HOMBRES Y MACHOS

MASCULINITY AND LATINO CULTURE

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We are carrying out a study of men and their attitudes toward different issues. You can help us a great deal by simply answering some questions. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in what you think about these things. Please give us your honest opinion on each question. We will not ask your name or attempt to identify you in any way. Your answers are strictly confidential and will not be given out to anyone. You are free to not answer any question that you do not want to.

The response of the committee members was revealing. They felt that both the protocol and the interview schedule were acceptable, but they were concerned that I did not indicate anywhere that I was doing a study of Latino men. They felt that the protocol should say that I was studying Latino men only. I wrote back to the chair to ask whether the Human Subjects Committee would have required someone who was studying Anglo men to also indicate this on a protocol. I never heard from the Human Subjects Committee again.

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was normalized and validated on a predominantly Anglo population of college students, ironically also conducted at Stanford and at a nearby community college. Yet the issue of race is not typically raised when evaluating the validity of Bem's instrument or other instruments designed by white researchers and validated on white subjects. This experience illustrated not only the norm of universalism but the hierarchy of credibility. Chicano/Latino men are men, no more or less so than Anglo men. There appears to be a prevailing, though unstated, assumption in social science that findings and generalizations obtained with white samples and reflecting dominant theories, perspectives, and ideologies are generalizable to the population as a whole, whereas studies of Latinos, African-Americans, Asians, or American Indians are studies of subpopulations or specialized groups. Why is a study of Latino, African-American, Asian, or American Indian men somehow viewed as being less universal than a study of Anglo men? Is it that Anglo men are ethnically or racially neutral? Is it that they are simply generic men? Would the Human Subjects Committee have requested that Bem call her instrument the Bem Anglo Sex Role Inventory or that Michael Kimmel's recent book, *Manhood in America*, be titled *Anglo Manhood in America*? Somehow, I don't think so.

*2*

**Genesis of Mexican Masculinity**

While growing up in México City, I didn't know a lot about my pre-Columbian heritage, though I lived in Tenochtitlán—the capital of the Aztec empire—and was literally immersed in that heritage. I recall that one of my childhood hobbies was to collect pictures of Aztec warriors and other Mexican heroes like the Aztec king Cuauhtémoc, who was captured and tortured by the Spaniards. I should add that none of these heroes were Spanish. My brothers and I would go to a little store in our neighborhood near el árbol de la noche triste on avenida México-Tacuba and buy candy. Each package of candy contained a picture card of a Mexican historical figure that we would paste into an *album*, or scrapbook. Since the pictures would repeat themselves in the candy packages, we would trade them with other kids in order to collect a variety. It was kind of like a baseball card collection because some of the cards were rare and more valuable than others. The goal, of course, was to complete El *Album*, a pictorial history of México. I collected these books without fully understanding that I was living in the Aztec capital and honoring my pre-Columbian heritage.

*My vecindad*, Tacuba, formerly Tacopan, is located at the west edge of the city. After my parents separated, I moved south with my father to my grandmother Anita's house in Tacubaya, near Chapultepec. My brothers and I would go almost daily to play in Chapultepec, where there was a huge park with a lake and numerous attractions, including the internationally renowned Museum of Anthropology and the majestic Castle of Chapultepec. But we didn't go to Chapultepec because of the museums and tourist attractions. We went because it was green and because there were places to play, a lake, hills to climb, and places to hide. We went because Chapultepec was our back yard—our private playground, as it were.

*El Castillo* was the Castle where the Hapsburg emperor Maximilian and his wife Carlota resided during the French intervention in the 1860s and, more importantly, where Los Niños Héroes leaped to their death. After the
U.S. invasion in 1847, with the Mexican forces severely depleted, a group of military school boys valiantly defended the Castle. These boys emerged not only as heroes and patriots but also as symbols of Mexican manhood. On September 13, 1847, rather than surrendering, the six military cadets died defending their country. Juan Escutia is perhaps best known because he leaped to his death wrapped in the Mexican flag. Like every other Mexican schoolboy, I learned about and deeply identified with these young Mexican patriots. I admired them in my pictorial collection without realizing at the time that both of my neighborhoods, Tacuba and Chapultepec, were an integral part of the ancient capital.

The Aztecs, or Mexicas, were the last of the nomadic tribes to enter the valley of México from the north in the middle of the thirteenth century. After a number of defeats and humiliations they were able to establish themselves in 1325 on an island in a lake, according to the ancient codices (León-Portilla 1962, xiv). Founded on a low-lying island that other tribes had not bothered to occupy (León-Portilla 1962, xv), Tenochtitlán had emerged by the time of the arrival of Cortés as a bustling metropolis, dazzling the Spaniards with its size and beauty. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, famous chronicler of the Conquest, was so taken that he concluded that “the wonders must be a dream.” The Spaniards were welcomed to the city as guests by the Aztec king himself. Motecuhzoma II climbed to the top of the pyramid in the main temple and pointed out the magnificent sights for all to see. Bernal Díaz remarked:

So we stood looking around us, for that huge and cursed temple stood so high that from it one could see everything very well, and we saw the three causeways which led into México, that is the causeway of Iztapalapa by which we had entered four days before, and that of Tacuba, along which later on we fled on the night of our great defeat... and we saw the fresh water that comes from Chapultepec which supplies the city, and we saw the bridges on the three causeways which were built at certain distances apart through which the water of the lake flowed... and we beheld on that lake a great multitude of canoes, some coming with supplies of food and others returning loaded with cargoes of merchandise... Some of the soldiers among us who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, and all over Italy, and in Rome, said that so large a market place and so full of people, and so well regulated and arranged, they had never beheld before. (Díaz del Castillo 1908, 2:74–75)

When the Spaniards entered the Aztec capital on November 8, 1519, arriving from the direction of Tlalpan in the south and having crossed the causeway of Iztapalapa, they were welcomed not only as honored guests but heralded also as returning deities by the Aztec king, who mistook them for the returning deposed white god Quetzalcóatl and other gods (León-Portilla 1962, vii). This would be the first encounter “between one of the
most extraordinary pre-Columbian cultures and the strangers that would eventually destroy it." The Aztec capital would fall within two years, on August 13, 1521, but only after a fierce struggle and with the aid of Indian allies such as the Tlaxcalans, who joined forces against the Aztecs.²

The Cempoal, for example, dreaded the Aztecs and proposed intermarriage with the Spaniards in order to insure their own protection and survival. Bernal Díaz noted that when a fat Cempoal cacique, or noble, offered eight of the finest young women of the elite families to Cortés and his men, Cortés told the Indians that before he could accept their friendship or the women, they must renounce their idolatrous practices, cease their sacrificial offerings, and free themselves from sodomy (1908, 1:186). It was also necessary that the women undergo the ceremony of baptism.

Much of what has been said and written about the Conquest has been from the perspective of the conquerors, who saw the Indians as heathens who believed in false idols and were badly in need of conversion. The codices, or Indian chronicles, however, present the Indian view of the Conquest. When Cortés left the capital, he left one of his lieutenants, Pedro de Alvarado, in command. In a surprise and unprovoked move Alvarado proceeded to attack and mutilate thousands of defenseless people as they celebrated a feast to Huitzilopochtli, a very important feast that Fray Bernardo de Sahagún likened to Easter for Christians (León-Portilla 1962, 70). The Indian chronicles describe how the Spaniards entered the sacred patio and proceeded to massacre the celebrants.

They ran in among the dancers, forcing their way to the place where the drums were played. They attacked the man who was drumming and cut off his arms. Then they cut off his head, and it rolled across the floor. They attacked all the celebrants, stabbing them, spearing them, striking them with their swords. They attacked some of them from behind, and these fell instantly to the ground with their entrails hanging out. Others they beheaded; they cut off their heads or split their heads to pieces. They struck others in the shoulders, and their arms were torn from their bodies. They wounded some in the thigh and some in the calf. They slashed others in the abdomen, and their entrails all spilled to the ground. Some attempted to run away, but their intestines dragged as they ran; they seemed to tangle their feet in their own entrails. (León-Portilla 1962, viii-ix)

The Aztecs revolted against this brutal massacre. After a fierce battle that raged for four days, Cortés was forced to abandon Tenochtitlán. He attempted to withdraw at night down the Tlacopan (now the Tacuba) but was discovered, and the Aztecs avenged the massacre of Tlatelolco. According to Sahagún’s informants, the rout was so disastrous that it came to be known as la noche triste, the night of sorrows (León-Portilla 1962, 83).
Alternative Explanations of Hypermasculinity

My intent here is not to provide a history of pre-Columbian México and the Conquest, for that would be beyond the scope of this chapter. My intent is to reexamine the ensuing conflict not only as one between two very different cultures and races, but also ultimately as a conflict between men, one that would expose contrasting images of masculinity and manhood. I present three explanations for the emergence of hypermasculinity, or outward masculine displays, among Mexicans.

By far the most prevalent and the most negative explanation for the Mexican preoccupation with masculinity is that it is the direct result of the Spanish Conquest, an event so devastating that it produced a form of “masculine protest,” an almost obsessive concern with images and symbols of manhood, among Indian and mestizo men. The view is negative, or pathological, because it assumes that the so-called Mexican protest is a response to intense and persistent feelings of powerlessness and weakness. A second, related view, is that the cultural emphasis on masculinity was a characteristic of Spanish society prior to the Conquest that was imposed on the native population. The emphasis on masculinity and patriarchy were, therefore, imposed on the Indian in the same way that Catholicism, horses, pork, and deadly diseases such as the “great plague” were imposed. A third and final explanation is that masculine displays may have had pre-Columbian origins that predated the arrival of the Spaniards. The Aztec universe, after all, was sharply divided into masculine and feminine spheres. From birth Aztec men were told that their vocation was to wage war on and to subdue their enemies. According to this view, excessive masculine displays were, therefore, a part of Aztec society long before the arrival of the Spaniards.

Before examining each of these explanations, several caveats are in order. First, though the views are treated separately, they are not in fact separate or mutually exclusive. What I present under each explanation is a very extreme description or prototype. The truth is that though there is much overlap among the three, I believe that the theories or explanations are distinct enough to deserve separate treatment and discussion. Second, I want to reiterate that I am not suggesting that masculine displays or hypermasculinity are either unique to Mexicans or pathological manifestations of the Mexican psyche, unlike conventional theories or what has been termed the “deficit model.” As noted in the previous chapter, a large number of societies are concerned with manhood and masculinity and with assessing who is a “real man” or a “true man.” According to Gilmore, “Many societies build up an elusive or exclusionary image of manhood through cultural sanctions, ritual, or trials of skill and endurance” (1990, 1). Finally, though I critically examine each explanation, it is not possible to say which is the “true” or “correct” explanation for Mexican displays of masculinity.

A Response to the Conquest: Hijos de la Chingada

In The Labyrinth of Solitude the renowned Mexican philosopher, poet, and Nobel laureate Octavio Paz attributed the Mexican’s deep-seated feelings of “inferiority” to the spiritual rape and conquest of México—a defeat that was so devastating that it proved to be not only a military conquest but a spiritual and moral downfall as well. Our anxiety, tension, and rage is captured by a solitary phrase that is uttered as follows: “When anger, joy or enthusiasm cause us to exalt our condition as Mexicans: ‘Viva México, hijos de la chingada!’” (Long live México, children of the great whore!) (1961, 74). Significantly, this phrase becomes a battle cry on Mexican Independence Day, September 16, as all Mexicans are symbolically acknowledged as offspring of a single mythical mother, La Chingada.

It is important to note, parenthetically, that not everyone agrees with the view that the Conquest was totally effected. León-Portilla (1990, 56), for
example, noted that shortly after the Conquest, the Spanish friars stressed the widespread acceptance of Christianity among the natives, but by the second half of the sixteenth century many began to have serious doubts about the efficacy of the conversion. In addition, there are numerous native testimonies and indigenous expressions that indicate a hostility toward and profound criticism of the procedures used to impose the Christian faith (León-Portilla 1990, 56).

According to Paz, in Mexican folklore La Chingada is not our real mother but our mythical, violated, metaphorical "mother," who is symbolized by the thousands of native women raped by the conquistadors. The counterpart to La Chingada is the great macho, or Gran Chingón, who is powerful and aggressive and goes about committing chingaderas and ripping up the world. Extending the sexual analogy further, whereas La Chingada is passive and inert, El Chingón is wounding and penetrating. Thus the Mexican male is said always to be distrustful of others para que no se lo chinguen (so that he is not "fucked over").

La Chingada is symbolized in Mexican folklore by La Malinche, or Doña Marina, an Indian woman who was given as a slave to Hernán Cortés at the age of fourteen and who went on to serve as his translator and concubine (see Miranda and Enríquez 1981, 24–31). Although she was apparently an articulate young woman who was respected by both the Spaniards and Indians, Mexican folklore has erroneously labeled her a traitress, whore, and mother of a bastard mestizo race. She is despised for somehow "opening herself up" to the conqueror and humiliating and thereby emasculating the male, despite the fact that she was actually sold into slavery and literally "given" as a gift to Cortés shortly after his arrival.

According to this view, the so-called cult of machismo developed as Mexican men found themselves unable to protect their women from the Conquest’s ensuing plunder, pillage, and rape. Native men developed an overly masculine and aggressive response in order to compensate for deeply felt feelings of powerlessness and weakness. Machismo, then, is nothing more than a futile attempt to mask a profound sense of impotence, powerlessness, and ineptitude, an expression of weakness and a sense of inferiority.

The renowned Mexican psychologist Samuel Ramos also used the concept of "inferiority" to explain Mexican character. By systematically using and applying Alfred Adler’s psychological theories, Ramos concluded that the Mexican’s hypermasculinity is a form of masculine protest designed to mask feelings of inferiority (Ramos 1962, 56).

One must presuppose the existence of an inferiority complex in all those people who show an excessive concern with affirming their personality, who take vital interest in all things and situations that signify power, and who demonstrate an immoderate eagerness to excel, to be first in everything.

It is important to note Ramos was not saying that the Mexican is inferior "but rather that he feels inferior" (1962, 57).

For Ramos the prototype of Mexican national character is the pelado, a term that defies translation but literally means "plucked," "naked," or "striped" and connote a "lowly person" or "nobody." Like the chingón he has an intense phallic obsession and attributes not only sexual potency but also every type of power to the reproductive organ (Ramos 1962, 60). Thus the success of any man is always attributed to his "balls." The pelado may lack economic power and social status but he consoles himself by strut ting around holding his genitals and exclaiming, "¡Tengo muchos huevos!" (I have a lot of balls). The phrase "Yo soy tu padre" (I am your father) is likewise used to assert power and dominance over others in a patriarchal society in which the father is the ultimate symbol of power and control (1962, 60). The pelado, however, is a study in contradiction. He is not, in fact, strong and brave but is weak and cowardly, and his aggressiveness, assertiveness, and bravado are designed to conceal insecurity, distrust, and inferiority.
The appearance he shows us is false. It is a camouflage by which he misleads himself and all those who come into contact with him. One can infer that the more he shows he makes of courage and force, the greater is the weakness that he is trying to hide. (Ramos 1962, 61)

Ramos, like Paz, believed that the most striking aspect of Mexican national character, at first sight at least, is distrust (1962, 64). The Mexican does not distrust anyone in particular, he distrusts everyone (1962, 64). This so-called a priori form of oversensitivity is so pervasive that the distrust is not limited to the human race but "embraces all that exists and happens" (1962, 62).

There are several problems with Ramos's characterization of the pelado. First, the characterization is clearly classist because the pelado is a low-life, poor, or proletarian Mexican. One wonders what form false or ingenuine courage and bravado takes among middle- or upper-class Mexican men. Ramos acknowledged that feelings of inferiority are also found among middle-class, educated Mexicans, and that when a middle-class Mexican loses control, he is chastised by peers for "acting like a pelado" (1962, 68). In fact, "the main psychic disparity between upper-class Mexicans and those of the lower classes is due to a complete dissimulation by the former of their sense of inferiority. . . . On the other hand, the pelado flaunts with impudent frankness his psychological idiocracies, and the connection in his soul between the conscious and unconscious is quite simple" (1962, 68-69). The middle-class Mexican masks feelings of inferiority through imitation, especially imitation of European, and specifically French, institutions and culture (1962, 18).

When a Mexican compares his own nullity to the character of a civilized foreigner, he consoles himself in the following way: "A European has science, art, technical knowledge, and so forth; we have none of that here, but . . . we are very manly." (1962, 61)

In other words, though we may not have art and high culture, ultimately we have the only thing that really counts—"balls!" But we are men only in a very limited zoological sense, in the sense of the male exhibiting "complete animal potency" (1962, 61).

A second problem with Ramos's characterization is that because the pelado is seen as a negative response of Mexican manhood that is rooted in feelings of inferiority, the limited and unidimensional character that emerges is a caricature, one that serves to mask possible positive manifestations of this masculine response to subordination. In his films the beloved Mexican comic Cantinflas, for example, captured what one might term—for lack of a better word—a good or benign pelado, or at a minimum, a humorous, comic pelado. Cantinflas's characters were invariably poor Mexicans who encountered oppression, classism, and internal racism against Indians. But Cantinflas always managed to outsmart and certainly outwit his more pretentious, well-educated, and rich adversaries. He was the master of double-talk, or albur, a form of verbal art common among Mexicans, and he symbolized a positive quality of the uncultured, witty, but infinitely resourceful Mexican pelado.4

The popular Mexican singer and actor, Pedro Infante, also symbolized a positive version of the pelado. In classic films such as Nosotros los pobres (We the Poor), Ustedes los Ricos (The Wealthy Talk), and Pepe el Toro (Pepe the Bull), Pedro Infante represented a positive image of the poor Mexican male who is depicted as strong, honest, moral, loyal, and compassionate. Though proud and muy hombre (very manly), the poor Mexican is neither loud, boisterous, nor insensitive. He is sensitive, loving, and loyal, and demonstrates his manliness through action, not by abusing people or holding his genitalia and proclaiming his manhood.

The Spiritual Conquest and Machismo. From Paz and Ramos it is clear that the literature linking the origin of machismo to the spiritual conquest of México often assumes a psychoanalytic model in which the outward expression of courage and bravado is based on subconscious feelings of impotence and inadequacy. Psychoanalyst Aniceto Aramoni (1963), for example, defined machismo as "the expression of exaggerated masculine characteristics, ranging from male genital prowess to towering pride and fearlessness. It also is a specific counter phobic attitude toward women" (Aramoni 1972, 70). Ultimately, the machista (male chauvinist) is propelled to dominate and subdue others in order to deny his own weakness, dependency, and regressiveness. Aramoni believed that the cultural emphasis on hyper-manliness, or machismo, "is a uniquely Mexican answer—albeit a disturbed one—to the universal quest for individuation, dignity and relatedness" (1972, 73). Aramoni noted that though machismo is not a universal Mexican trait, it is a fairly common feature of Mexican culture and certainly not rare among Mexican males.

Similarly, for American psychoanalyst Marvin Goldwurt (1980, 1983, 1985), the cult of male virility and machismo, characteristic not only of México but all of Spanish America, is a mechanism of denial, reaction formation, and sublimation used to repress persistent feelings of femininity. Extending the sexual metaphor further, Goldwurt (1985, 161) argued that mestizo society was a product of some form of "metaphysical bisexuality" whereby the Spanish conquistadores assumed the active, aggressive male role in metaphorically raping or sodomizing the passive or feminine Indian. In other words, one might say que el español chingó al indio (that the Spaniard metaphorically violated or "fucked" the Indian). The contemporary macho who incessantly strives to prove his masculinity to himself and
Although machismo was associated with the sexual sphere during the colonial period, once independence from Spain was attained, it was transferred to the political arena as symbolized by the caudillo, or political strongman (Goldwert 1985, 163). Porfirio Díaz, who ruled México with an iron hand from 1876 to 1910, personified the supreme macho, authoritarian father figure. The Mexican Revolution in 1910, in turn, produced its own brand of machismo, unleashing “an orgy of machismo, sexual rampages, and destructiveness” (1985, 163). Revolutionary leader Pancho Villa, for example, was considered to be the epitome of Mexican manliness. According to Aniceto Aramoni, Villa embodied the attributes of machismo:

*hipertrofia compensadora de la personalidad, narcisismo, petulancia, agresividad, destructividad intensa, odio importante hacia el superior..., desprecio profundo y terror por la mujer* (An extreme, compensatory exaggeration of the personality, narcissism, petulance, aggressiveness, intense destructiveness, considerable hatred of superiors..., a deep contempt for and fear of women). (Aramoni 1965, 151)

The mestizo macho, haunted by the bisexual quality of the Conquest, seeks not only to be dominant and aggressive in his household but also to conquer all women outside his household. In contrast, the chastity and purity of his “own” women (i.e., wives, mothers, daughters) must be protected at all costs, even if the cost is death. It is interesting to note that a man who is a *mujeriego,* or “womanizer,” is also referred to as a conquistador, for he is seen not only as seducing but also as symbolically “conquering” women.

Center, movie star and singer Jorge Negrete; right, Xavier Mirándé.


Villa appealed to the masses because, like the pelado and Cantinflas, he symbolized the peon or lower-class person taking a stand against the dominant classes. Mexicans seem to identify vicariously with the person who "bears with it," who is brave, que no se deja (who doesn't take anything from anyone), and que no se raja (who doesn't back down), especially if the person is depicted as an underdog and of poor or humble origins (1965, 163). Villa's invasion of the United States, for example, was celebrated because it demonstrated his audacity in taking on the most powerful nation in the world. In the end, what mattered was not that the battle was won or lost or that numerous casualties were incurred but that Villa tenía huevos (he had "balls") and was man enough to take on the hated yanquis. Francisco I. Madero assumed the presidency after Porfirio Díaz was toppled. Madero's personality and physique contrasted sharply with those of Villa and Díaz, as he was small in stature, idealistic, and gentle. When Madero appeared hesitant and indecisive, Villa told him in a letter to assert himself and show them que tenía pantalones (that he wore the pants) (Villa 1913).
4

Masculinity: Traditional and Emergent Views

A Declaration of War

One of the things that I remember most about my father is that he always made us confront our fears. He used to say “Al mal paso, darle prisa,” a saying that literally translates as “The bad step shall be taken quickly.” It is different than “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today” because it emphasizes that one should not put off negative or unpleasant situations. My father taught us to swim by throwing us into the swimming pool to see if we would sink or swim. Of the three brothers, I was the only one, I think, who literally sank.

Our house on la calle Colegio Militar in Tacuba was near the house of two brothers, Samuel and El Chapulin (the grasshopper) Sánchez, who were roughly the same age as my older brothers (Alex and Héctor, or Gordo). Though we eventually became friends, at first Chapulin and Samuel were our bitter enemies. We used to be afraid of going by the Sánchez house because the brothers and their friends would yell out things, trying to scare and intimidate us. There was definitely a class difference between us and the Sánchez family. The Sánchezes were very poor, and I recall that my mother would take them in periodically, bathe them, and rid their hair of lice.

I also remember that Chapulin was crazy. The boys lived right near the railroad tracks and Chapulin would put coins on the track so that they would be mangled by the train. But his craziest stunt was to stand on the track waiting for an oncoming train, daring the engineer to hit him. At the last minute, he would throw himself down on the tracks and wait for the train to pass over him. He was fearless. We always thought he would get killed, but Chapulin would get up after the train passed, grinning from ear to ear, dust himself off, and go about his business as though nothing had happened.

One afternoon we were sitting in Tía Margarita’s living room, relaxing and singing. It seems strange to write about it now. But the extended family
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often sat around my tía's house listening to her, my mother, and neighbors and friends singing rancheras or corridos. All of my mother's sisters could sing, but Tía Márgrita was the best. She had an incredible voice and knew a lot of songs. One day our seclusion was suddenly interrupted by an avocado pit that came flying through the open bay window. It was a very dramatic moment; my father picked up the strange object from the floor and read a note out loud that had been tied around the projectile with a string. The Sánchez boys had finally declared war, offering a challenge to the Mirándes to come out and fight, if they dared.

My father acted immediately. I don't recall why he picked Héctor, or El Gordo. Perhaps it was because he was the same age as Chapulín (around ten), or perhaps it was because my father sensed that my brother was scared. He took Gordo by the arm and proceeded to go outside to meet the challenge. We met Samuel and Chapulín at La Pila, a waterless fountain in the center of the street that formed a glorieta, or traffic circle, on the dead-end street where we lived. We always played around La Pila.

The confrontation near La Pila reminded me of a classic gunfight in a western movie, as the entire family and neighborhood accompanied my father and Gordo to La Pila. It was a dramatic moment as my father, after asking Chapulín if he wanted to take on my brother, ordered Gordo to fight. I remember that Gordo was chunky and bigger than his opponent but that he was not very street-wise. I doubt that he had ever been in a real fight. Though Chapulín clearly had an advantage in the beginning, his biggest obstacle, I think, proved not to be my brother, but my family, especially las tíos. Every time that Héctor landed a punch or even came close to landing a punch, las tíos would go wild, screaming their approval, shouting: “¡Orale!”, “Now you've got him!”, “He's in trouble now!”, or “Look, he's bleeding!” (he wasn't, initially). Rather than concentrating on the fight at hand, Chapulín became distracted and looked down to see if there was actually blood and looked at las tíos as they screamed.

So what Héctor lacked in boxing skills, he made up for in crowd support, perseverance, and enthusiasm. Rushing after his opponent like a small bull, he was unquestionably the crowd favorite. Gordo “had heart” and would eventually prevail. He would prevail after Chapulín got a bloody nose and ran home crying. My father was pleased but had been pleased regardless of the outcome. What mattered to him most, I think, was not so much that Gordo had won, but that his son, a Mirándes, had accepted the challenge and had conquered his fear of the Sánchez boys.

The Bem Sex Role Inventory and Latino Masculinity

As I reflected on this incident and sought to relate it to my present interest in masculinity, I realized that none of the Bem masculine items really seemed to capture the kinds of qualities that my father sought to foster in us. I don't think my father was trying to make us “aggressive” or “assertive,” and though I suppose that being “willing to take a stand” or “defending one's beliefs” come closest to the qualities he valued, they are not quite the same either. In retrospect, I think this incident taught me that my father wanted his sons to be willing to defend the family honor, but mostly he wanted us to overcome our fear of the neighbor boys. He wanted us to face our fear directly and to conquer it. This wasn't just about physical fear, it was about any kind of fear of or hesitation to face a difficult or unpleasant situation.

In deciding whether to include the Bem Scale (BSRI) in the study, I was placed in a catch-22 situation, a dilemma faced by all researchers who are seeking to develop measures that are more sensitive to the nuance and complexity of non-majority cultures. The dilemma essentially is how to reject a measure that appears to lack validity without first utilizing it. Since established measures have typically been validated on the dominant group, people of color have reason to be leery of these measures. They must either ignore established measures or use them and run the risk that they will not be relevant or valid. Though I had some reservations about the validity of the scale for Latinos, I finally decided to include the BSRI to see how the respondents ranked the Bem items.

On a seven point scale, scores on the twenty BSRI masculine items ranged from a high of 6.25 (self-sufficient) to a low of 4.33 (dominant). From the rank ordering of these items it is clear that the men in the sample generally saw themselves as possessing many traditional masculine traits, as only three masculine items received a mean rank of less than 5.00. But more stereotypical macho traits such as being “dominant” (ranked #20), “aggressive” (#18), “individualistic” (#17), and “athletic” (#19) were not as highly endorsed as other traits such as being “self-sufficient” (#1), “self-reliant” (#3), “defending one's beliefs” (#2), and “willing to take a stand” (#4).

The rank order distribution of the BSRI feminine items was even more surprising and not at all consistent with stereotypical depictions of macho men and Latino culture. “Loves children” (#1), for example, was more highly endorsed than any other feminine or masculine item on the scale. Other feminine items receiving a high mean ranking were “loyal” (#2), “understanding” (#3), “sympathetic” (#4), and “compassionate” (#5).

Overall, then, the Latino men in this study tended to view themselves as self-reliant, self-sufficient, and willing to take a stand to defend their beliefs. At the same time, they thought of themselves as loving children, being loyal, compassionate, sympathetic, and sensitive to the needs of others, but not as shy, yielding, childlike, gullible, or feminine.

In order to assess whether the BSRI measures two separate and distinct dimensions, or factors, as Bem suggests, I decided to use a statistical technique called “factor analysis.” Factor analysis is used to identify certain
items (variables) that tend to cluster together or to be associated with one another in a consistent and predictable way. To the extent that distinct clusters can be identified and the groupings make sense theoretically, they are labeled as "factors." A basic assumption of factor analysis is that relatively complex phenomena can be explained by their underlying dimensions, or factors (Norušis 1990, 322). The goal of factor analysis, then, is to explain the observed correlations with as few factors as possible. Obviously, if many factors are needed to explain, little is gained from the analysis because simplification or summarization has not occurred.

Although factors are not directly observable, factor analysis allows us to identify them or infer their existence from observable variables. Let us say, for example, that we are interested in measuring elusively ideas such as "creativity," "altruism," or "love." One obviously cannot measure a concept like love directly, but such measurement might be inferred from "strongly agree" responses such as she (or he) sends me flowers, listens to my jokes, cares about my feelings, or makes me feel good or special: The phenomenon of love or "being in love" cannot be directly observed, but it is a construct that we believe exists and that may be inferred from other directly observable variables (Norušis 1990, 321).

"Factor loadings" tell us the relative strength of a factor by showing how much of the variation in an item or variable is explained by a particular factor. By squaring the factor loading, we can determine the percentage of the total variation in the variable "explained," or accounted for, by the factor. If the factor loadings for each of the items on a scale are high, say between .50 and .80, we can be confident that a person's total score actually reflects true differences on the dimension that has been identified. It is therefore a common practice to retain items that have at least moderate factor loadings.

Because "masculinity" and "femininity" are separate and independent, according to Bem, the score on one dimension does not necessarily affect the score on the other. Theoretically, at least, one can score high on both masculinity and femininity or low on both dimensions. What makes a person "androgynous," then, is not the absolute value of the score but the fact that there is not much disparity between the total masculinity and femininity components. The initial results of the factor analysis tended to support Bem's contention that there are two distinct masculine and feminine factors underlying the BSRI, although about half of the items on the scale were not related or did not "cluster" (i.e., were not correlated) around either factor.

Because the factor loadings on a number of variables were very low, items with factor loadings under .40 were discarded and the data reanalyzed. Fourteen items emerged from this reanalysis with high factor loadings (.40 or more) on either Factor 1 (masculinity) or on Factor 2 (femininity). However, two masculine and four feminine items were reversed. The last two items with high loadings on masculinity—"flattering" and "sensitive to the needs of others"—are supposedly "feminine" attributes on Bem's original scale. And four BSRI "masculine" items—"self-reliant," "self-sufficient," "defends own beliefs," and "willing to take a stand"—loaded on femininity with our study respondents (see Table 4.1).

One of the most important inferences that can be drawn from these findings is that certain conceptions of sex-appropriate behavior that have been assumed to be universal by Bem and other researchers appear to be culture specific. The findings suggest that Latino men may score high on traditional masculinity traits such as being independent, assertive, and having leadership abilities, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the needs of others. Conversely, Latino men may endorse traditional "feminine" traits such as being warm, tender, loyal, and affectionate, and still remain self-reliant, self-sufficient, defend their beliefs, and be willing to take a stand. I am not suggesting that these findings can be generalized to all Latinos, but I am suggesting that many traits that are defined as "feminine" in the dominant culture, such as being affectionate, warm, sympathetic, tender, emotional, and sensitive, are much more acceptable behaviors in Latino men than they are in Anglo men. Despite the popular macho stereotype of Latino men as cold, hard, aggressive, and insensitive, it is more culturally acceptable for Latino men to cry, to be emotional, and to demonstrate their feelings.

The concept of loyalty, an item that was highly endorsed by the study respondents, can be used to illustrate cultural differences in conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Anglo culture appears to have a more limited conception of loyalty, one largely associated with monogamy and sexual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSRI Masculinity and Femininity Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity (Factor 1)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Femininity (Factor 2)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates item is reversed.
fidelity. I propose that for Latinos loyalty is a more expansive concept that is grounded in notions of interpersonal commitment and support and that is not necessarily a sex-linked quality. A person who is loyal is one who can be counted on to support one’s friends and who will not “bend with the winds,” so to speak. Loyalty is a highly valued quality among Latinos.

The fact that some of the items on the BSRI were reversed made me consider the possibility of the presence of a third factor. A factor analysis using three factors revealed that the masculinity factor is essentially unaffected by the introduction of a third factor, but femininity (Factor 2) contains two distinct subfactors. The revised Factor 2 includes the following eight feminine items, all with relatively high loadings (.55 or greater):

Revised BSRI Factor 2 (Femininity)
1. Compassionate (.75)
2. Sympathetic (.72)
3. Tender (.72)
4. Warm (.70)
5. Understanding (.63)
6. Affectionate (.62)
7. Gentle (.57)
8. Soothes hurt feelings (.56)

In addition, a new Bem hypermasculine, or super-macho, Factor 3 emerged, an interesting mixture of traditionally feminine and masculine items. Four of the seven items in Factor 3 were classified as “masculine” on the original Bem scale. Three of these masculine items (“self-reliant,” “defends own beliefs,” and “self-sufficient”) loaded on the femininity factor in our initial two-factor analysis; another (forceful) previously did not load on either factor. The rank ordering and factor loadings on the seven-item Bem hypermasculine component of the three factor loadings were as follows (* indicates loaded on “femininity” on two-factor analysis; - indicates item is reversed):

Factor 3 (Hypermasculinity)
1. Self-reliant (*,.64)
2. Soft-spoken (-,.58)
3. Defends own beliefs (*,.55)
4. Self-sufficient (*,.54)
5. Shy (-,.49)
6. Forceful (*,.41)
7. Gullible (-,.40)

The fact that the three “feminine” items loaded negatively on Factor 3 suggests that this new factor taps what is essentially a hypermasculine, or perhaps more accurately, a distinctly “nonfeminine” dimension. The third factor parallels the negative conception of machismo discussed in the previous chapter and appears to isolate a truly aggressive form of masculinity. In short, “hypermasculine” men see themselves as being self-reliant, self-sufficient, and forceful, as defending their beliefs, and; because the items are reversed, definitely not as being shy, soft-spoken, or gullible.

An Alternative Measure:
The Mirandé Sex Role Inventory

Overview of the Items

The Bem Sex Role Inventory defines masculinity and femininity as a series of individual psychological traits or attributes such as “tender,” “masculine,” or “assertive.” But Latino conceptions of masculinity and femininity, I believe, are more situational and are best understood within a collective sociocultural context rather than as individual traits. The Latino sense of masculinity and femininity is often determined by the response of the collective. How a person behaves in public and the images that are projected to others are, therefore, very important, as a value is placed on being una persona decente (a decent or respectable person) or bien educada (well-bred).

Although the issues of honor and integrity are focal concerns in Latino culture, often it is the behavior of women rather than that of men that is more closely scrutinized and used in assessing honor, decency, and integrity. Men, in turn, are generally expected to respond to violations of honor and integrity. It is in this sense that gender is externalized and encompasses not only prescriptions for male behavior but, more importantly, restrictions on the conduct of women.

Many of the statements in the Mirandé Sex Role Inventory (MSRI) were taken from dichos (cultural “truths” or sayings), consejos (words of advice or wisdom that elders pass on to youth), cuentos (stories), and corridos (folf ballads). The statements, therefore, reflect traditional Latino values surrounding the role of men and women in society. The following are examples of such statements: “El hombre debe tener los calzones en la familia,” (The man should wear the pants in the family), “La palabra de un hombre vale más que nada” (A man’s word is his most important possession), “Es preferible morir parado que vivir de rodillas” (It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees), “El verdadero hombre tiene respeto y autoridad completa en la familia” (A real man has complete respect and authority in the family).

Other items expressed traditional values regarding female marital fidelity and the role of the male in the family. This dimension included questions
such as "A woman should always be faithful to her husband," "Even if a man cannot provide for his family, he should still be the boss," and "A married woman should not dance with another man unless her husband gives his permission."

Although the items on the MSRI are concerned with assessing traditional conceptions of appropriate behavior for women and men, they can be grouped into four distinct subcomponents or categories: (1) a double sexual standard for men and women, (2) the idea that the male is or should be the dominant figure in the home, (3) the importance of maintaining honor and integrity in the family, and (4) toughness and the notion that men should be tough and not cry or be too emotional.

The first component revolves around the double sexual standard that dictates women are to be sexually pure and protected, whereas men are not. Women are expected to be pure before marriage and loyal after marriage, whereas men are seen as inherently promiscuous before and after marriage. This component included items such as:

1. "A woman should always be faithful to her husband."
2. "It is not important for a woman to be a virgin when she marries."
(reversed)
3. "A married woman should not dance with another man unless her husband gives his permission."
4. "It is natural for a man to fool around before marriage."
5. "It is natural for a man to fool around after marriage."

Another component of traditional gender roles is related, but it revolves less around sex and more around the power and authority of the man in the family. This second component included items such as:

1. "A woman should honor and obey her husband."
2. "A real man has complete respect and authority in the family."
3. "Even if a man cannot provide for his family, he should still be the boss."
4. "A man's home is his castle."
5. "The father is the more influential parent."
6. "The man should wear the pants in the family."

The third component focuses not on the double sexual standard or on male authority but on the idea of maintaining and, if necessary, protecting personal and collective honor and integrity, at almost any price. It included such items as:

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

2. "Once a man ‘gives his word’ or agrees to something, he should not change his mind."
3. "A man's word is his most important possession."
4. "One of the worst things that a man can do is to disgrace or dishonor his family."
5. "It is much better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

The final component revolves around the assumption that men should not cry and that they should not be too emotional or affectionate, especially with male children. Men should be tough, stoical, and unfeeling. Some of the items included were:

1. "A sign of a real man is the ability to withstand pain, hardship, or failure."
2. "Little boys should be taught that men do not cry."
3. "Men should never cry or show their feelings."
4. "A father should not kiss or be too emotional with his sons."

Before analyzing each of the four components, I will present an overview of the responses to the fifty original MSRI items. The mean responses to the original fifty items on the MSRI, ranked in order from the most to the least often endorsed, are found in Appendix B. On the surface, at least, these responses do not appear to be consistent with traditional conceptions of Latino masculinity, especially the belief that men are distant and uninvolved with the family. Almost all of the respondents (98 percent), for example, believed that "a man should be willing to help his wife with the care of children and household chores" (52 percent "strongly agreed" and 46 percent "agreed" with the statement). Fourteen other items were endorsed by 80 percent or more of the respondents. Not surprisingly, most men (95 percent) believed that a woman should always be faithful to her husband, but 90 percent said that a man should also always be faithful to his wife. More than 90 percent agreed that it is not right for a man to get high, stoned, or "wasted."

Several items center around the father's role in the family as the provider and source of emotional support. Eighty-six percent believed both that a good man spends a lot of time with his wife and children and that the worst thing that a man can do is not to take care of them. Another 87 percent agreed that a man should put his wife and children above everything else. Contrary to what was expected, though 91 percent felt that the worst thing that a man could do is to disgrace or dishonor his family, only 76 percent felt that this was the worst thing a woman could do.

Some traditional beliefs as expressed in such items as "A man should be willing to take a stand or take risks for something that he believes in, even
at the risk of losing his life” (78 percent) and “It is much better to die on your feet than to live on your knees” (83 percent) were heavily endorsed, but the idea that men must prove their masculinity by showing that they are tougher, stronger, less emotional, and otherwise superior to women was not supported by the data. Only 8 percent, for example, believed that a man should never back down from a fight, 9 percent that the best way to get respect is to be stronger and tougher, 10 percent that a father should not kiss or be too emotional with his sons, and 11 percent that men should never cry or show their feelings. More than nine out of ten respondents said that it is not right for a man to get high, stoned, or “wasted” and to look for trouble, another 84 percent that it is good for a man to cry or show his emotions, and only 63 percent believed that women are somehow more sensitive and emotional than men.

These preliminary responses also suggest that egalitarian beliefs regarding the marital relationship may be much more prevalent among Latinos than is commonly assumed. Almost nine out of ten respondents indicated that marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition, with the man and the woman having an equal say (87 percent), and that women are equal to men (88 percent). Eighty-three percent, moreover, felt that a man who hits a woman is not really a man. The value of virginity before marriage was not widely endorsed, as 73 percent said it is not important for a woman to be a virgin when she marries, and 89 percent said that a woman who is not a virgin at the time of marriage is generally just as good a wife and mother as one who is.

**Isolating Factors on the MSRI:**

**“Traditionalism,” “Toughness,” and “Sensitivity”**

Like the BSRI, items on the MSRI were subjected to factor analysis to determine if one or more factors, or components, would emerge. Initially, two fairly distinct factors were identified. The seventeen items with very high factor loadings (.50 or more) on “traditionalism,” or Factor 1, appear in Table 4.2. The variables with the highest factor loadings (.78) were “A son should always honor his father” and “A woman should always honor and respect her man.” Those with the lowest loadings (.53) were “Women are more sensitive and emotional than men” and “The worst thing a man can do is to not take care of his wife and children.”

Perhaps what is most striking about these findings is that the component dealing with the double sexual standard and the cultural emphasis on virginity does not appear to be a significant part of the traditionalism factor. The notion that men should be tough and not cry or be too emotional is also not reflected in the factor, since there is only one item that relates at all to this component (A real man withstands pain, hardship, and failure).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Woman should always honor and respect man</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Son should always obey father</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Better if married woman does not work</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Woman should always honor/have duty to her husband</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Worse thing woman can do is disgrace family</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Man’s home is his castle</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Woman should always be faithful to husband</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Worst thing man can do is disgrace family</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Worst thing someone can do is insult mother</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Woman should not dance without permission</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Most important thing father gives is family name</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Real man can withstand pain, hardship, and failure</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Good man spends time with wife and children</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Man should be able to handle all financial responsibilities of marriage</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Real man has complete authority in the family</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>Women more sensitive and emotional than men</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>Worst thing is not to take care of wife and children</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also worth noting that seven of the seventeen items directly invoke restrictions on the behavior of women. A woman should thus honor and respect her man (mean rank of #1.5), honor and obey her husband (mean of #4.5), not dance with another man without her husband’s permission (mean of #10.5), always be faithful to her husband (mean of #7), not disgrace or dishonor the family (mean of #4.5), and, preferably, not work outside the household (mean of #3).

Three items deal with men, but they imply that women have a subordinate status. A man is thus expected to have “complete respect and authority in the family” (mean of #15), “to handle all of the financial and economic responsibilities of marriage” (mean of #14), and to believe that “his home is his castle” (mean of #6). The ideas that the most important thing a father gives his children is the family name (mean of #10.5), that one of the worst things one can do is to insult one’s mother (mean of #9), and that a son should always obey his father (mean of #1.5) are based on a patriarchal value system that extols male privilege.

In short, the MSRI appears to tap a traditional conception of gender that holds that the woman should honor, respect, and be faithful to the man, and, ideally, stay home and permit him to handle the economic and financial responsibilities of marriage. Men thus occupy a special and privileged
status in the home. Significantly, items that are contrary to this notion, such as “A man should always be faithful to his wife” and “A real woman is strong and independent,” did not emerge as significant components of the sex role inventory. On the other hand, very traditional beliefs such as “The father is the more influential parent,” “It is natural for a man to ‘fool around’ after marriage,” “The man should ‘wear the pants’ in the family,” and “A man should never back down from a fight” also did not prove to be significant.

Whereas the principal factor in the MSRI measures traditional conceptions of gender that maintain the privileged position of men while restricting the behavior of women, the second factor isolates a machismo or “toughness” component, including the idea that men should not cry, that they should not kiss or be too emotional with male children, that a man should never back down from a fight, and that it is somehow “natural” for men to be more sexually promiscuous before marriage. Factor 2 includes seven items with a factor loading of .50 or greater (see Table 4.3).

Most of these items focus on toughness and a lack of emotion, but one item does not fit conceptually with the rest. Item 6 indicates that a man should help with chores and child care.

In order to refine the analysis further, I decided to run another factor analysis using three principle factors instead of two, including all variables with an initial factor loading of .50 or greater. This analysis revealed three distinct factors, although Factor 1 is clearly larger and more reliable than the other two. Factor 1 remains essentially the same as in the two-factor analysis, except for slight variations in factor loadings and the addition of Variable 15 (Item 36—“One should defend the family honor even if it means death”) (see Appendix B).

With regard to Factor 2, four of the seven items on the two-factor analysis remain and constitute a shorter, revised, and more refined “toughness” component. It includes the following variables: (1) It is natural for a man to fool around before marriage (.81), (2) A man should never back down from a fight (.78), (3) A father should not kiss or be too emotional with his children (.70), and (4) Men should never cry or show their feelings (.52).

Interestingly, a third factor emerges that stands at the polar end of “toughness” and that I have termed “sensitivity.” This new factor includes two items that previously appeared in Factor 2. A man should help his wife with chores and child care, and it is good for a man to cry or show his emotions, and three items that had not previously loaded. The factor loadings on the MSRI sensitivity component were as follows:

1. “Marriage is a fifty–fifty proposition” (.73)
2. “Women are equal to men” (.73)
3. “A man should help his wife with chores and child care” (.63)
4. “It is good for a man to cry or show his emotions” (.53)
5. “The worst thing a man can do is to disgrace his family” (< .44).

This new dimension appears to tap male sensitivity or egalitarian gender roles, which hold not only that marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition, that women are equal to men, that the man should help with household chores and child care, and that it is good for a man to cry or show his emotions, but also that disgracing the family is not the worst thing that a man can do. This sensitivity component is unique and cannot be readily classified as masculine or feminine.

### Table 4.3 MSRI Factor 2: Toughness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Natural for a man to fool around before marriage</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Good for a man to cry or show his emotions</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Men should never cry or show feelings</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Man should never back down from a fight</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Father should not kiss or be too emotional with children</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Man should help wife with chores and child care</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Boys should be taught that men do not cry</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Regional and Socioeconomic Differences

This section presents an overview of regional, educational, occupational, income, and language usage differences in the BSRI and the MSRI. Based on previous research and social scientific theory, I came into the study expecting that middle- and upper-middle-class men would generally be less traditional and more “androgynous” than working-class men. With regard to regional variations, Californians were expected to be somewhat more “modern” and less traditional in their gender role orientations than Texans, but this was more of a hunch than a formal hypothesis.

### Regional and Socioeconomic Differences in the BSRI

There were substantial differences in the BSRI among our respondents, though these differences were surprising and not generally consistent with what had been predicted (see Appendix A, Table 1).10 The Bem masculinity component (Factor 1), for example, was positively associated with income, education, and occupational status. But contrary to what was expected, men in professional occupations, those with higher incomes, and those with
more education were more likely to endorse traditional masculine items than those respondents who had a lower socioeconomic standing. These differences, moreover, tended to be statistically significant. Regional differences in the BSRI also defied our predicted “hunch.” Texans scored higher on masculinity than northern or southern Californians, but the differences were slight and not statistically significant. In addition, the BSRI femininity component (Factor 2) did not differentiate clearly. Income, educational, occupational, and regional differences in femininity were generally negligible and statistically insignificant.

With regard to the second, or “super-masculine,” component isolated in Factor 3, northern Californians, high school graduates, and men with higher incomes tended to score higher on the factor. They were more apt, in other words, to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, forceful, to defend their beliefs, and to not see themselves as shy, gullible, or soft-spoken. The differences, however, were also not significant.

Regional and Socioeconomic Differences in the MSRI

The findings relative to regional, occupational, and socioeconomic differences on the Mirandé Sex Role Inventory were more consistent with the hypothesized relationships than was the case for the Bem Inventory, suggesting that the MSRI may be a more valid measure (see Appendix A, Table 2).

As expected, our findings indicated that men who are professionals or managers and those with more education or higher incomes are less “traditional.” These differences were statistically significant. What was unexpected, however, was the finding that southern Californians are somewhat more “traditional” than northern Californians or Texans.

Factor 2 on the MSRI is a dimension that extends beyond traditional gender roles to measure “toughness,” supporting the notions that men are naturally more sexually permissive than women, that men should not cry or show their feelings, and that a man should never back down from a fight.

Factor 2, however, did not generally differentiate among the respondents in either the two- or the three-factor analysis. Differences in Factor 2 by region, education, or occupation were minimal. In fact, the only variable that was statistically significant in Factor 2 was income, as men who earned higher incomes generally did not score as high on the toughness dimension as did those with moderate or low incomes.

Unlike toughness, sensitivity (Factor 3 in the MSRI) includes items that tap a nontraditional orientation toward gender. Men who scored high on “sensitivity” rejected the double standard and believed that women are equal to men, that men should help with chores and child care, and that it is good for a man to cry or show his feelings.

Not only were educational, occupational, and income differences in Factor 3 negligible, but they were also the opposite of what had been predicted. Men who were nonprofessionals, those with a high school education, and those with moderate incomes were somewhat more likely to score high on sensitivity. Regional differences were also significant and contrary to what we expected, as Texans were most sensitive or nontraditional, whereas northern Californians were the least sensitive and most traditional.

**Nativity, Language, and Socioeconomic Status Differences**

**Nativity, Language, and Socioeconomic Status Differences and the BSRI**

Because the preliminary analysis suggested that language usage and language preference did not appear to be significantly related to the various factors in the BSRI, I reanalyzed the data without these variables. The revised analysis included the following variables: place of birth, language in which the interview was conducted, education, occupation, and income (see Appendix A, Table 3). The results revealed that these variables were generally significantly related to the original Bem Factor 1 (masculinity) and Factor 2 (femininity) but not to the new Factor 3 (hypermasculinity). Specifically, education and income were significantly related to Factor 1, as men with more education and higher incomes were more apt to endorse traditional masculine traits. Education and income were significantly related to femininity (Factor 2), but, as previously noted, the relationship was inverse so that men with more education and higher incomes generally scored lower on femininity.

Scores on androgyny, the difference in the mean score on the masculine and feminine items, were highly significant. Education again was significantly related to androgyny, whereas occupation and the language in which the interview was conducted approached significance. Contrary to what had been predicted, those with more education, those with higher incomes, and those interviewed in English were less likely to be androgynous than those with less education, those with lower incomes, and those who preferred to be interviewed in Spanish.

**Nativity, Language, and Socioeconomic Status Differences and the MSRI**

Finally, an analysis was conducted to assess whether factors such as place of birth, language preference, language usage, and the language in which
the interview was conducted were related to responses on the Mirandá Sex Role Inventory (see Appendix A, Table 4). Although the findings were statistically significant, as was the case with the BSRI, the language in which the person was interviewed appeared to be the only variable significantly related to the Mirandá traditionalism component (Factor 1). Differences in Factor 2 (toughness) and Factor 3 (sensitivity) of the MSRI were small. In fact, none of the background variables (place of birth, language preference and usage, and language of the interview) were statistically significant.

A revised analysis was computed for the Mirandá traditionalism items (see Appendix A, Table 4), using place of birth, language of the interview, education, occupation, and income. Findings for education and income were statistically significant on the Mirandá traditionalism component, and those for the language of the interview approached significance. But unlike the BSRI, men with more education, higher incomes, and those who were interviewed in Spanish were less likely to endorse traditional views of gender.

Household Chores, Power, Interaction with Children, and Marital Happiness Differences in the MSRI and BSRI

This section looks at whether factors such as the distribution of household chores, marital power or decisionmaking, marital happiness, and interaction with children are related to the Bem masculinity and femininity components and the Mirandá sex role traditionalism scale. Whereas in the previous analyses factors such as income, education, and language preference were entered as independent variables, here distribution of household chores, marital decisionmaking, marital happiness, and interaction with children were treated as dependent since they appeared to be a result rather than a cause of gender role orientation.

The first step was to carry out the analysis using these three variables as dependent and the three MSRI factors as well as a number of background variables (place of birth, education, and income) as explanatory, or independent variables. With regard to distribution of household chores, the results revealed that although none of the background variables was a very good predictor of the mean number of chores performed by the husband or wife, each of the three MSRI factors was a fairly good predictor (see, Appendix A, Table 5). Factor 3 on the MSRI (sensitivity) was significant and Factors 1 (traditionalism) and 2 (toughness) approached statistical significance. As expected, men who were more traditional on the MSRI (Factor 1) performed fewer household chores, but those who scored high on “toughness” were actually more likely to perform household tasks than those who scored low. Perhaps even more surprising, men who scored high on the “sensitivity” dimension (Factor 3) were less likely to share in the performing of chores.

The various background variables were significantly related to marital decisions (see Appendix A, Table 5). More specifically, traditionalism as measured in the MSRI is significantly related to the number of decisions made by the man or woman, as men who are more traditional are more apt to be in marriages in which fewer decisions are made by the wife. But surprisingly, as with household tasks, men who scored high on “sensitivity” were more likely to be in marriages in which fewer decisions are made by the wife than those who were low on sensitivity. This difference approached statistical significance.

The other independent variables (place of birth, language of the interview, education, occupation, and income) were also generally not good predictors of interaction with children or marital happiness, with the exception of income, which was significantly related to marital happiness (see Appendix A, Table 5). People with higher incomes were more likely to report that they felt that their marriage was “happy” or “very happy.”

Traditionalism and toughness components of the MSRI were related to interaction with children, but, contrary to what was expected, men who were more traditional and those who scored higher on toughness were more likely to be involved in significant interaction with their children. Though not statistically significant, sensitivity was inversely related to interaction with children. Men who were judged to be more “sensitive” and less stereotypically macho, in other words, actually spent less time in activities such as helping children with homework or taking them on outings. Also interesting was the finding that men who were rated as tough or “super-macho” were significantly less apt to evaluate their marriages as happy or very happy.

In the second phase of the analysis the same variables were included, but the BSRI was added as an independent variable to see how well it predicted scores on the dependent variables (see Appendix A, Table 6). The findings revealed that with the exception of income, which is significantly related to marital happiness, the socioeconomic and background variables were not consistently or significantly related to any of the four dependent variables. The three dimensions of the Bem Scale were also not generally related to the four dependent variables. In fact, only the marital happiness findings were statistically significant. Although the masculine dimension of the BSRI was not significantly related, those high on the “super-macho” items were less likely to rate their marriage as happy. Also, those high on the BSRI femininity component more often scored high on marital happiness.

Since the socioeconomic and background variables were not generally positively related to the dependent variables, these variables were then ex-
cluded, and multiple regressions were recomputed for the three BSRI and the three MSRI factors. The results of this analysis suggested that the MSRI is generally a better predictor than the BSRI (see Appendix A, Table 7). In fact, three of the four multiple regressions computed with the MSRI were either significant or approach statistical significance, whereas none of the four dependent variables were significant and only one of them approached significance when the BSRI was used.

It appears, therefore, that men who were more traditional in the MSRI tended to perform fewer chores, make more decisions in the household, interact more with children, and were not significantly more or less happy than their less traditional counterparts. It is interesting that men who scored high on sensitivity also performed fewer chores and made more marital decisions, but they did not differ significantly with regard to interaction with children or marital happiness.

The only dependent variable that the BSRI appeared to predict successfully was marital happiness. The masculine dimension of the BSRI did not relate to marital happiness, but the feminine and super-masculine dimensions did relate. Men who scored high on the feminine dimension more often reported their marriage as being happy, whereas those who scored high on the super-masculine dimension were more likely to report their marriages as being unhappy. When the BSRI androgyny score (not presented in the table) was entered into the multiple regression equation, the results suggested that androgyny was not a very good predictor of any of the four dependent variables. As expected, men who were more androgynous performed more household chores than those who were less androgynous, but these differences were not statistically significant.

**Implications and Conclusion**

The findings presented in this chapter suggest that conventional conceptions and measures of gender may have limited applicability for non-majority populations. The guiding hypotheses of the study were generally supported with the MSRI but not with the BSRI, a more conventional measure of masculinity and femininity. The MSRI demonstrated that, as predicted, professionals, those with more education, those with higher incomes, and southern Californians were generally less traditional in their ideas about gender. But on the Bem Scale professionals, those with more education, and those with higher incomes were actually more likely to score high on Factor 1 (masculinity) than on Factor 2 (femininity).

The assumption that the Bem (BSRI) and Mirandé Sex Role (MSRI) inventories are somehow equivalent or even comparable measures of gender role orientation is seriously called into question by these findings. Indeed, many of the key variables turned out to be inversely related when we used one measure instead of the other. Not only does the MSRI appear to be a more culturally relevant and valid measure, but it also appears to be a better predictor of the dependent variables in the study.

Factors such as language usage, language preference, and place of birth were generally not significantly related to the Bem masculinity component. In fact, the only variable that appeared to affect the masculinity score was whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish, and, surprisingly, men interviewed in Spanish were less likely to endorse traditional masculine items. The androgyny score on the BSRI (the difference between the mean of the masculine items and the mean of the feminine items) proved to be a better predictor than either the masculine or the feminine score, though men who had more education, who earned a higher income, and who were engaged in professional occupations were actually less androgynous.

Language usage, language preference, and place of birth were also not good predictors of the MSRI Factor 1 (traditionalism). Education and income were significantly related to traditionalism, and the language in which the person was interviewed approached significance. These findings, moreover, were generally what we had expected, so that men with more education and higher incomes were less likely to endorse traditional conceptions of gender. Surprisingly, those who were interviewed in Spanish were also less traditional than those interviewed in English.

A possible interpretation of these findings is that the Bem Sex Role Inventory is not only less valid and reliable for Latinos, but also that it contains a distinct ethnic and class bias. The fact that professionals or managers, those with more education and higher incomes, and those who preferred to be interviewed in English scored higher on "masculinity" is, in retrospect, perhaps not that surprising. Such men, after all, are bilingual, bicultural, more assimilated and integrated into Anglo-American culture, and more apt to have internalized dominant societal conceptions of masculinity and gender. But perhaps the most important implication of the findings is that they lend support to the view that certain conceptions of masculinity that have been assumed to be unvarying and universal are, in fact, variable and culture specific.