la transcripcion; cualquier persona



asistiendo con la transcripcion de la entrevista tendra que firmar un documento donde se compromete a mantener todo confidencial. Mi advisor de este proyecto tendra acceso a la informacion despues que la informacion de su identidad esta quitado. Yo guardare los cuestionarios y transcripciones y audio caset/s por tres anos, tiempo que es consistente con las regulaciones federales. Durante este tiempo, cuestionarios, transcripciones, y audio casset, seran guardadas en un gabinete bajo llave, el cual solo yo tengo acceso. Tambien la Forma De Permiso sera guardada en un gabinete bajo llave pero separado de los demas informacion (cuestionarios y transcripciones y audio casset) para proteger su confidencialidad y solo yo tendre acceso a el. Despues que el periodo de los tres anos halla pasado todos los materials seran destruidos si ya no son necesitados. Algunas frases ilustrativos seran usadas en mi tesis pero no va tener ninguna connection con informacion que le identifica incluyendo su nombre para proteger su confidencialidad.

Usted quiza, quizas no, sienta incomodidad o estresada por el hecho de hablar de su vida y memorias sobre su experiencia siendo Latina viviendo en los Estados Unidos o sobre memorias de su familia. Yo le estoy entregando una lista de referencias con los nombres y numeros de recursos de agencias donde ofrecen servicios en Espanol donde usted puede consultar si tiene cualquier problema.

La participacion en este estudio es voluntario, y usted puede rehusar el contestar cualquier pregunta, terminar o salirse de la entrevista en cualquier momento. Usted tiene el derecho de pedirme que la saque del estudio si asi lo desea despues de la entrevista, con la fecha limite del 21 de Mayo, la fecha cuando el reporte para mi tesis sera escrito. Si decide salirse del estudio todo el material que pertenesca a su participacion sera destruido. Usted me puede contactar directamente. Mi informacion esta incluida abajo.

SU FIRMA EN LA PARTE DE ABAJO INDICA QUE USTED A LEIDO Y ENTIENDE LA INFORMACION PRESENTADA EN ESTE DOCUMENTO, ASI COMO TAMBIEN QUE USTED HA TENIDO LA OPORTUNIDAD DE HACERME PREGUNTAS SOBRE EL ESTUDIO, SUS DERECHOS COMO PARTICIPANTE, Y QUE USTED ESTA DE ACUERDO EN PARTICIPAR EN ESTE ESTUDIO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

Jennifer Vazquez  
510 828-4978  
[jvazquez@email.smith.edu](mailto:jvazquez@email.smith.edu)

Appendix C  
Professional Transcribers Assurance of Research Confidentiality

**STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

This thesis project is firmly committed to the principle that research confidentiality must be protected. This principle holds whether or not any specific guarantee of confidentiality was given by respondents at the time of the interview. When guarantees have been given, they may impose additional requirements which are to be adhered to strictly.

**PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. All volunteer and professional transcribers for this project shall sign this assurance of confidentiality.

2. A volunteer, or professional transcriber, should be aware that the identity of participants in research studies is confidential information, as are identifying information about participants and individual responses to questions. Depending on the study, the organizations participating in the study, the geographical location of the study, and the hypothesis being tested may also be confidential information. Specific research findings and conclusions are also usually confidential until they have been published or presented in public.

It is incumbent on volunteers and professional transcribers to treat information from and about research as privileged information, to be aware of what is confidential in regard to specific studies on which they work or about which they have knowledge, or to preserve the confidentiality of this information. Types of situations where confidentiality can often be compromised include conversations with friends and relatives, conversations with professional colleagues outside the project team, conversations with reporters and the media, and in the use of consultants for computer programs and data analysis.

3. Unless specifically instructed otherwise, a volunteer or professional transcriber upon encountering a respondent or information pertaining to a respondent that s/he knows personally, shall not disclose any knowledge of the respondent or any information pertaining to a respondent's participation in this project.

4. Data containing personal identifiers shall be kept in a locked container or a locked room when not being used each working day in routine activities. Reasonable caution shall be exercised in limiting access to data to only those persons who are working on this thesis project and who have been instructed in the applicable confidentiality requirements for the project.

5. The researcher for this project, Jennifer Vazquez, shall be responsible for ensuring that all volunteer and professional transcribers involved in handling data are instructed in these procedures, have signed this pledge, and comply with these procedures throughout the duration of the project. At the end of the project, Jennifer Vazquez, shall arrange for proper storage or disposition of data, in accordance with federal guidelines and Human Subjects Review Committee policies at the Smith College School for Social Work.

6. Jennifer Vazquez must ensure that procedures are established in this study to inform each respondent of the authority for the study, the purpose and use of the study, the

voluntary nature of the study (where applicable), and the effects on the respondents, if any, of not responding.

**PLEDGE**

I hereby certify that I have carefully read and will cooperate fully with the above procedures. I will maintain the confidentiality of confidential information from all studies with which I have involvement. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to such information, except directly to the researcher, Jennifer Vazquez, for this project. I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including termination of professional or volunteer services with the project, and may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Jennifer Vazquez: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D  
Demographic Questionnaire- (English)

**Please answer the following question, and when needed please place an X on the line next the answer you have selected. Thank you.**

**1. What is your age?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How do you usually describe yourself?** Please mark only ONE answer.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican-American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latina   | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin-American   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicana  | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____     |

**3. Do you have children?**  yes  no

**4. What is your marital status?** Please mark AS MANY lines that apply to you.

- single
- married
- divorced
- separated
- widowed
- in a serious relationship
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. What is your sexual orientation?**

- heterosexual
- bisexual
- homosexual

**6. What country were you born in?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If born outside the U.S., how old were you when you arrived to the U.S.?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Since you lived in the U.S., have these years been continuous?**  Yes  No

**What is the longest period of time you resided in the U.S.?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you plan to live in the U.S. permanently?**  Yes  No

**7. The place you grew up in was:**

- rural
- small town
- urban

**8. What is the place of birth of your father? \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the ethnic background of your father? \_\_\_\_\_**

**9. What is the place of birth of your mother? \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the ethnic background of your mother? \_\_\_\_\_**

**10. Please indicate the generation in your family that first migrated to this country:**

- My generation
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Great-grandparents
- Generation before my great grandparents
- Don't Know

**11. What is your level of education?**

- less than high school
- some high school
- high school graduate
- some college
- college graduate
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. What is your father's level of education?**

- less than high school
- some high school
- high school graduate
- some college
- college graduate
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**13. What is your mother's level of education?**

- less than high school
- some high school
- high school graduate
- some college
- college graduate
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**14. What is your annual family income?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than \$10,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$70,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$80,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$80,000       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$50,000 |  |

**15. Are you currently employed?**  Yes  No

**What type of work do you do?** \_\_\_\_\_

**16. What is your current religious affiliation?**

- Catholic
- Protestant (Baptist, Evangelical, etc...)
- none
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**17. What language/s are you fluent in?**

- English
- Spanish
- Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

**For the following questions please write down only ONE language.**

18. What is the language do you speak at home mostly: \_\_\_\_\_

19. What language do you watch T.V. in mostly: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E  
Demographic Questionnaire- (Spanish)

**Porfavor, conteste las siguientes preguntas poniendo una marca X sobre la raye que corresponde con su respuesta, o escriba su respuesta cuando sea indicado. Muchas Gracias.**

**1. Cual es su edad?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. De que manera se describiria usted?** Porfavor, marque solo UNA respuesta.

<input type="checkbox"/> americana	<input type="checkbox"/> mexicana
<input type="checkbox"/> hispana	<input type="checkbox"/> mexicano-americana
<input type="checkbox"/> latina	<input type="checkbox"/> latinoamericana
<input type="checkbox"/> chicana	<input type="checkbox"/> otra: _____

**3. Tiene hijos?**  si  no

**4. Cual es su estado civil?** Porfavor, marque todas las respuestas que le corresponde.

soltera  casada  divorciada  viuda  
otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Cual es su orientacion sexual?**

heterosexual  
 bisexual  
 homosexual

**6. En que pais nacio?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Si nacio fuera de los EEUU, a que edad tuvo cuando llego a EEUU?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desde que vive en los EEUU ha vivido continuamente en este pais?**  Si  No

**Que es el tiempo mas largo que tiene viviendo en EEUU?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Planea vivir en los EEUU permanente?**  Si  No

**7. Usted crecio en :**

el campo  
 un pueblo  
 la ciudad

**8. En que pais nacio su padre?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cual es la ethnicidad de su padre?** \_\_\_\_\_

**9. En que pais nacio su madre? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Cual es la ethnicidad de su madre? \_\_\_\_\_**

**10. Porfavor indica cual generacion de su familia que emigro primero a este pais?**

- mi generacion
- padres
- abuelos
- bis abuelos
- generacion antes de mi bis abuelos
- no se

**11. Cual es su nivel de educacion?**

- menos de secundaria
- algo de secundaria
- graduada de secundaria
- algo de universidad
- graduada de universidad
- otro:

**12. Cual es el nivel de educacion de su padre?**

- menos de secundaria
- algo de secundaria
- graduada de secundaria
- algo de universidad
- graduada de universidad
- otro:

**13. Cual es el nivel de educacion de su madre?**

- menos de secundaria
- algo de secundaria
- graduada de secundaria
- algo de universidad
- graduada de universidad
- otro:



**14. Cual es su religion?**

- Catolica
- Protestante (ej., Bautista, Evangelica, etc.)
- ninguna
- otra: \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Cuanto gana por ano su familia?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> menos de \$10,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$70,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$80,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> mas de \$80,000     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$50,000 |  |

**16. Tiene empleo ahora?  Si  No**

**Que tipo de trabajo hace?** \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Que lenguajes habla usted fluentemente?**

- ingles
- espanol
- otro/s: \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Que lenguaje hable mas en casa?** \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Que lenguaje ve mas programas de television en?** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix F  
Interview Guide Questions

1. How do you perceive your role as a woman today? How do you think your mother perceived her role as a woman? What about your father, how do you feel he perceive your role as a woman?
2. What are some of the goals you have for you life, personal life?, career life? Do your parents have any goals for you?
3. While you were growing up was tradition important in your family? Has the traditions of your family changed over the years?
4. What messages did you receive from your parents about marriage?
5. What messages did you receive from your parents about being or not being a woman who is independent? Meaning a woman who is opinionated and expresses her opinions and who is able to provide for herself?
6. How much did your mother feel that a “good” woman has to sacrifice and devote her life to her children? What are your beliefs on what a ‘good woman’ does?
7. What are your thoughts on putting others needs first, especially family before your own?
8. How comfortable are you in expressing your feelings in a close relationship when you know they will cause disagreement?  
  
How comfortable are you in expressing your thoughts with authority figures?
9. What messages did you receive from your parents about sex?
10. How much did your mother feel a woman was suppose to tolerate whatever her husband’s behavior was even his negative behavior (eg. abuse, infidelity)?  
What are your thoughts on a wife tolerating such behavior of her husband?
11. Do you think there is a difference in how Latino culture views a woman’s role compared to how the “Anglo” American culture views a woman’s role? If so how so? How has these differences impact who you are today?

I will read four statements that a Latina American might see herself as: Please circle the number that best applies to you on a scale of 1-5.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral or Indecisive</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

The following question captures the assimilation phase:

**12. I feel it is important to relinquish as much of my Latina culture values so that I can take on more United States American values.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Has this caused any conflict in your life?

The following question captures the integration phase:

**13. I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina culture values while incorporating United States American values in my life.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Has this caused any conflict in your life?

The following question captures the rejection phase:

**14. I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina values and avoid as much as possible interaction with United States American culture.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Has this any caused any conflict in your life?

The following question captures the deculturation phase:

**15. I feel culture whether it is Latino culture or American culture is not very significant for me at this point in my life.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Has this caused any conflict in your life?

Appendix G  
Statement Questions for Participant's Viewing

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral or Indecisive</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**Statement #12**

I feel it is important to relinquish as much of my Latina culture values so that I can take on more United States American values?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Statement #13**

I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina cultural values while incorporating United States American values in my life?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Statement #14**

I feel it is important for me to maintain my Latina culture and avoid as much as possible interaction with United States American culture.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Statement #15**

I feel culture whether it is Latino culture or American culture is not very significant for me at this point in my life?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Appendix H  
Interview Guide Questions (Spanish)

1. Como perceives tu papel (role) como una mujer? Como piensas que tu madre percibio su papel (role) como mujer? Que piensas como percibio tu papa tu papel (role) como mujer?
2. Cuales son los metas que tu tienes personales para tu vida? O en tu vida profesional? Tu piensas que tus padres habrian tenido una meta para ti?
3. Cuando tu estabas creciendo era la tradicion importante en tu familia? Ha cambiado las tradiciones de su familia y suyo sobre los años?
4. Que consejos recibistes de tus padres sobre el matrimonio?
5. Que consejos recibistes de tus padres de ser o de no ser una mujer independiente? Es decir: Una mujer que tiene sus propios opiniones y los expresa y que provee para si misma?
6. Que tanto sintio tu madre de que una mujer buena se tiene que sacrificar y dedicar su vida para los hijos? Que piensas tu sobre que identifica ser una mujer buena?
7. Que es lo que tu piensas sobre poniendo en primer lugar las necesidades de otras personas, especialmente la de tu familia antes de tus necesidades?
8. Que tan comfortable estas en expresar tus sentimientos en una relacion cercana cuando tu sabes que esta en desacuerdo? Como te sientes expresando tus pensamientos con figuras de autoridad?
9. Que mensajes recibistes de tus padres sobre sexo?
10. Que tanto se sintio tu madre que una mujer debiria tolerar cualquiera comportamiento negativo de su esposo incluyendo forma de abuso o infidelidad?
11. Piensas que hay una diferencia en como la cultura Latina percibe el papel (role) de mujer comparada con la de la cultura "Anglo" Si tu respondes si, porque? Como te impacta a ti esas diferencias?

**Le voy a leer cuatro frases. En una escala de uno a cinco porfavor indique que numero corresponde a su respuesta.**

<b>Fuertemente en Desacuerdo</b>	<b>Algo en Desacuerdo</b>	<b>Neutral o Indeciso</b>	<b>Algo de Acuerdo</b>	<b>Fuertemente de Acuerdo</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**12.** Yo siento que es importante dejar algunas valores de mi cultura Latina para yo pueda tomar mas valores de los Estados Unidos.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Le ha causado esto conflictos en su vida.

**13.** Yo siento que es importante para mi mantener mi cultura Latina mientras que yo puedo incorporar a mi vida los valores de los Estados Unidos.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Le ha causado esto conflictos en su vida.

**14.** Yo siento que es importante mantener mi cultura Latina mientras que you puedo evadir como sea posible entrelazar con la cultura de los Estados Unidos.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Le ha causado esto conflictos en su vida?

**15.** Yo siento que la cultura aunque sea Latina o Estado Unidos Americana—no es significativa para mi en este punto de mi vida.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Le ha causado esto conflictos en su vida?

Appendix I  
Statement Questions for Participant's Viewing (Spanish)

<b>Fuertemente en Desacuerdo</b>	<b>Algo en Desacuerdo</b>	<b>Neutral o Indeciso</b>	<b>Algo de Acuerdo</b>	<b>Fuertemente de Acuerdo</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

12. Yo siento que es importante dejar algunas valores de mi cultura Latina para yo pueda tomar mas valores de los Estados Unidos.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. Yo siento que es importante para mi mantener mi cultura Latina mientras que yo puedo incorporar a mi vida los valores de los Estados Unidos.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

14. Yo siento que es importante mantener mi cultura Latina mientras que you puedo evadir como sea posible entrelazar con la cultura de los Estados Unidos?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

15. Yo siento que la cultura aunque sea Latina o Estado Unidos Americana—no es significante para mi en este punto de mi vida?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Appendix J  
Flyer (see next page)



# **YOUR INVITED TO PARTICIPATE**

## **IN A STUDY ABOUT:**

### **Mexican and Mexican-American Woman**

**This study is for a Masters in Social Work Thesis Project**

**Are you a MEXICAN or MEXICAN-AMERICAN  
Woman? And age 18 and older?**

**Would like to Share your Experience about  
you're role as a woman and your cultural  
values, and your family influence?**

**If you are interested please contact:**

**Jennifer Vazquez (510) 828-4978**

**I am a Graduate School Student doing my Masters in Social Work at  
Smith College School for Social Work.**

**“My intention is to work with the Latino community after I graduate and that is  
why I choose this topic for my Master’s thesis with the purpose in expanding the  
literature on how a social worker or therapist can provide effective services to**

**Mexican and Mexican-American women. Your contribution to this study would be very valuable and appreciated.”**

**Appendix K  
Resource List**

**Alameda County Mental Health** 510 795-2434

**La Familia Counseling Service** 510 881-5921

**Pathways Counseling Center** 510 357-5515

**Project Eden** 510 247-8200

Appendix L  
HSRB Approval Letter

April 19, 2007

Jennifer Vazquez  
25698 Lewis Drive  
Hayward, CA 94544

Dear Jennifer,

Your revised materials have been reviewed. You have done a very thorough job describing your recruitment process and all is now in order. We are, therefore, happy to give final approval to your study.

*Please note the following requirements:*

**Consent Forms:** All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

**Maintaining Data:** You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

*In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:*

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

**Renewal:** You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

**Completion:** You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your recruitment. You have planned so many approaches and seem to have several good contacts, so I would think you will gather a large enough sample.

We wish you success with your very interesting study.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.  
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Pearl Soloff, Research Advisor