Abstract

Conflict between Culture and Sexuality: A Qualitative Study
of the Coming Out Experience of Latino Gay Men

The purpose of this study was to determine whether cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way families, especially fathers, respond to their sons and how sons are affected when coming out. This qualitative phenomenological study collected data by using a self-administered survey. Participants were asked questions about their experiences coming out to a family member, specifically their father, as it relates to the Latino culture and personal history. This study was the first to examine the coming out experience of Latino gay men and how their disclosure may impact their mental health and their relationships with their fathers'. This study revealed that cultural norms influenced the coming out decision for the men in this study. Participants shared their lived experiences of coming out to their fathers, including barriers and supports they encountered in the process. Findings yield the unique challenges and strengths of these men that social workers can use in their practice. Understanding that cultural norms play an essential role in the coming out process for these men, social workers will be better prepared to apply interventions that meet the population's cultural needs.

Conflict between Culture and Sexuality: A Qualitative Study
of the Coming Out Experience of Latino Gay Men

by

Carlos Gerena, LMSW

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Wurzweiler School of Social Work

Yeshiva University

(*2/21*)

The committee for this doctoral dissertation consisted of:

Lynn Levy, Ph.D., Chairperson, Yeshiva University

Gary Stein, JD, MSW, Yeshiva University

Gregory Acevedo, Ph.D., Fordham University

Stefanie Pilkay, Ph.D., Syracuse University

Acknowledgments

Dedication

To my mother, Lydia, thank you for your unconditional love, support, encouragement, and prayers. Thank you for reminding me each day that you love me for who I am. I could not have completed this dissertation without you. Te amo mucho, mami!

To Steven, my best friend and soul mate, thank you for your patience and for putting up with me during this process.

To my beautiful island, Puerto Rico, and those who inhabit it, you never stop smiling, even during hard times.

Lastly, in loving memory of my father, Juan Gerena, I miss you every day.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

"Race, gender, religion, sexuality, we are all people and that's it. We're all people. We're all equal."-Connor Franta

The present study examined whether cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons and how sons are affected when coming out. This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological study as defined by Patton (2002) who states that this method "seeks to explore, describe, and analyze the meanings of individual lived experiences" (p. 104). The data was collected by the use of online surveys, including demographic and open-ended questions. The data was analyzed by the use of the qualitative software, NVivo. This program is a data management software program that enables the researcher to organize, manage, age, shape and analyze qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). The following NASW Codes of Ethics are relevant to the present research: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and importance of human relationships (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017). These values guide social workers in effectively working with their clients who are often the most marginalized or oppressed in society. In doing so, social workers give voice to these individuals who otherwise remain unheard.

Statement of Purpose

Little attention has been given to the coming out process of Latino gay men and the impact disclosure has on the relationship with their families, specifically their fathers. The lack of literature on this population makes it difficult to fully understand the experiences of gay Latino men. The effects of Latino culture could influence the coming out experience for

Latino gay men in a way that presents potential new risks and protective factors. As a result, further investigation on this population is needed.

Significance of the Study

It remains unclear what cultural implications are present for Latino men who defy the traditionally held gender norms, especially the impact it has on their relationship with their family, particularly male members upon disclosure. Investigation on the social phenomenon has the potential to contribute to the body of social work knowledge and to enrich social work practice with this population. While social workers are well equipped, based on the research, to work with people who identify as gay and people who identify as Latino, the practice knowledge is lacking on this double minority. Therefore, this study will add to the knowledge base for practitioners regarding potential risks and vulnerabilities for this population, enabling them to sharpen their practice skills for unique work with Latino gay men.

Social Work Values

It is important to understand the experiences of Latino gay men in the United States. When working with this population, it is crucial to incorporate social work's core values into practice. As social workers, we have a professional responsibility to provide service to vulnerable populations. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (2017), social work professionals "should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and differences among people and cultural groups" (p.1). As members of two marginalized groups (i.e., Latino and gay), these men experience racism and homophobia from both the mainstream society and Latino community, resulting in negative physical and emotional

outcomes (Diaz, 2009). Culturally competent social work practice with Latino gay men is crucial in applying appropriate interventions that meet the cultural needs of these men. In doing so, social workers are effectively working with clients while enhancing their skills to better work with this population.

Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Latino gay men after coming out to their families, specifically fathers. The researcher chose this approach to collect extensive detail about an individual's lived experience. A total of 15 self-identified cisgender Latino gay men participated in this study. This sample size

enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Padgett, 2008) and to achieve code and theme saturation (Hennink et al., 2017).

A volunteer sampling was used to yield data that informs us of the lived experiences of Latino gay men in this study. Data was collected through online surveys and included open-ended questions, asking participants about their experiences coming out as it relates to the Latino culture and personal history. Using a self-administered survey can increase respondents' desire to self-report accurately on sensitive topics, such as sexuality, sexual orientation, and mental health (Krumpal, 2011). The method of self-administration has proven to increase respondents' privacy and decrease feelings of jeopardy and shame associated with the presence of an interviewer (Krumpal, 2011; Tourangeau & Yan 2007).

Participants were recruited using a two-tier approach. First, a solicitation flyer (see Appendix A) was posted on several national online platforms that have a large presence of Latino gay men. Participants in this study were self-selected. Within the solicitation for

recruitment of the participants, consent was attached. A second strategy used for recruiting participants was a snowball sampling technique. Participants were asked in the solicitation and at the end of the survey to share the solicitation flyer or survey link with any individuals they believe might be interested in participating in the study. Approval of exempt status from the Western Institutional Review Board (approval #800006565) was obtained before beginning data collection (see Appendix C). This study did not categorized as engaging directly with human participants.

Contribution to Social Work

This is the first study to focus explicitly on the coming-out experience of Latino gay men and how their disclosure may impact the relationship with their fathers'. This present study discovered the unique challenges and strengths of these men that social workers can use in their practice. Findings in this study can also provide social workers with interventions that meet the culturally sensitive and specific needs of the population.

Limitation to the Study

The generalizability of this study was a limitation as the study had a small sample of self-identifying Latino gay men and it is not applicable to every Latino gay man. This limited our ability to contextualize or universalize an understanding of the lived experience of the men in the study. However, the qualitative nature of the study and its open-ended questions allowed participants to further` explore whether cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' disclosure of same-sex attraction.

This concludes the chapter on the proposal overview. The next chapter will discuss the study problem.

CHAPTER TWO: THE STUDY PROBLEM

Problem Statement

The coming out process often has a profound impact on individuals and their families. A large body of knowledge focuses on the coming out process of white gay men and their families, while the coming out experience for Latino gay men remains underdeveloped in the scholarly world. As a result, it makes it difficult to measure the impact coming out has on the health and quality of life of these men and their relationship with their families after disclosure. Given the lack of research regarding the coming out experience for Latino gay men, this phenomenon was analyzed more closely.

Problem Characteristics

According to Munoz-Laboy (2008), "In cultures where collectivism is a predominant value, the sexual orientation of individuals is no longer an individual issue, but rather a struggle between placing an individual's orientation over apparent collective social order" (p. 774). Latino men who share their same-sex attraction to family members experience adverse reactions upon disclosure (Ryan et al., 2009). According to Gattamorta, Salerno, and Quidley-Rodriguez (2019), negative responses may be attributed to cultural values endorsed within the family. Three cultural values that have been pervasive within the Latino community are familismo, machismo, and religion.

Ryan et al. (2009) posit that literature regarding Latino gay men found that men who practice same-sex behavior reported higher levels of parental rejection, which has resulted in depression, high-risk sexual behavior, and suicide attempts (Ryan et al., 2009). The same study also found that Latino men experience more rejection from family than females who are gay in their community (Ryan et al., 2009). Diaz (1998) found that for most men in the

Latin community, maintaining psychological connectedness with their family was important, which makes it difficult to denounce the family's homophobia because of a fear of rejection.. As a result, Latino gay men choose to hide their sexual identity to avoid conflict. Concealing sexual identity from the family can contribute to the isolation that many Latino gay men experience in their lives (Guarnero, 2009). Consequently, they may internalize their sexuality, resulting in serious mental health issues (Diaz, 1998).

Cultural Implication within the Family Context

Guarnero and Flaskerud (2008) report that "Latino gay men experience discrimination, racism and homophobia from a mainstream society based on their ethnic and sexual identity and from within the Latino community based on their sexual identification" (p. 668). Diaz et al. (2001) found that Latino gay men often experience high levels of psychological distress as a result of racism and homophobia in the U.S., having a deleterious impact on their mental health and well-being. The intersectionality of these two marginalized populations is highly stigmatized and, as a result, have "prevented their full and fair participation in family life and the gay community and have limited their educational and professional opportunities" (Diaz et al., 2001, p. 927).

One of the central values in the Latino culture is the importance of the family, including the extended family. In this particular community, the family needs usually override individual needs. As such, Ho (1987) suggested that "an individual's self-confidence, worth, security, and identity are determined by his relationship to other family members" (p. 124). For Latino gay men, having dual identities can create an identity crisis as they try to reconcile between being Latino or being gay. This often creates anxiety for

these men as they have a difficult time separating their identity. In addition, they may feel tremendous amount of stress as they might feel as if they must choose between an identity.

Geographical and Demographic Grounding

While the ethnonyms Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx are often used interchangeably to describe the population, the term 'Latino' will be used throughout this study. It is important to note that the term Latino will be used to describe cisgender men in the literature and the study, and in no way is it meant to exclude other genders. The discussion regarding Latino gay men will be limited to men who self-identify as gay or homosexual within the Latino community. Men who have sex with men but who identify as bisexual or as heterosexual will not be included.

Latinos. Latinos are currently the largest ethnic group in the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau (2019), the Latino population reached nearly 60 million in July of 2018, making up 18.3% of the nation's total population. The United States Census Bureau (2017) has estimated that the Latino population should reach 111 million by the year 2060.

Latino Gay men. A study conducted by the William's Institute (2013) revealed that approximately 1.4 million (4.5 %) Latinos adults in the U.S. identified as members of the LGBT. In a more recent study, Newport (2018) discovered that the percentage of Latinos who identify as LGBT has risen from 4.5 % in 2013 to 6.1 % in 2017. The same study found that women continue to identify as LGBT more than men. This may be because Latino gay men are stigmatized for having same-sex attraction and, as a result, may continue to conceal their identity. It is important to note that as the Latino population in the United States increases, it is likely that the number of Latino gay men will as well. Because the literature

on the coming-out experience of Latino gay men remains scant, it is difficult to understand how Latino gay men experience the process of disclosing their sexual orientation to their family members

History of the Problem in the U.S.

The United States is composed of many cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities (Tajon, 2009). Despite being a culturally diverse country, ethnic-minority groups remain invisible in large-scale studies (Ranganathan M & Bhopal, 2006). To date, Latinos are the largest ethnic groups in the country. However, very little is known about the population. Rodriguez (1991) notes that when included in the research, they are negatively represented as defiant, deviant, and inferior. Taylor, Krysan and Hall (2017) note that researchers cited mass migration of Latinos to the United States as a primary reason for anti-Latino attitudes. Prior to the significant influx of Latino immigrants to the U.S, Europeans groups dominated immigrant flow in the early 1900s. The same author reports that their arrival to the country creates a "browning" of the U.S. population (Taylor, Krysan & Hall, 2017), tainting America's Eurocentric ideology.

Eurocentric philosophies and values continue to dominates the scholarly world. Tajon (2009) notes that "psychological literature, research, theoretical paradigms, and practice are imbued with Eurocentric cultural biases" (p.11). The exclusion of minority populations in the United States is problematic and is a clear sign of ethnocentricity. As overlapping members of both sexual and ethnic minority groups in the country, Latino gay men face unique challenges. These men experience racism and homophobia from mainstream society and hegemonic masculinity within the Latino community. These oppressive forces make it difficult for Latino gay men to navigate their multiple identities and make sense of what it

means for them to belong to both marginalized groups. Further research on Latino men, specifically those who identify as gay, is required to explore ways to reduce barriers and promote resiliency with this population.

Social Work Values

The social work profession is deeply rooted on ethics and values. The four distinct social work ethical principles that relate to practice with Latino gay men clients and populations are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships.

The coming out process can present enormous challenges for Latino gay men and their families. Latino men who self-identify as gay may need extra emotional support as they navigate two cultures (i.e. mainstream society and Latino community) that have relegated them to discrimination, racism and homophobia—all which have prevented them for participating in family life as well as limiting life opportunities. As a profession, social workers strive for social justice and advocacy and works with individuals who are oppressed and vulnerable (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017). In doing so, social work professionals are fostering an environment that empowers diverse groups like Latino gay men.

Social workers have a duty to respect the dignity and worth of the person. Each individual should be treated in a compassionate and respectful way that is mindful of individual differences, cultural norms and ethnic diversity (NASE Code of Ethics, 2017). Often times, vulnerable populations feel invisible within their own community. Working with clients allow for their voices be heard. Working with Latino gay men can allow the social work professional to validate their experiences and show them that they matter.

As the Latino population continues to grow in the U.S, there is a greater need for social workers to expand on their professional knowledge and skills. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (2017), social work professionals should have "knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups" (p.1). Latino gay men experience higher levels of psychological distress due to their marginalized identities (Diaz, 2009). Culturally competent social work practice with these men is necessary for ensuring effective access for treatment delivery to this population (Furman et al., 2009).

Social worker professionals working with Latino gay men should recognize the importance of human relationships. "Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change" (Code of Ethics, 2017, p. 1). A therapeutic alliance is important in the helping process. Engaging clients in an honest and supportive dialogue throughout the helping process can strengthen "relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities" (Code of Ethics, 2017, p. 1). The intersectionality of these two marginalized populations is highly stigmatized and can cause overwhelming feelings of isolation and alienation from both the mainstream society and from their Latino community. Social workers should consider this ethical principle when working with this population.

Summary

Cultural norms are relevant to the coming out process of Latino gay men. However, little is known about their experiences after coming out and how disclosing their sexual

identity impacts their relationship with their families. Further research is needed to fully understand this social phenomenon. This chapter looked at the historical-cultural implications as a contributor in the coming out process for this population. The next chapter, the Literature Review, will analyze existing literature that is relevant to the coming out process for Latino gay men and explore cultural factors endorsed within the family that may impact Latino gay men's relationship with their families.

This concludes the Study Problem section. The next chapter will present the Literature Review.

Table 1 Definitions

Term/Key Concept	Author(s)	Definition
Cisgender	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	An individual whose gender identity matches the sex at birth.
Closeted	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	A term used to describe a person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.
Coming out	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	A sexual minority who openly shares their sexual identification with other individuals, friends, or/ and family members.
Culture	Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)	Individuals have the same access to and ability to use the same community resources as those without disabilities.
Family	(Barker, 2003)	A primary group whose members assume certain obligations for each other and generally share common residence.
Familismo	(Diaz, 2009)	A cultural value in the Latino community that emphasizes the importance of family; both immediate and extended family
Gay/ Homosexual	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
Heterosexism	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	The belief that heterosexuality is the preferred sexual preference and the only normal sexual orientation.
Homophobia	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex
Latino	Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)	A native or inhabitant of Latin America or a person of Latin American origin living in the U.S.
LGBT	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	An acronym used for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer."
Machismo	(Barker, 2003)	A socially constructed set of behaviors that shape male gender roles and expectations in Latino society.
Outing	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	Exposing someone's sexual identity to others without their consent. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.
Questioning	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
Same-gender loving	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.
Sexual orientation	(Human Rights Campaign, n.d.)	An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.
Values	(Barker, 2003)	A term used to describe the custom, beliefs, standards of conduct, and principles considered desirables by a culture, a group of people, or an individual.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As overlapping members of both sexual and ethnic minority groups in the United States, Latino gay men face significant challenges. These men experience racism and homophobia from mainstream society and hegemonic masculinity within the Latino community. The intersectionality of these two marginalized populations is highly stigmatized and quite often lacks the resources needed, such as education, employment, and housing. Additionally, these men experience a higher degree of hate crimes, physical and verbal abuse, psychological distress, and suicide. In the Latino community, a strong emphasis is placed on family values, and it is meant to serve as a protective factor. However, for most gay men in the community, coming out can weaken or sever the family ties. As a result, these men are excluded from family life, causing a deep sense of loss, isolation, and alienation. Latino gay men who experience rejection from their family will not feel loved or supported, which can have deleterious effects on their overall health. Social Workers working with this particular group should be aware of these sociocultural issues that have been negatively impacting Latino gay men's emotional functioning. Utilizing cultural competency geared towards the community (Latino and gay) and having the ability to provide interventions that meet the cultural needs of these men, can assist in enriching clinical work with this population.

Background

Overview of Coming Out in General Society. The coming-out process, defined as an individual who openly shares their sexual orientation and /or gender identity to others, is

perhaps one of the most challenging decisions for gay men and women. Adams (2008) defined the coming out process as an act of "self-identification and confession that others can motivate but never force, an act typically thought of as necessary, dangerous, and consequential, and an act often viewed as a discrete, linear process" (p. ii). Ryan, Legate, and Weinstein (2015) described coming out as an important milestone in a sexual minority's life.

For many, revealing their same-sex attraction to family, especially parents, is often the biggest challenge in the coming out process (Savin-Williams, 2003). Cass (1979) noted that coming is an essential step for the individual in establishing his or her homosexual identity. How parents react to their children's disclosure can have a significant impact on the individual's well-being. For many, receiving a positive reaction from a parent can lead to a positive identity (Perrin-Wallqvist & Lindblom, 2015). For example, the literature showed that parental acceptance is correlated with favorable psychological outcomes, such as higher self-esteem (Savin-Williams 1989); lower anxiety (Monroe, 2000); decrease in depressive symptoms and suicide attempts (D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 2001), and resiliency (Rhoads 1995). However, parental rejection leads to deleterious effects on individuals who disclose their sexuality. Parent reactions can lead to increased risk of negative psychological distress such as suicidal ideation and attempts, low-self-esteem, and depressive symptoms (Bos, Sandfort, de Bruyn, & Hakvoot, 2008) and substance use (Baiocco, D'Alessio, & Laghi, 2010). Additionally, research has discovered that disclosure of sexual orientation can lead to the individual being forced out of their homes by their parents (Lolai, 2015)

Strommen (1989) noted that the bulk of literature discussed the coming out to family experience as a traumatic event due to negative views and attitudes about homosexuality Heatherington and Lavner (2008) noted that disclosing one's sexual orientation is a

"psychological decision and hurdle due to both perceived fears and actual negative consequences" (p. 329). For many, to avoid the risk of severing familial ties, they have denied their true identities to maintain their relationship with their parents (Ben-Ari, 1995).

Cramer and Roach (1988) noted that if one or both parents hold negative beliefs and values about homosexuality, then they may be appalled by the disclosure. In the United States, there is a shared belief that fathers will respond to their son's disclosures much more negatively than mothers. Studies related to parental reactions to their son's disclosure have confirmed that these beliefs that fathers are likely to react negatively to the son's coming out than mothers (Cramer & Roach, 1998; Savin-Williams, 2001). As a result, male sons might find it challenging to share their same-sex attraction with their father. In a 2015 study, researchers surveyed 168 participants who self-identified as gay about their coming out experiences to their family. Participants' in this study were between the ages of 18 to 26. The researchers found that sons were more likely to come out to their mothers before revealing their true identities to their fathers (Baiocco, Fontanesi, Santamaria, Ioverno, Marasco, Baumgartner, & Laghi, 2015).

In American culture, attitudes towards homosexuality can be directly linked to the construction of hegemonic masculinity (Bucher, 2014). According to Jadwin-Cakmak et al. (2015), hegemonic masculinity encompasses "strict and limited conceptions of what constitutes "masculine behavior" within a particular time and culture, the rejection of any behaviors considered gender atypical or feminine within that particular time and culture, and the belief that heterosexuality is superior to a gay or bisexual sexuality" (p. 276). When considering masculine and heterosexual identities, one must keep in mind that it is used to "uphold patriarchal codes by requiring that males adopt dominant and aggressive behaviors

and function in the public sphere" (Saez, Casado & Wade, 2009, p. 117). These set of beliefs can influence fathers' perception of their sexual minority sons. The literature surrounding the father-son relationship suggests that most fathers take on the responsibility of socializing gender roles to their sons and emphasize behaviors associated with being "real men" (Jadwin-Cakmak et al., 2015).

Little is known about the relationship between gay sons and their fathers. However, a qualitative study exploring the lived experiences of 30 gay men found that most of the participants felt rejected by the fathers once they disclosed their sexuality. Some of the participants reported hearing their fathers using homophobic slurs as children (Jadwin-Cakmak et al., 2015). While this study yielded important findings about the coming out experience for gay men, not all of the participants in the study were Latino. In addition, it was unclear from the study the findings specifically geared towards Latino gay men. This proposed study differs as it will specifically examine the coming out experiences of Latino gay men. Horn and Wong (2014) have found that gay sons who have disclosed their same-sex attraction to their fathers reported being less connected to them. Heterosexual fathers who "conform to traditional masculinity ideology may struggle with accepting the sexual identities of their gay sons" (p. 249).

Elliot (2011) discovered that fathers stressed the importance of having heterosexual sons and discussed their efforts to craft masculine and heterosexual identities for them. In Coming out, Coming Home (2010), LaSala examined fathers' perception of their sons coming out and found that for most fathers, having a gay son will be seen as a failure to successfully socialize masculinity to their sons and in many ways, feel responsible for their sons' homosexuality.

Traditionally, masculine beliefs can create a barrier in which makes the father-son relationship "less affectionate, less emotional, and less close." (p.12). Through previous studies, father-son relationships are of critical importance for gay youth and young adults, regardless of their ethnic or racial backgrounds (Hussen et al., 2004). As a result, this makes sons less inclined to disclose their sexual orientation.

Cultural Determinants of Gender Norms and Behavior. Negative attitudes towards sexual minorities have been linked to making the decision to reveal their same-sex attraction is influenced by cultural factors, such as "conservative religious beliefs, unyielding gender roles, traditional family values, and homophobia" (Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019, p.3). Because of these cultural considerations, verbalizing one's sexual orientation is carefully calculated. These men willfully decide to "whom they disclose their sexual identity, how they disclose that information, and when they disclose that information, if at all" (Gattamorta & Quidley- Rodriguez, p.1, 2019). Since family is the bedrock of Latino culture, gay men find it challenging to engage in an honest dialogue with their families about their sexuality. As a result, they conceal their same-sex behaviors to avoid disruption in family dynamics.

Among Latinos, there is an understanding that the family is the primary source of social support. Diaz (1998) posited that "close and supportive relations hold an important place for Latinos throughout the lifespan" (p. 7). He further stated that for many Latinos in the United States, the family serves as a protective factor against poverty and minority status. However, for men who self-identify as gay, revealing their sexual orientation to their family means they risk the chance of severing family ties. The loss of familial support can lead to alienation and a lack of social support.

In many Latino communities, the father plays a central figure within the family unit. The role of the father is essential when shaping expectations, gender norms, and values. Research has shown that paternal involvement can have a significant influence on a child's academic and social functioning (Terriquez, 2013). Despite Latinos being the largest racial/ethnic group in the country, little is known about the father's parenting role (Glass & Owen, 2010). Terriquez (2013) mentioned that only recently has there been an interest in the paternal involvement with Latino fathers (Terriquez, 2013). While the father's involvement has received attention in the scholarly world, the experiences of gay men after disclosing their sexuality to their fathers remain scant.

What we do understand about the Latino family structure and father roles has emerged in a few studies in the last several years. Sobralske (2005) notes that "culture determines gender roles through a complexity of learned and socially transmitted values" (p. 348). Through these values, men and women have ascribed roles in which they are expected to adhere to. While African Americans share cultural similarities with Latinos, gender roles in their community have been more flexible than their white and ethnic minority counterparts (Greene, 1994). When it comes to the family structure within the Latino community, men have roles that they are expected to perform. For example, men are considered to be the "head of the household, the unquestioned authority figure, the authoritative caring parent and the leader and protector of their families" (Sobralske, 2005, p. 348).

As the patriarchal authority in the family unit, the father may influence how the rest of the family shapes their own view. The paternal role in the home could have implications for the relationship between the father and son. Young Latino boys are expected to model the behaviors of their fathers. They learn this by engaging and bonding with their fathers. It is

expected that young boys are to appreciate and practice cultural values. Coronado (2009) states that Latino boys who do not adhere to cultural norms can expect to be ostracized or punished, and that "these violations are judged primarily by the subjective view of the father relating to what is and what is not acceptable according to the established social norms" (p. 7). According to Kanes (2006), heterosexual fathers play a central role in teaching their sons' become "real men" which often involve personal endorsement of hegemonic masculinity." (p.158). In doing this, the fathers are endorsing heteronormative culture that implements heterosexual behaviors.

***Cultural Implications for Coming Out in the Latino Community*.** Researchers have described the Latino community as being extremely homophobic (Diaz, 1998; Finlinso, Colon HM, Robles & Soto, 2007). Latino families, especially more traditional families, attach a negative connotation to the same-sex attraction (Guarnero, 2007). Ramirez-Valles (2007) found that negative attitudes towards gay men might be more prevalent in Latino communities than in other communities. Conversations surrounding homosexuality is considered taboo in Latino culture, and often presents challenges to liberating strategies such as revealing one's sexuality (Marsiglia, 1998). Guarnero (2007) identified these challenges as a limitation that regularly "contributes to the isolation that many Latino gay men experience in their lives" (p. 13).

Latino gay men frequently find themselves living uncomfortable double lives. Guarnero and Flaskerud (2008) described it as "having a foot in both the gay world and the world of the family" (p.668). For many, having to juggle two worlds is the only way they can protect their secret, while also protecting their families from the pain and embarrassment their homosexuality may cause. Greene (1994) explained that affirming your same-sex

attraction is perceived as an act of treason against the culture and family. While this is true

for other ethnic-minority groups like African Americans, cultural factors like familismo,

machismo, and religion are heavily considered in the coming out process for many Latino

gay men, whereas religion is the primary factor for African American gay men (Greene,

1994).

Alvarez (1997) examined the literary representation of homosexuality in the Mexican

culture and found that, to some extent, Latino gay men are compared to the Malinche, an

Aztec woman perceived as a cultural traitor for her role in the Spanish conquest. She was

known for her "fleshly weakness" that left her open to being seduced by the Spaniards,

ultimately destroying the Aztec empire because of her betrayal. The author also found that

"the "homosexual" man's body, unlike the heterosexual man's, is perceived as open.

Therefore, the negative connotations of passivity, weakness, and betrayal that are associated

with Mexican women are associated with him" (p. 3).

It is noteworthy to mention that Latinos are not a homogenous group of men. With

that said, the experiences of some Latinos are not necessarily experienced by all Latinos.

Many men who self-identify as gay may continue to have a place within the family.

However, it is widely recognized that any tolerance of homosexuality in the Latino

community comes with an implicit restriction that men who sleep with men are not to discuss

anything related to homosexuality or identify as such (Diaz, 1998). Nevertheless, if Latino

gay men declare their same-sex attraction and act on it, it increases their chances of being

completely isolated from their families.

While some might practice concealment as a way to avoid familial conflict, others

choose to move away from their families in the hope of never having to reveal their secrets

(Diaz, 1998). The decision to migrate is done in an attempt to avoid any shame and hurt that their being gay might have on the ones they love—their family. According to Diaz (1998), "at times, the paths of migration and exile are embraced as the only way out of this personal dilemma between family loyalty and same-sex desires" (p.7).

Cultural Influencers. Values and Beliefs unique to Latino individuals can be described as cultural themes, which shape and inform their worldview. While it is understood that Latinos are a heterogeneous group, and their experiences may vary from other Latinos in their community (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019), they may share common cultural values (Delgado-Romero, Nevels, Capielo, Galvan, & Torres, 2013). Fuentes and Adams (2014) asserted that very little attention had been given to the intersection of Latino values and beliefs and sexual identity.

For Latino men who self-identify as gay, "sexual identity development and familial acceptance may differ as they negotiate cultural factors and sexual orientation" (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019, p.3). Such cultural factors may inform the coming out process for some members of this population. Several themes have been identified throughout research, which are strong predictors of how values and beliefs among the Latino culture can shape the experiences of gay men after coming out to their fathers.

Familismo. Familismo has been described as a fundamental cultural value among Latinos. The term familismo is defined as a sense of belonging and interconnectedness between nuclear and extended kin. It emphasizes the importance of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity within a family (Marin & Marin, 1991). Santiago-Rivera (2003) asserted that for most Latinos in the United States, "features of familismo such as pride, belonging, and obligation to members of the family continue to be distinctive attributes across generations

regardless of the length of time one has resided in the US" (p. 8). Because family is an important part of the culture, Latinos often stress "the centrality of family life and its priority over other realities" (Arditti, 2006, p. 246). Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that familismo is a set of beliefs among Latinos that are passed down through generations and learned through interactions (as cited by Gonzalez & Dumka, 2009).

Familism can be beneficial for Latinos and have positive implications for their overall well-being and health. Researchers have identified familismo as a protective factor from both physical and mental health outcomes (Bush, Supple, & Lash, 2004). However, Diaz (1998) has argued that this is not entirely the case for most Latino gay men who disclose their sexual identity to family members. For gay men in the community, coming out often "implies the risk of severing family ties, not so much because families would explicitly reject or disinherit them, but rather because there is a deeply ingrained feeling that being homosexual hurts the family, that is, cause shameful pain to those whom you love most" (Diaz, 1998, p.7).

In a 2001 study, Diaz and Alaya found that Latino gay men feared that coming out may cause embarrassment or pain to their families. Munoz-Laboy (2008) argued that familismo is a significant barrier to coming out for many sexual minorities in the Latino community. When discussing familismo as a cultural norm, Diaz (1998) argued that:

> Familism values, as strong in Latino homosexuals as in any other members of the Latino culture, prevent homosexuals from denouncing the family's homophobia and demanding acceptance. Instead, for the sake of psychological connectedness and identification with the family, homophobia tends to be internalized in a self-punitive way. (p. 94)

For most Latin men who self-identify as gay, disclosing their sexual orientation can become a major source of conflict and tension within their community. Understanding that prioritizing family needs over their own is a core concept in the Latino community, Latino

gay men may consider concealing their sexual identity to avoid disrespecting or shaming the family (Greene, 1994).

Machismo. Machismo is recognized as a cultural factor influencing the lived experiences of many Latino gay men. Diaz (1998) notes that the more influential the machismo ideology is, the more homophobic attitudes in the Latino community can be expected. Machismo is defined as a socially constructed set of behaviors that shape male gender roles and expectations in Latino society. In the literature, machismo is often used to emphasize Latino masculinity in Latino culture. In both the United States and Latino America, Latinos are known as being hypermasculine and homophobic (Diaz, 1998).

This socially constructed set of behaviors has been known to marginalize Latino gay men within their own community. Hurtado and Sinha, in Beyond Machismo (2016) explored the machismo attitudes in the United States and emphasized that "Latino men occupy a contradictory position within a system of privilege, one that offers them advantages but concurrently disadvantages those belonging to devalued social categories" (p. 12), including sexual minorities in the Latino community.

While the construct of machismo beliefs encompass positive aspects of masculinity, such as "culturally valued and desirable ideals of courage, honor, virility, physical strength, and as representing a protector, provider, and authority figure" (Saez et al., 2009, p. 117), there is a negative connotation attached to the term. For example, Glass & Owen (2010) noted that machismo attitudes are associated with "dominance, hostility, and interpersonal dogmatism" (p. 253). Literature shows that Latino masculinity has a negative effect on the lives of Latino gay men (Cantú, 1999). A study investigating the relationship between machismo, gender role conflict, and mental health among Latino gay men, found that

machismo beliefs had negative mental health outcomes, such as higher depression, anxiety, and anger (Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000).

Latino men are socialized to act in characteristically masculine ways since childhood. Diaz (1998) has suggested that Latino boys spend their childhood and adolescence proving their masculinity through sports, physical fights, participating in dangerous activities, and bragging about their sexual experiences with women. Being exposed to gender socialization often limits men's ability to share their feelings, as they are expected to behave like men and avoid any behaviors that may be perceived as feminine. In a study conducted by Sandfort et al. (2007), it was determined that Latino men who self-identified as gay men and displayed effeminate manners reported high levels of abuse and depressive symptoms.

For many Latinos, cultural factors shape their attitudes about sexuality and identity. Masculinity is often associated with power and control (Guarnero & Flaskerud, 2008). Research has found that Latino men exert these cultural characteristics through penetration during sex. (Diaz, 1998; Finlinson, Colón, Robles, & Soto, 2006; Wood & Price, 1997). Sexual activities among gay men are divided into three roles: top, bottom, and versatile. The top is the individual who takes on the insertive role, while the bottom takes on the receptive role. An individual who is versatile, alternates between roles (Wegesin & Meyer-Bahlburg (2000). Among Latino gay men, tops are referred to as "activos" and bottoms as "pasivos." Machismo attitude has created a belief among some Latinos that homosexuals are men who are taking a receptive role in anal intercourse while men who take on an insertive role identify as heterosexuals (Diaz, 1998; Finlinson, Colón, Robles, & Soto, 2006). Diaz (1998) noted that for Latino boys, boasting about penetrating a gay individual is a way of proving their masculinity while continuing to live heterosexual lives.

Interestingly enough, even in the Latino gay community, masculinity plays a significant role in sexual behavior. For example, the pasivo role is associated with femininity and is often viewed as taking the role of the women, whereas the activo role is less stigmatized and viewed as masculine within the Latino gay community (Diaz, 1998).

Since gay men are often associated with femininity, men who do not exhibit traditional gender role beliefs in the Latino community are often publicly sanctioned. Words like "maricon" and "pato," which are the equivalent to faggot, are used to humiliate or call into questions another man's masculinity (Guarnero & Flaskerud, 2008). Hirai, Dolma, Popan, and Winkel (2018) examined the relationship between traditional machismo and attitudes toward sexual minorities in a Latino college sample. They found that Latinos with high conventional gender role beliefs (i.e., traditional machismo) often view gay individuals negatively because of conflict with gender role beliefs. Literature has found that machismo has been associated with internalized homophobia. Experiences of internalized homophobia are strongly associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes (Guarnero & Flaskerud, 2008).

Religion. Severson, Munoz-Laboy and Kaufman (2014) pointed out that "religious beliefs and practice are a fundamental aspect of human experience, structuring meaning and guiding behavior" (p. 136). Latino theological literature describes religion as a core cultural value shared among the community. Researchers found that Latino communities display a higher engagement in religious practices than white communities (Pew Research Center 2015a). For most Latinos, relying on religious belief may help them during difficult times. (Comas-Diaz, 2006).

In the United States, Catholicism is a prominent religion among Latinos (Severson et al., 2014). The most up to date survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (2014), found that approximately 70 % of U.S. Latinos identify with Catholicism while 23 % of Latinos identified as Protestant. Catholicism is perceived "to serve as a bastion of cultural conservatism among Latinos in the United States" (Ellison, Acevedo & Ramos-Wada, 2011, p. 3). Like many other religious communities, Catholicism supports heterosexual marriage, procreation, while condemning same-sex behaviors (Espinosa, 2008).

Historically, Catholic Christianity has had a negative viewpoint on homosexuality and has openly denounced it (Severson et al., 2014). Those who represent the church often cite Biblical references to condemn homosexuality (Clarke, Brown & Hochsteien, 1989). Religious institutions often describe homosexuality as sinful and morally wrong (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Negative attitudes received by the church have been cited as the central conflict in the coming out process as a result of religious teachings (Shuck & Liddle, 2001). It's been said that "many gay men and lesbians repudiate organized religion or at least maintain a healthy distance in order to survive in a hostile context" (Ellison, 1993, p. 149). While the conflict between religious teachings and homosexuality remain underdeveloped among the Latino population, research has found that most Latino gay men keep their close relationship with God. However, they abandon the church as a result of their negative attitude towards homosexuality (Garcia, Gray-Stanley, and Ramirez-Valle, 2008). Such anti-gay attitudes can lead to internalized homophobia, in which the individual has a "negative view of self" (Weber, 2008, p. 32). Internalized homophobia has been linked to adverse mental health outcomes (Diaz, 1998).

Researchers discovered that in the Latino culture, religion might be the source of conflict and tension between the father and his gay son (Abreu et al., 2019). In a recent study, Gattamorta, Salerno, and Quidley-Rodriguez (2019) found that cultural norms, such as familismo, machismo, and religion influenced the way in which the parents react to a son's sexual disclosure. In a quantitative study investigating family acceptance among adolescence and young adults, the researchers discovered that being Latino and religious are linked to lower acceptance (Ryan et al., 2010). Garcia et al. (2008) noted that literature regarding religiosity in the lives of Latino gay men is scant. Having this knowledge helps determine how religious ideology influence Latino gay men's experience after coming out to their father.

Methods

The goal of this systematic literature review was to explore if and how cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' disclosure of same-sex attraction. The search was conducted using ProQuest, PsychInfo, and Social Work Abstract with full text. The following search terms were used in varying permutations to search the databases: (LGBT OR gay OR homosexual) AND (Latino) AND (coming out OR disclosure) AND (father OR parents OR family). There was significant replication of articles in each database. The collected literature was reviewed for any references relevant to this search that were not already identified. Inclusion criteria include peer reviewed articles and some variation of the search terms encompassing Latino, coming out, sexuality and family. Exclusion criteria included: articles written in languages other than English, studies on non-Latino population, men who were "in the closet" or have not come out as gay to family.

Figure 1. Overall Results of the Systematic Review
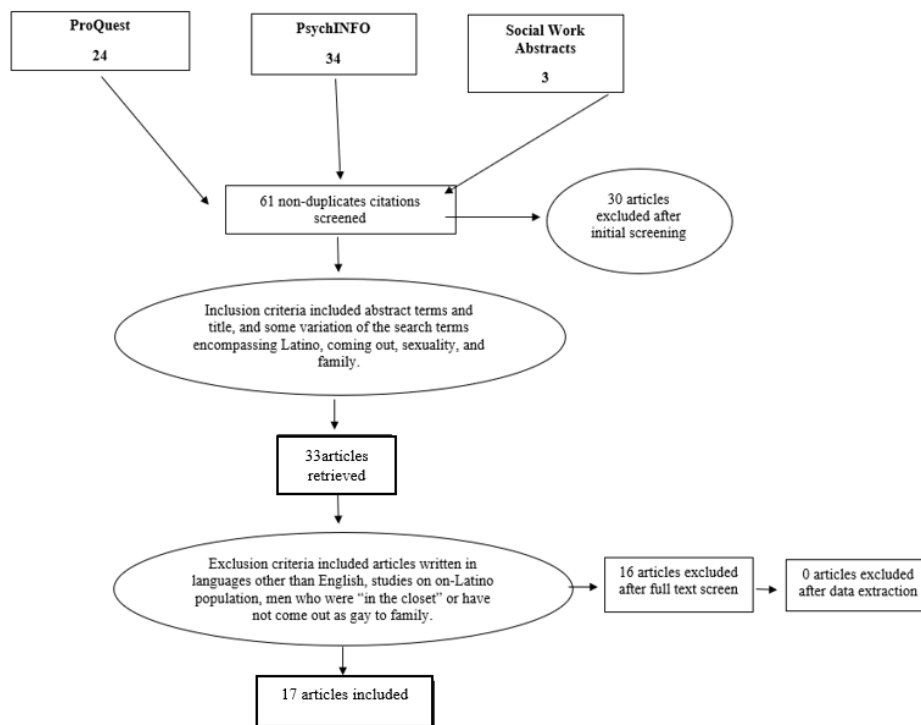
Results

In this systematic literature review, there was a total of 17 articles that were reviewed and included in this research. After reviewing all the articles, three themes emerged from the literature: perceived reaction from the sons' perspective, parental reaction to son coming out, and shift in parental attitude. These themes were selected by identifying common concepts and findings in the studies collected. The majority of the qualitative studies were used to examine cultural norms in the Latino community that may influence the way fathers to respond to their sons' disclosure of same-sex attraction. Although very little quantitative studies were used in this systematic literature review, researchers used surveys to collect data. Numerous instruments were used to collect data on the psychology and physical deficits experienced by the participants.

Perceived reaction from the sons' perspective

For Latino gay men, coming out presents an enormous challenge to the relationship with family members, many of whom see homosexuality as a source of shame and dishonor for the whole family (Diaz, 1998, p.7). Research indicates that disclosing same-sex attraction to parents is a significant turning point in the coming out process and lives of adolescents and young adults. For many, the thought of revealing their sexual orientation to parents may cause tremendous fear of potential strain in their relationship. For example, Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore the coming out experience of 20 Latino gay men. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, which were all audio-recorded face-to-face and lasted approximately 30–60 minutes. Findings indicated that many of the participants feared possible consequences as a result of their disclosure (i.e., negative parental reaction, expulsion from the home, being mistreated, losing financial support, and shaming the family)(Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019). Similar perceived parental reactions to disclosure in an earlier study conducted by del Pino and colleagues (2014), found that participants feared anticipated rejection from their family, expulsion from their homes, and embarrassing their family as a result of their same-sex attraction. Several participants shared concerns about coming out to their parents. Many feared that their disclosure of same-sex behavior would result in rejection and isolation.

A qualitative study conducted by Adam and Rangel (2017) found that many participants cite machismo and fear of rejection as reasons for hiding this aspect of their identity. Del Pino et al. (2014) found similar patterns of coming out experiences in terms of machismo and fear of rejection. One participant reported recalled that "If I told my dad that

I'm gay, my dad, obviously given his machismo and his way of thinking, is going to cut off all support possible" (p. 414).

There was a study that examined the coming out experience of young gay men from multicultural backgrounds. The findings specific to Latino gay men found that participants cited cultural norms and ideals as a barrier to coming out (Merighi & Grimes, 2000). One participant reported that disclosing his sexuality to a parent would not only hurt them emotionally but would also subject them to mistreatment by members outside of the immediate family as a result of having a gay offspring. Latino gay men in Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez's (2019) study also identified cultural factors (i.e., familism, machismo, and religious beliefs) as a barrier in coming out to their parents. Several participants reported that such cultural characteristics might influence the way parents react to their same-sex attraction, and in turn, have an impact on their experiences in coming out. As a result, some of the participants chose to conceal their sexuality from their family.

The review findings suggest that cultural value are relevant when examining the coming out process of Latino gay men. While these values are meant to nurture healthy family relationships, disclosing same-sex attraction may have a detrimental effect on the parent-child relationship. Knowing that these values matter, these men may conceal their sexuality from their parents to avoid a disruption in their relationship. Failure to meet cultural expectations can weaken family ties and interfere with their decision making (del Pino et al., 2014).

Parental reaction to son coming out

Explicit rejection. Research indicates that Latino men who have sex with men have higher levels of reported parental rejection (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). This

population also experience an higher degree of adverse family reactions regarding sexual orientation when compared to non-Latinos (Ryan et al., 2009). Using secondary data analysis, Guarnero's (2007) examined 27 Latino gay men's experiences after coming out to their fathers. The researcher found respondents dealt with feelings of isolation or alienation within their family. Many reported experiencing discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse as a result of their homosexuality.

Castellanos (2016) conducted a qualitative study to explore the experiences of 14 Latino gay men. Data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews, which were all audio-recorded face-to-face and lasted approximately 60 minutes. Findings indicated that many of the participants reported parental conflict over their same-sex attraction. Several participants reported immediate expulsion from their homes after coming out to their fathers. One participant stated that he was given two hours to gather his belongings and leave the home. Another participant shared that his father expressed disappointment in having a gay son. He noted that his sexual orientation and effeminate behaviors caused severe conflict with his father. Some of the participants in this study reported homelessness due to the conflict led by their disclosure.

To examine the lived experiences of Latino gay men, Sandfort, Melendez, and Diaz (2007) used a secondary analysis design. Data was gathered using face-to face interviews with 912 self-identified Latino sexual minorities in three major U.S. cities. The majority of the men who participated in the original study reported experiencing verbal and physical abuse by their families. These men also reported that identify as homosexual hurt and embarrassed their families. For these men, expressions of homophobia whether explicit or implicit is viewed as a display of rejection. This study had its own set of limitations. For

example, the researchers did not assess who the homophobic actors were, which made it difficult to identify if parents were responsible for anti-gay behaviors.

Esparza's (2017) study utilized a case study design to examine the lived experiences of 5 Latino gay men. Data were collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews that lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. The average age of the men interviewed was 21.4 years. The researcher concluded that participants encountered homophobia from their fathers, resulting in isolation and alienation. Most of the participants reported that their fathers expressed disapproval of their sexual identities and feminine gender expression. These findings are in line with other studies showing that for Latino gay men, traditional value of machismo requires men to avoid all things feminine (Guarnero, 2007).

Adam and Rangel (2017) conducted a qualitative study to explore the lived experiences of 25 Latino gay men in the United States. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Some participants reported experiencing negative reactions from their parents once coming out as gay. One participant reported that he lost emotional and financial support from his parents once coming out to them. There was a strain in the parent-child relationship and he eventually moved from the home to avoid further conflict.

In Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez's (2019) qualitative study, they discovered that among the most severe consequences felt by participants was experiencing parental rejection once coming out. Some of these men in the study reported that their parents distanced themselves from their sons once they learned that they were gay. One participant remembered coming out and recalled, "my parents started to get contemptuous, and really started to hate me, I feel, as a son. They really started to build resentment towards me" (p.13).

Del Pino, Moor, McCuller, Zaldívar, and Moore (2014) conducted an ethnographic qualitative study of 30 Latino gay men to investigate how study participants interpreted their experiences of familial support or rejection after coming out to their parents. Several of the participants reported a change in the father-son relationship after disclosing their sexuality. One respondent stated that prior to disclosing his sexuality, his father would often display affection towards him. However, once coming out, his father was distant. Another respondent noted that he was instructed not to disclose his sexuality to others outside of them home to avoid family shame. While none of the study found that over time some parents may become accepting and supportive of their sons' sexual orientation and that their actions may be interpreted as being supportive.

While there is research that focuses on the child's perspective of parental reactions to having a child come out, there is some research that studies the parents' perspective. (Gattamorta et al., 2019; Abreu et al., 2019). Using a qualitative study, Gattamorta et al., (2019) explored the experiences of 10 Latino parents who had a sexual minority child. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Data found that negative reactions to their child coming out were influenced by the pre-existing ideology of homosexuality, which impacted the parent-child relationship. Parents cited fear of potential substance use, high-risk sexual behaviors, and societal attitudes towards the child's lifestyle. Parents also cited cultural factors, such as religion, familismo, and machismo, as influencing their responses. One parent described their family as "doomed" once their gay son disclosed his sexuality, stating that her son will be condemned to hell, and so would she for allowing him to be gay. Another parent emphasized machismo attitude as a source of strain between the father-son

relationship, noting that after the son's disclosure, their relationship was not the same (Gattamorta, Salerno, & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019).

  Implicit rejection. Results from the review revealed that rejection can occur in different forms. For most Latinos, culture may inform the why gay men interpret parental behaviors as a display of rejection. While it was not explicitly stated, machismo influenced the parents' acceptance. For example, in Guarnero's (2017) study, while respondents didn't explicitly report having been excluded from their homes, they spoke about another display of rejection—control of their homosexual lifestyle. One respondent reported that his father would control his access to other gay men and romantic partners by limiting outside communication. Most respondents noted that their fathers would attempt to control their effeminate behaviors. For example, one participant reported being threatened to be physically assaulted by his father for displaying effeminate behavior. Additionally, respondents discussed ways in which stereotypes were used to emasculate and diabolize gay men, such assuming that gay men are cross-dressers or a pedophile (Guarnero, 2007).

  Li, Thing, Galvan, Gonzalez and Bluthenthal (2017) utilized a qualitative design to examine the experiences of 21 Latino gay men disclosing their sexual orientation to parents. Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The researchers concluded that the majority of these men experienced significant levels of microaggressions and overt discrimination from their fathers. Many participants stated that while their fathers accepted their sexual identities, they would often use sexually prejudiced profanities (i.e., faggot and queer) in their sons' presence. Other reported that their fathers would correct their effeminate behaviors and encourage them to sleep with females. These findings suggest that

participants in this study experienced a strain in their relationships with their parents, which resulted in psychological distress.

In a qualitative study, Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez (2019) examined the coming out experiences of sexual minority Latinos in south Florida. The findings specific to Latino gay men revealed that while these men did not report being explicitly rejected once coming out to their parents, they experienced parental rejection in other forms. Many of these participants reported that some parents used religious ideologies as in an attempt to dissuade same-sex behaviors. Some of the participants were told that God disapproved of their sexual orientation. Participants reported that their parents quoted scriptures from the bible and went to church to pray for their salvation. One participant remembered coming out to his parents and that they "were both crying and my mom was throwing a lot of religious arguments at me and she said they had to respect my decisions, but she wasn't happy about it and God was not happy about it" (p, 12). This particular finding shows how some parents convey a level of acceptance of their son's sexual orientation by saying that they respect their decision, yet also use quotes from the Bible to discourage homosexuality, implying that there is something wrong about being gay. For some of the participants, having these negative experiences tended to have some participants disassociate from their particular faith.

Shift in parental attitude

Results from the review revealed that some parents were receptive to their sons' disclosure of their sexual orientation. For example, in Adam and Rangel's (2017) qualitative study, they found that most participants reported having a positive relationship with their fathers after disclosing their sexual orientations. Researchers found that the relationship with

their fathers did not change upon disclosure. However, while some reported parental acceptance, they noted that the topic of their sexual orientation was not discussed.

del Pino et al. (2014) qualitative study found that while some fathers were accepting of their sons' sexual orientation, the acceptance came with the condition that these men were not to disclose their sexual orientation to members outside of the immediate family. These findings are consistent with other studies showing that for Latino gay men, fathers acceptance is often only achieved by agreeing not to openly discuss their sexual orientation to other members of the family (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019).

While there is an emphasis in the current literature on rejection toward sexual minorities from parental figures in the Latino culture, results from the review revealed a shift in the way parents react to the disclosure of their gay sons. Abreu et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore the experiences of 5 Latino fathers as they navigate their relationship with their sexual minority child. Data was gathered from taped interviews of 40 to 60 minutes, and subsequent data analyses were conducted using a phenomenological approach. While some fathers reported having a difficult time understanding their son's disclosure, they were able to accept their child's same-sex attraction. Additionally, fathers expressed wanted their sexual minority child to be happy and live healthy lives. While this study discussed the fathers' perspective of having a sexual minority son and found that they reacted positively to their son's disclosure, it is important to note that to the researchers knowledge, this is the only study that examines the fathers' perspective. It is also noteworthy to mention that this study did not account for the sons' perspective which may differ than their fathers.

Substance and Alcohol use

del Pino et al., (2014) used an ethnographic qualitative study to explore how 30 Latino gay men interpreted parental rejection after disclosing their sexual orientation. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews each lasting approximately one hour. The majority of participants reported that using alcohol and substances allowed them to manage family rejection due to their sexual orientation. Many of these men reported a lack of emotional support from their families, feeling isolated, and a deep sense of loss, upon disclosure. One participant stated that being rejected by his family for being gay "[pushes you] to numb those feelings and the only way that you can numb those feelings is by drinking and using drugs." (del Pino et al., 2014, p. 230).

Mental Health

Gray, Mendelsohn, and Omoto (2015) conducted a qualitative study to explore the sources of stress and challenges among 13 Latino gay men. Data was gathered from taped interviews, which lasted between 1-2 hours. Findings suggest that fear of being exposed, as a homosexual was the source of psychological distress for some participants. One participant disclosed feelings of shame and guilt for having same-sex attraction. These negative feelings led to participants having suicidal ideations. Fortunately, as time went on, he was able to cope with his sexuality.

Gattamorta and Quidley-Rodriguez's (2019) qualitative study found that some participants reported negative consequences in concealing their sexual identity. For example, some participants reported depressive symptoms (i.e., difficulty in sleeping, concentrating, eating, and having nightmares). One participant described his experience as lonely and

isolating. His inability to cope with negative feelings resulted in suicidal ideation. Findings from the review found that parental rejection lead to higher rates of mental health issues.

Mitrani et al., (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study to explore the relationship of parents reaction to sexual orientation with depressive symptoms and safer sex among 125 Latino gay men. The average age of the participants was 42.02. Data was gathered using questionnaires and surveys and subsequent data analyses were conducted using Hierarchical generalized linear models (GZLM). Findings indicated that participants in this study experience a high degree of rejection from their parents. Fathers appeared to have a stronger negative reaction than the mothers. Researchers found that negative reactions towards sons' disclosure resulted in higher psychological distress. They also found that negative reactions about the sons' sexual orientation long lasting effects even years after coming out (Mitrani et al., 2017).

In a qualitative study conducted by del Pino et al., (2014) it was discovered that majority of the participants in the study had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, like depression and anxiety. However, it was unclear whether these men experienced these symptoms as a perceived fear of coming out to their parents or if this was due to parental reactions after disclosing their sexual orientation.

Coping skills

Out of the 17 articles reviewed, only one study reported on coping strategies used by participants to manage their feelings surrounding their sexual orientation. Gray et al., (2015) qualitative study found that for some participants, connecting to other members of their community (i.e., LGBT) was a source of support. Participants sought out these communities for a sense of inclusion. For some of these men, sharing a space with individuals who lived

similar experiences provided a sense of comfort. Some participants found supportive circles

to have psychological benefits which helped them to cope with previous life stressors

brought on by their sexual orientation (Gray et al., 2015).

Conclusion

After examining the research on this topic, the researcher found three common

themes that contribute to this research study. These themes include perceived reaction from

the sons' perspective, parental reaction to son coming out, and shift in parental attitude.

What we know

The results from this review revealed that Latino gay men experienced a deep sense

of shame and guilt prior to coming out to their parents. Cultural factors like familism,

machismo, and religious beliefs were cited as reasons for hiding their sexual identity.

Understanding the importance of family values in their community, Latino gay men feared

that coming out may cause embarrassment or pain to their families. As a result, they chose to

conceal their sexual orientation. Findings also suggest that some religious institutions have

vehemently denounced homosexuality, causing potential conflict between Latino gay men's

sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Results also found that cultural values were linked to

lower acceptance of a sexual minority son and higher levels of psychological distress.

Findings revealed that rejection could occur in different ways. For many Latino gay

men, disclosing their sexuality to their fathers resulted in expulsion from the home, loss of

financial and emotional support, and in some cases, threats of physical abuse or actual abuse.

For others, the rejection was implicit. For example, for some, the rejection was seen as their

fathers controlling their effeminate behaviors and communication with other gay men.

Another display of rejection was being told that their lifestyle was accepted in the home, but

that God was not happy with their sexual identity. These men reported a deep sense of loss, isolation, alienation, mental health distress, and substance and alcohol use after being rejected by their parents.

On the contrary, when being accepted by their parents, they reported improved relationships with their fathers, higher self-esteem, and a sense of self, and familial support. Some men reported being accepted by their fathers with the condition that they did not disclose their sexual orientation to members outside of the immediate family. In a study that interviewed fathers of gay sons, they reported to loving their sons unconditionally.

What we do not know

While the literature gives insight into the challenges faced by Latino gay men, it does not speak to the specific problems of Latino gay men and their relationship with their fathers once they disclosed their sexual orientation. Another limitation of this review is that the mental health of the men in these studies was not explored further. While it is known that Latino gay men experience higher levels of psychological distress, these reviews fail to discuss such issues. Results in the review revealed that conversations regarding resources for coping skills for these men were not considered in any of the results.

Further research is needed to more precisely examine the lived experiences of Latin gay men after coming out to their fathers and whether cultural factors play a vital role in the fathers' response to their sons' disclosure. These findings have significant implications for the social work profession. While literature supports social worker's work with the Latino population and the gay community, none indicate social worker's working with specifically Latino gay men. Social Workers working with this particular group should be aware of how cultural values may have a harmful consequence for most of the population. It is essential

that when working with this population, clinicians understand the community, avoid judgment, and apply interventions that meet the cultural needs of these men in other to enrich clinical work with this population.

This proposed study sought to address this gap empirically by answering the following questions:

1) To what extent does culture influence the relationship between fathers and their gay sons?

2) To what extent does the life experience of gay Latino men change once they have disclosed their sexual orientation to their fathers?

This concludes the chapter on the Literature Review. The next chapter will address the Theoretical Framework.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

No people come into possession of a culture without having paid a heavy price for it." — James A Baldwin

This study will utilize cultural theory as a guide to explore Latino gay men's experiences after coming out to their families, more specifically to their fathers. This study will also seek to explore whether cultural factors might influence what sons may have perceived as having influenced their fathers' responses to them coming out.

Theory

The term theory, according to Barker (1999), is a "group of related hypotheses, concepts, and constructs, based on facts and observations that attempts to explain a particular phenomenon" (p. 434). A theory is a system of interconnected concepts or ideas that seeks to deepen our sense of how individuals conduct and find meaning in their daily lives (Babbie & Rubin, 2010). Theories attempt to "retrospectively explain and to prospectively predict" (Thyer, 2001, p.16). Thyer (2001) notes that theories are comprehensives and can be applied to a wide array of human behavior.

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), "the theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the entire dissertation inquiry. It serves as the guide on which to build and support your study, and also provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole (p.13).Since thece e theoretical framework is one of the most central pieces in the research process, the researcher will utilize cultural theory as a way to provide structure and vision for the presenting phenomenon of this proposed study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Theory and Social Work

Social work uses a broad range of theories from other disciplines and professions to explain and predict a variety of human phenomena. Social work researchers have found that using a theoretical approach in the profession is vital as theory can "serve as an anchoring frame and a conceptual screen for case assessment, causal explanation, intervention planning, and outcome evaluation" (Gentle-Genitty, Chen, Karikari & Barnett, 2014, p. 40).

In social work practice, theory serves as a way "to recognize patterns, relationships, and significant variables that assist in bringing order to the complexities of contemporary practice" (Turner, 1996, p. 9). Understanding the role of theory in the social work profession helps identify new ideas that may present gaps in current knowledge, which can be useful in working with clients effectively.

Cultural Theory

Culture theory is an interdisciplinary field of studies. It draws from fields such as, anthropology, sociology, communication, economy, and political science. Cultural theory aims to define heuristic concepts of culture (Serrat, 2010). As a result, this theoretical framework focuses on how a specific phenomenon correlates with ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class, and gender (Serrat, 2010). Szeman and Kaposy (2011) described cultural theory as:

> An explanation of and accounting for cultural phenomena (socially, politically, structurally, historically, and so on) which also pays attention to the way in which such phenomena are endowed with meaning. This moment between poles is unavoidable in the study of culture. Cultural theory contends with the often perplexing nature of constitute e social, political and cultural antagonism; it does so through an attention to those practices, activities, and artifacts that we have understood to be "culture," but with an awareness of the shifts the deformations that this concept has undergone over the past century developments which have made it increasingly difficult to meaningfully separate the levels of social (cultural, economic, politics, etc.) from one another (p.3).

In its broadest sense, the term cultural theory has been applied to examine cultural conflict. Culture theory suggests that societal views are often influenced by social actors and their unique ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge. These values are shared with others through their interactions. This cultural phenomenon can be explained by "the common way that a community of persons makes sense of the world ... a set of plans, instructions, and rules" (Gross & Rayner, 1985, pp. 1,3). As such, members of groups with a shared worldview are willing to enforce order on reality in particular ways (Taney & O'riordan, 1999).

Taney and O'riordan (1999) posit that cultural theory interprets how and why individuals form judgments about other members of social groups. The idea behind this theory is to show "that such judgments are not formed independently of social context. They are part of an evolving social debate about rights to know, justice for those likely to be affected by damage or loss of peace of mind, and about blame, responsibility, and liability "(p.71). These attitudes and judgments harm those belonging to the marginalized groups.

Culture and Meaning

Inglehart (1990) defines culture as "a system of attitudes, values, and knowledge that is widely shared within a society and transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 18). Saleebey (1994) notes that culture is the mean by which we receive, organize, rationalize, and understand our particular experience in the world. Through culture, we construct meaning which allows us to tell stories and weave narratives (Saleebey, 1994). Barker (1999) define culture as the "customs, habit, skills, technology, arts, values ideology, science and religious and political behavior of a group of people in a specific time period" (p. 105).

In Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952), Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, they identified 164 definitions of culture. Although all the meanings differed, all were connected to the social and human connection. Encompassing previous definitions offered, Kroeber and Kluckhohn's drew from its central ideas and offered their own definition to the term culture:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action (p. 181)

Banks and McGee Banks (1999) posit that many of the modern social scientists view culture as "consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies" (p. 8). They also add that:

> The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them. It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or in similar ways (p. 8).

The term "culture" has been deeply contested. Over the course of the years, culture has been given different meaning in different contexts, making it difficult to define. There is an ongoing debate surrounding the "content of culture, its relationship to society and civilization as well as its function and role in the human condition" (Johnson, 2013, p. 1). Williams (1976), a cultural historian referred to culture as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p. 7). Despite the plethora of explanations behind the word culture, they all have one thing in common: a sense of meaning. Williams

(1999) notes that "every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land. Culture insinuates its patterns on us, and they become embedded deeply within us (Saleebey, 1994, p. 352)

Figure 2: Cultural Implications

Social Norms and Social Influences

Research indicates that culture has powerfully shaped our behaviors, thoughts, and the way we interact with others. As such, it becomes clear that culture, in many ways, dictate practices and social norms. A social norm is an expectation of behaviors and thoughts based on shared beliefs within groups and societies. Cialdini and Trost (1998) describe social norms as a psychological phenomena that explains human behavior. Turner (1991) defines social norms as:

A generally accepted way of thinking, feeling, or behaving that is endorsed and expected because it is perceived as the right and proper thing to do. It is a rule, value or standard shared by the members of a social group that prescribes appropriate, expected or desirable attitudes and conduct in matters relevant to the group" (p. 3).

Through literature, we understand that social norms are not merely suggestions, but a way of life. Social norms are fundamental to the production of social order. Failure to comply with these expectations can create conflict between society and the individual who deviates from social norms. McDonald and Crandall (2015) note that "deviation from social norms leads first to communication designed to engender conformity and if social expectations are not met and if the social norm is important, deviation leads to loss of social status or exclusion" (p. 147). Many social norms are so rigid that they can be detrimental to individuals who do not adhere to these standards, increasing social pressure to abandon such norms (Bicchieri, Muldoon, & Sontuoso, 2018).

Social Norms and Social Influences Among Latino Gay Men

As discussed in the literature review, three social norms play significant roles in the Latino community: familismo, machismo, and religion. While the intersection of these Latino social norms with the coming out process has not been carefully examined, there has been a clear and consistent theme on the impact these norms have on Latino men who self-identify as gay (Gattamorta, Salerno & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019).

In the Latino culture, family is such a critical aspect of their lives. There is a high dependency on the family for emotional support and guidance (Marin & Marin, 1991). For Latino gay men, the family can represent something other than a protective factor when the family perceives their children's same-sex attraction as shameful and wrong (Diaz, 1998). Anti-gay attitudes can negatively impact the familial relationship.

Much of the negative attitudes toward homosexuality in the Latino community has been linked to religion. Traditional Latino families have been known to identify with Christianity, which has publicly denounced homosexuality (Diaz, 1998). Latino theological literature describes religion as integral to Latino culture and has been cited as a cultural norm that often hinders the coming out process among Latino families (Gattamorta, Salerno & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019).

It is impossible to discuss social norms within the Latino culture without addressing cultural ideas about men and masculinity. While machismo has positive attributes such as a provider to one's family and the protector, it can also have its undesirable traits, such as being aggressive, hypermasculine, emotionally reserved (Gattamorta, Salerno & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2019) Latino men who identify as gay or display effeminate behaviors are viewed as "failed men" who have not complied with social norms (Diaz, 1998).

According to McDonald and Crandall (2015), "norms not only detail what is appropriate behavior, but these expectations, in turn, define what the group does, and who the group is. Identity is formed by group norms, and by conforming to them" (p. 147). Latino gay men are often perceived as deviant within their community because of their sexual identification. Deviation from social norms leads to cultural conflict, and failure to meet with these social expectations leads to exclusion from their families and community. Research has found that "discrimination is associated with multiple indicators of poorer physical health and, especially, mental health" (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2008, p. 29). Cultural factors have a significant impact on the mental health of Latino gay men. Diaz (1998) found that these men experience higher levels of psychological distress as a result of cultural influences within their community.

Theory and Research

Cultural Theory is used as a guide to conceptualize and understand the coming out experience for Latino gay men, how cultural norms influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' same-sex attraction, and whether their reaction hinder the coming out process for the sons. This theory informed the method used as the online survey asked questions about cultural influences and cultural implications as it relates to the coming out experience for Latino gay men. Cultural theory also guided implication to social work practice and recommendations for improving mental health services for this population.

This concludes the chapter on the theoretical orientation. The next chapter will discuss the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH QUESTION

For this phenomenological qualitative study, the following research questions were used to explore how cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' disclosure of same-sex attraction and how it affects Latino gay men. Formulating a research question is a fundamental skill necessary in conducting research. (Neri de Souza, F., Neri de Souza, D., and Costa, 2016). Neri de Souza et al. (2016) note that the skill of developing a research question is "even more sensitive when conducting qualitative research, given the interpretive, holistic and open nature that these methodological approaches can take (p. 10).

Neri de Souza et al. (2016) note that research questions are vital when conducting research as it is "fundamental in the analysis of the collected information and help the researcher not to waste time on the incidental aspects of the research, while holding a steady course towards the conclusions and possible answers (p.7) Agee (2009) posits that part of the process of developing qualitative research questions is being cognizant about how the questions will affect participants' lives and how the questions will position the researcher in relation to participants.

In order to gain a better understanding on how cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' disclosure of same-sex attraction, the following research questions were explored:

1) To what extent does culture influence (familismo, machismo, and religion) the relationship between fathers and their gay sons?

2) To what extent does the health of Latino gay men change once they have disclosed their sexual orientation to their fathers?

3) To what extent does the quality of life of Latino gay men change once they have disclosed

their sexual orientation to their fathers?

Study Sub-questions
Q1: How do Latino gay men perceive their relationships with their fathers after coming out?

Q2: How does culture (machismo, familismo, and religion) affect the coming out process for Latino gay men?

Q3: How does culture (machismo, familismo, and religion) affect the relationship with the father after coming out?

Q4: How does culture (machismo, familismo, and religion) affect the sexual identity for Latino gay men?

Q5: What mental health symptoms are prevalent among Latino gay men after coming out to their fathers?

Q6: What role does substance use play in coming out for Latino gay men?

This section presented the research questions that will guide this study. The following

chapter will discuss the methodology that will direct this study.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology that was used to explore the experiences of Latino gay men after coming out to their fathers. The first part of this chapter will discuss the rationale for this study, including qualitative research, and phenomenology. The second part of the chapter will discuss the participants of this study, data collection, and analysis. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with a discussion on the ethical considerations of this study.

Rationale for Design

The researcher examined the lived experiences of this population to understand how Latino gay men make meaning of their father-son relationship after disclosing their sexuality. Using a qualitative approach for this study allowed the researcher to investigate how Latino gay men "interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5).

Qualitative Research Method

Leedy & Ormrod (2001) defines research methodology as "the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project" (p. 14). In qualitative research, a researcher seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena in a natural setting and attempts to identify patterns and themes. Jindal, Singh and Pandya (2015) define qualitative research as a "form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (p. 369). Creswell (2007) defines qualitative research "as an approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, worldviews, possibly a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p 51). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) defines qualitative research as:

> A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them (p. 3).

Creswell (2012) posits that qualitative inquiry is best suited when "the literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and you need to learn more from participants through exploration" (p. 16). Tufford and Newman (2010) note that qualitative methodology has been used in the field of social work research to explore the lived experience of the participant. Therefore, employing a qualitative research method would contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the potential cultural effects on the coming out experience for Latino gay men. It is also useful for readers both inside and outside of academia as they are being informed of current cultural, social and human issues that they might not have already had knowledge. It helps them think critically about what they are reading by showing them how to identify, analyze and approach problems as well as helping them to understand the experience of participants.

This research study explored greater insight into the meanings that Latino gay men make of their relationship with their fathers after coming out and how these meanings relate to their general identity, particularly their identity as Latino gay men. Utilizing a qualitative approach for this study provides Latino gay men the platform to discuss their perception of their experiences. This approach might spark a conversation about this social phenomenon and may educate others about the lived experiences of Latino gay men and their perception of the father-son relationship after coming out.

Phenomenology. According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), phenomenology is a "philosophical approach to the study of experience" (p.11). Patton (2002) notes that phenomenology study is a method that "seeks to explore, describe, and analyze the meanings of individual lived experiences" (p. 104). According to Padgett (2008), a phenomenological study will "explore not only what participants experience but also the situations and conditions of those experiences" (pp.35 & 36).

Phenomenologists, according to Welman and Krug (1999), "are concerned with understanding the social and psychological phenomena from the perspective of people involved" (p. 189). Groenewald (2004) posits that "the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to facts" (p.44). Polkinghorne (1989) suggests that "since the descriptions of natural objects are derived from experience, experience itself must be clearly understood before a firm foundation can be established for the sciences studying the natural world" (p.41).

Phenomenology was born through the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1895-1931). According to Eagleton (1996), Husserl, "sought to develop a new philosophical method which would lend absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilization" (p. 47). He rejected the notion that "objects existed independently of ourselves in the external world, and that our information about them was generally reliable" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 48). According to Sloan and Bowe (2014) Husserl saw phenomenology as "a way of reaching true meaning through penetrating deeper and deeper into reality" (p. 5). Husserl viewed phenomenology as a science of pure phenomena and as such, all realities must be treated as

pure 'phenomena', in terms of their appearances in our mind, and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin (Eagleton, 1996, p. 48). The works of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre have also contributed greatly to the work of phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). Although each philosopher's meaning of the term phenomenology varies, they each share a common theme—interest in the human experiences with a specific phenomenon.

The basic purpose of phenomenology is that "experience should be examined in the way it occurs, and in its own terms (Smith et al., 2009, p. 12). As such, for this study, the researcher will use the method "bracketing" (or epoche) to ensure that the researcher's own experiences do not influence the way participants understand the phenomenon (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013).

The use of bracketing is "a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires deliberate putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological investigation" (Carpenter, 2007, as cited in Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013, p.1). Because the researcher shares the same social identity as the participants, he understands that the methodological use of bracketing would be best practice for this study to avoid any bias that might jeopardize the study.

Researchers suggest that when conducting a phenomenological study, investigators ought to put aside their "repertoires of knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences in order to accurately describe participants' life experiences" (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013, p.3). According to Hamil and Sinclair (2010), researchers' failure to set aside their own understanding of the phenomenon can bring assumptions about the topic into the research process. By bracketing, the researcher can briefly suspend what they think they know and

actively listen to the participants and their individual reality (Hamil & Sinclair, 2010). Gearing (2004) notes that the use of bracketing should be treated as a rich concept that can facilitate effective and needed qualitative research.

Gearing (2004) identified six types of bracketing: ideal, descriptive, existential, analytical, reflexive bracketing, and pragmatic. He notes that although there is similarity in each type of bracketing, on their own, they each reflect a distinct central elemental structure. For this study, the researcher will utilize reflective bracketing. According to Gearing (2004), reflective bracketing's "focus is to make transparent, overt, and apparent the researcher's personal values, background, and cultural suppositions" (p. 1445). Finlay (2002) posits that reflective bracketing allows the researcher to develop self-awareness.

Reflexive bracketing can be seen in Husserl's (1913/1931) and Heidegger's (1972) earlier writings (as cited in Gearing, 2004). Caelli (2000) examined the work of both philosophers and noted that they "were severely critical of the effect that culture and tradition might have on a true examination of phenomena" (p. 371). Bracketing, according to Tufford and Newman (2010) as a reflexive process can:

> assist social work researchers to gain awareness of power differentials between themselves and research participants, to hear participant resiliencies in the face of classed and racialized challenges, to develop a new appreciation for the context or person in environment, as well as for their own social location and the impact of this location on research (p. 93).

In reflective bracketing, the researcher identifies "his or her personal suppositions and ideas about the phenomenon prior to investigating the phenomenon in an effort to minimize their impact on the phenomenon under investigation" (p.1445). In doing so, the researcher is taking precautionary measures to ensure that he or she does not influence the participant's understanding of the phenomenon (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013). Understanding that the

participants in this study share the same social identity (Latino gay men) as the researcher, reflective bracketing is best suited for this study as it makes the researcher's personal values, background, and cultural beliefs overt (Gearing, 2004).

Sampling, Recruitment, and Data Collection Methods

Participants

To gain an understanding of the coming out experiences of Latino gay men, specific population were sought out for this study. The researcher used a purposive sampling. Creswell (2007) notes that this technique is used in qualitative research, as it the researcher "selects individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p.125). In addition to purposive sampling, the researcher also used snowball sampling to recruit participants for this study. Padgett (2008) suggests that using snowballing sampling is appropriate when examining a hard-to-reach population.

A two-tier approach was used to recruit participants. First, the researcher advertised the study by sharing a flyer on online platforms that have an LGBT presence to identify potential participants. The advertisement discussed what the study was about and the criteria for eligibility. A second strategy used for recruiting participants was a snowball sampling technique. This method allowed for stakeholders to help in identifying potential subjects.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected using Google forms survey. Using surveys to ask questions about sensitive topics can often produce inaccurate survey estimates which are distorted by social desirability bias (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007). Krumpal (2011) reviewed empirical literature on the determinants of social desirability bias and found that the use of a self-administered

survey increased respondents' inclination to self-report accurately on sensitive topics (i.e., racial attitudes, mental health, sexual orientation, and sexual activities). Research has found that minimizing the presence of the interviewer can increase participants' privacy, avoid shame, embarrassment, and judgment, and decrease feelings of threat. Therefore, resulting in more honest answers to questions asking about taboo topics (Krumpal, 2011).

The survey utilized open-ended questions and ask participants about their experiences coming out as it relates to the Latino culture and personal history. Included in this survey were basic demographic questions, such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, and employment. The questions were influenced by literature regarding Latino gay men and guided by theoretical framework used in this study.

The goal was to survey between 5 to 25 participants for this study as recommended for a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2007). A total of 15 participants were recruited for this study. Each participant was informed that taking a survey would be a onetime commitment and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. For the purpose of this study, participants had to meet the criteria to participate in this study: identify as cisgender male; identify as Latino; identify as gay; be between the ages of 18- to 65 and reside in the United States.

Since Google Forms survey was used for this study, the researcher did not need to audiotape and transcribe the interviews. Instead, the survey data was exported to Excel and then downloaded the file to NVIVO. The researcher used NVivo to code the participants' account and identify re-emerging themes. A hierarchical structuring was used to organize data and identify themes where the first tier of themes are the "roots" and the second tier are branches of each root as described by Richards and Richards (1995). There were three

branches that were identified in the data analysis. For each tier, codes were organized under categories and color-coded using the qualitative software.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher distributed a solicitation that explained the study and its purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, participation, and consent. It also indicated that their participation was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The solicitation, which included the consent form, was delivered in a manner that protected the individual's identity (e.g., email).

After deciding to participate in the study and clicking the survey link, participants completed the online survey. Participants were reminded that their identity will be kept confidential and all data will be kept in a secure, limited access location. Participants were informed that the researcher will not reveal their identity in any publication or presentation of the results of the study. This study was conducted in accordance with Yeshiva University's policies regarding the ethical and legal conduct of research involving human subjects. Approval of exempt status from the Western Institutional Review Board (approval #800006565) was obtained before beginning data collection (see Appendix C).

This section discussed the methodology of this study. The next chapter will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of data from 15 self-identified Latino gay men. The researcher examined whether cultural norms in the Latino community influence how families, especially fathers, respond to their sons and how sons are affected when coming out. The chapter begins with a description of the participant demographics, followed by the results. The results are organized according to themes in a hierarchical manner where the first level of themes are the "roots" and the second tier are branches of each root as described by Richards and Richards (1995). Lastly, the researcher will summarize the findings.

Demographics

All 15 participants in this study have identified as cisgender Latino men. Demographic details include age, place of birth, religion, level of education, employment status, and annual income. The mean age of the participants were (M = 33.73). Participants ranged in age from 27 to 40 years old. The majority of these men were born in the mainland United States, while two were born in Puerto Rico, one in the Dominican Republic and the other in Peru. Out of the 15 participants, six identified as Catholic, three as Christian, while six reported not identifying with any religious denomination.

The majority of participants have college degrees, four held a graduate degree, with one person having a post-graduate degree. A small amount reported to have some college. Regardless of the level of degree or completion of a degree, all participants had experience with a higher education institution. All 15 participants reported being employed full-time. Out of the 15 men in this study, the majority reported to have earned over $60,000 a year. Only one participant reported making under $30,000 a year. A detailed demographic

description of the participants are displayed in Table 1. Pseudonyms were used to ensure

participants anonymity so that they cannot be identified.

Table 1.
Demographics

Participants	Age	Place of Birth	Religion	Education	Employment	Annual Income
Alberto	28	United States	Catholic	Graduate Degree	Full-time	30,000-60,000
Cristian	33	United States	N/A	Some College	Full-time	60,000-90,000
Diego	32	United States	Catholic	College Degree	Full-time	30,000-60,000
Efrain	33	Puerto Rico	N/A	College Degree	Full-time	60,000-90,000
Juan	32	United States	N/A	College Degree	Full-time	30,000-60,000
Lisandro	37	United States	Christian	College Degree	Full-time	60,000-90,000
Manuel	40	United States	Catholic	Post-graduate	Full-time	>90,000
Miguel	36	Dominican Republic	N/A	Graduate Degree	Full-time	>90,000
Nestor	35	United States	Catholic	Some College	Full-time	30,000-60,000
Omar	29	United States	N/A	Some College	Full-time	30,000-60,000
Pedro	27	United States	Christian	Some College	Full-time	10,000-30,000
Raymond	36	United States	Catholic	College Degree	Full-time	60,000-90,000
Samuel	35	Peru	Catholic	Graduate Degree	Full-time	>90,000
Salvador	36	Puerto Rico	N/A	College Degree	Full-time	60,000-90,000
Victor	37	United States	Christian	Graduate Degree	Full-time	60,000-90,000

Mental Health

Under the primary theme of mental health, three tier themes were identified when

discussing mental health symptoms, if any, caused by their coming out experience to their

fathers: anxiety, resources, and a sense of freedom.

Anxiety. Thirteen participants reported that the thought of disclosing their sexuality

to their fathers caused them psychological distress. They each discussed the fears and

anxieties attached to the idea of coming out. Samuel, a 35-year-old born in Peru, stated " I

think that my anxiety was worsened prior to coming out, and I am still healing and dealing

from much of the stress associated with that time period between knowing and completely

coming to terms with my sexual orientation and coming out to my parents (especially my

father)."

Alberto, a 27-year-old male stated that before coming out to his father, he was "anxious and preoccupied, and feared the worst was going to happen" if his father found out that he was gay. Similarly, Lisandro, a 37-year-old male, discussed his depression and anxiety feelings prior to coming out. He stated, "I was constantly sad and nervous that my father would find me out."

Resources. Fourteen participants discussed specific coping strategies they have used to manage any mental health concerns caused by the worry of coming out and after their disclosure to their fathers. Many participants reported seeking their friends' support while others met with therapists to address mental health concerns. Nestor, a 35-year-old, stated, "I mainly spoke to friends and did therapy for a bit, I also do a lot of self-help reading for reflection." Samuel stated "I am currently in therapy and I am also seeing a psychiatrist for anxiety medication." Efrain, a 33-year-old from Puerto Rico, said that " therapy and counseling, and speaking to close friends and family has helped." Cristian, a 33-year-old, stated that he used "meditation and family support" to manage his anxiety around coming out. Pedro, a 27-year old male found strategies to manage anxiety. He stated, "I have just talked to others and have gone on long walks to clear my mind."

Sense of freedom. For many of the participants, disclosing their sexuality to their fathers allowed them to feel a sense of freedom . They expressed being able to live in their truth and be their authentic selves. Salvador, a 36-year old originally from Puerto Rico, stated, "I think my dad was the ultimate approval and blessing I needed in order to live a happy and authentic life. I have not had to hide myself since coming out to my father, and that has allowed me to ease my mind and mental state from the stress and anxiety of having to hide myself and live a double life." After coming out to his father, Miguel, a 36-year-old

originally from the Dominican Republic, stated that "I've been more at peace, confident, loved, cared for, comfortable with my sexuality." Raymond, a 36- year-old , stated that after coming out to his father, he felt as if he no longer had to "walk on eggshells." Efrain described coming out to his father as a "freedom of expression."

Substance Use

With regards to the substance use theme, coping emerged as a second tier. Coping often came up when discussing ways participants used substances to manage their anxiety of coming out. This theme also emerged when talking about how coming out to their fathers influenced their substance use.

Coping. Six participants reported having used alcohol to manage their anxiety of coming out to their fathers. They each described drinking as a coping strategy. Efrain stated that "alcohol was my gateway substance. I was 19 when I came out, so it was right after high school and right at the beginning of college." Lisandro also used alcohol as a way to manage his anxiety. He stated that "I would often go out and drink to ease my anxiety." Lisandro noted that "once I came out and he was okay with it, I didn't drink as much."

Samuel stated that "alcohol has definitely been a way for me to hide my truth, and numb the pain of not being able to come out. I came out to my father when I was 22, and my drinking started when I was 20, spiraling out of control since then and into my 20s." He added that "I always felt like my father wouldn't approve of me and abandon or reject me. He raised me from the time that I was a little boy, and having been abandoned by my biological father made the fear of rejection even worse and more severe." Victor, a 37-year-old, stated that "I would drink alcohol to numb the feelings of anxiety." While Victor's father

received his disclosure of his sexual identity well, Victor noted that "even though he was accepting of my lifestyle, I was insecure and felt that he would be silently judging me."

Cultural Norms

This thematic root broke down into additional themes including, familismo, machismo, and religion. This section will be organized according to these trees. Figure 1 illustrates, these second tier themes and their corresponding third tier themes. The thematic map also shows how the primary themes are related.

Figure 1
Thematic Chart
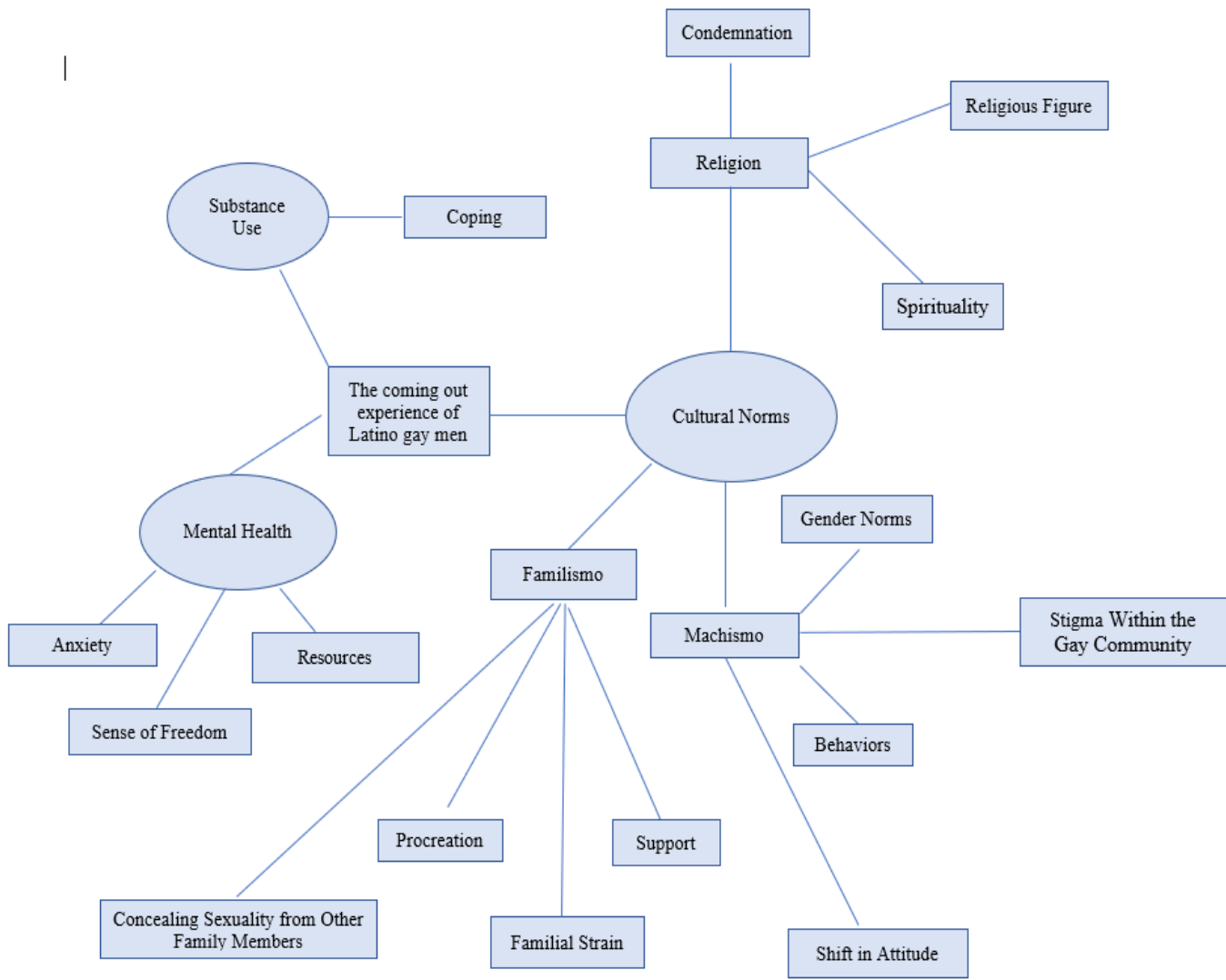
Familismo. Participants were asked how they perceived familismo as a barrier in the coming out process, whether it affected the relationship with their fathers since coming out, and how familismo might have affected their sexual identity. The majority of these men noted that the concept of familismo played a significant role in their lives both before coming out and after disclosing their sexuality to their family, specifically, their fathers. Familismo as a second tier theme was further refined according to a third tier of themes, including Familial strain, procreation, support, and concealing sexuality from other family members.

Familial strain. Four participants cited fear of severing family ties after coming out and vacillated between the idea of disclosing their sexuality or concealing their sexuality. Cristian stated that "I feared coming out because of the possibility that I could be ostracized by my family." Lisandro said that "Family is everything. I would often think about what it would be like to come out. Would I lose my family ? Will they no longer love me ? Will I get thrown out of my home ?" Salvador discussed his perception of how familismo can affect the coming out process and stated that "familismo can def [sic] hold someone back if they don't have the family support needed." Victor noted that the "fear of coming out as gay might bring shame to the family."

Procreation. Another theme that emerged within familismo was procreation. For some men, coming out as gay would create concerns within the family. The notion behind being a gay male in the Latino community is that you would not continue the family legacy if you were to identify as a gay man. Lisandro shared his thoughts about how familismo affects one's sexual identity, and he stated, "the idea of not being able to procreate has been rough. While my family hasn't told me anything , I know they are sad that I probably won't be able

to give them a grandchild or niece or nephew." Victor stated ,"the generational line stops with me. I'm gay , won't have children, therefore can't grow the family line."

Support. While all fifteen participants reported being accepted by their fathers after disclosing their sexual orientation, six of these men identified support as a theme. Cristian stated that "I'm blessed to have a family that supports and loves me." Efrain stated, "My family wasn't shocked when I came out. They felt that me doing it so openly allowed them to just embrace it." Miguel stated that " I come from a very tight knit supportive family with a lot of identities and personalities. This made my coming out process easier. He also noted that "My siblings and mother have influenced my father's acceptance in some way."

When discussing how familismo impacts the coming out process, Samuel stated that familismo was "super important and definitely a huge factor. I wasn't really big into my family or spending time with them (or my parents) prior to coming out. The older I get, the more time I would spend with my family. Feeling comfortable around them is super important and I can understand how a family could influence someone's ability to come out or stay in the closet." He further discussed the importance of familismo and stated, "I was always independent and not really one to do things for my family at large, but the relationship with my parents mattered most to me. I think that the visible connection between my father and I influences our family and teaches them about the power of love above all else. They have never questioned my sexual orientation or brought up any attacks towards me or my identity."

Concealing sexuality from other family members. While all the men in this study reported a positive reaction to their disclosure from their fathers, some said that they were asked not to share their sexuality with other family members outside of the immediate

family. Alberto discussed how when he first came out to his father, he was initially instructed not to disclose his sexuality with anyone else. He stated "I remember my father telling me to not talk about this with anyone in the family. In addition, I remember my father telling me to continue acting like a man so that no suspects that side about you." Lisandro noted, "While my relationship with my dad was okay, he didn't tell family members outside of our home. He did not want family members to know I was gay out of fear of shame and embarrassment." Victor shared his father's reaction after coming out to his father: "He was okay with it but didn't want family members to know about my gayness. He said to keep it quiet for time as some wouldn't understand."

Machismo. The socially constructed concept of machismo played a significant role in the lives of most men in this study. This second tier theme was broken down further, and the researcher identified third tier themes: gender norms, behaviors, stigma within the gay community, and shift in attitudes.

Gender Norms. In this study, men discussed how socially constructed concepts, like machismo, emphasized what it means to be a man. Cristian stated, "machismo makes it seem as if being gay makes you less of a man then your heterosexual counterpart. He added, "when I first came out he [father] had a bit of a mental breakdown because he thought being gay would make me less of a men [sic]." Miguel also shared his experience with machismo as a Latino gay man. He stated that "there was definitely a lot of machismo in my life and within my family growing up. Many of the men in my family, including my dad, made it a point to make fun or show disgust towards homosexuality, and I also recall instances of how they would reinforce gender roles and norms, which were impressionable on me, my sister, and

young cousins." Victor stated "to be a Latino, you are to be a man. Saying you're gay is relinquishing your right to be a man."

For some, machismo represents being a provider for their family. Miguel stated, "in the Latin culture machismo is a big aspect. In many Latin countries homosexuality is associated with weakness and not a "manly" thing. Latino fathers worry that you won't be able to step in and take 'care' of the family if he were to be gone." Raymond stated, "you're supposed to be masculine and be a provider."

***Behaviors*.** Many of the participants discussed behaviors that do not align with the idea of machismo. Alberto stated, "machismo definitely played a role, my father would act the typical Hispanic father and showing any signs of femineity [sic] prior to coming out was looked down upon. Machismo definitely played a role. If my father was not machismo, I am sure I would have come out sooner." Juan, a 32-years-old, stated, "I see myself spreading my legs a little more while I sit, but that's just a weird mental thing I noticed in "straight" men and try to copy." Lisandro stated, "I was traumatized with that word. It seemed that that's all I heard about growing up. Be a man, don't cry; crying is for girls. Don't walk like that, you are a macho. Machismo limited the way I expressed myself as I didn [sic] not want to go against the macho world." He added, "I've seen the looks dad would give when men would show each other affection. He would say " that's not how men should behave with one another." When discussing how machismo impacted his sexual identity, Omar noted that he was cautious in how people would perceive his behavior, such as being "too fem [feminine]."

Stigma within the gay community. While very few participants reported machismo as a source of stigmatizing attitudes within the gay community, this was a theme in this study. Lisandro stated, "even as an openly gay man, I try to be manly even in my relationship.

Always careful not to be too girly. I'm also careful to not tell those in the gay community that I am the bottom because they further emasculates me." Victor shared his experience as a gay man and stated, "I try to be as manly as I can be , even with my gay friends. There's a stigma even in the gay culture that if you're "gay acting" you aren't the man in the relationship. It's messed up."

Shift in attitude. While most men reported that machismo had played a significant role in their lives, they have noted that there has been a shift in the way the Latino community views homosexuality. Samuel stated, **"**I think that the idea of machismo has definitely diminished, if not entirely disappeared since I came out to my father. We have had conversations about gender and gender norms/roles in society and he seems to understand that placing people into boxes and roles based on gender is wrong and causes more harm than good. He added, "I think that there is a slight level of machismo in my general perception of the world, but I have managed to curb it and not give into any beliefs that would give it any power. In that sense I don't think it affects my sexual identity."

Efrain stated, "machismo is deeply rooted in the Hispanic communities, especially in the Puerto Rican household. The new generation is more accepting ." Miguel also shared his views on the shift of attitudes towards homosexuality in the Latino community. He stated, "luckily my father does not possess too much of a machismo mentality." When discussing whether machismo affected the relationship with his father after coming out, Raymond stated, that " (his father) understands times have changed." Similarly, Manuel, noted "my father was OK with coming out."

Religion. While most of the men in this study revealed that religion had not had a significant impact in their lives before coming out or disclosing their sexuality with their

family, specifically, their fathers, some participants did discuss the conflict between their sexuality and religious beliefs. Religion as a second tier theme was further refined according to third tier themes including, condemnation, religious figure, spirituality, and religious figure.

Condemnation. Many of the participants discussed how they perceived religion as a barrier to coming out. Lisandro stated, "religion has definitely caused me some internalized homophobia. Until this day, I feel like god will punish me for my lifestyle. Being intimate with a man is challenging. I enjoy it while being intimate but then feel bad that god is judging me." Victor stated, "I feel like I'm going to hell for liking the same sex. I have faith and believe in god, but it's fucked me up. Maybe that's why it's impacted my relationships. Can't commit because I know I'm sinning." Cristian stated, "Religion makes you hate yourself and feel as though you are an abomination to God." While there were men who have not been personally impacted by religion or religious institutions, they validated those men whose lifestyle might have been condemned by a religious denomination. Efrain stated, "I can understand why it can be harder for a religious person or just a person with a religious upbringing can make a person question their feelings and thoughts because it goes against what your being thought about the way life should be lived based on religious beliefs." Nestor stated, "I think many fear coming out because so many Latin households are very religious and homosexuality was viewed as a sin for so long. Many households almost weaponize religion and use it as a way to make you feel ashamed about yourself and "other" you."

Spirituality. For some, spirituality seemed to align more with their values than religion. For example, participants noted that it was more about having a sense of peace and

purpose than a connection to an organized set of practices for them. While only two participants relied on their spirituality rather than religion, it was interesting to observe this theme as it was not a theme discussed in the literature. When discussing whether religion affected his coming out process, Juan stated, "well if you're very religious, then I can understand how it could affect you and your values but for me it hasn't because I am for [sic]spiritual than religious." Efrain noted that religion didn't have any impact on his sexual identity. He stated "I am a gypsy at heart so spirituality has been my balance in myself identity discovery."

Religious figure. When it comes to religious figures in the household, most participants reported that while their fathers believed in god, they were not religious. Interestingly, this study revealed that many of the participants identified their mothers as a religious figure in their homes. Albert stated, "My mother is very devoted to her religion so that definitely also played in coming out because I thought during that time I would be a big disappointment. When discussing whether religion impacted the father-son relationship once he came out, Lisandro stated, "my father believed in God but he wasn't religious. So, I had no issues. It was my mom who told me that she loves me but reminded me that it was a sin to be gay." Lisandro's mother's response mirrors implicit rejection. While his mother was accepting his sexual orientation, she used religion to convey that his sexual orientation does not align with religious beliefs. Implicit rejection can also been seen in Victor's response. When discussing any changes in his relationship with his father, once coming out, he stated, "No change. He wasn't religious. My mom is. She accepted me but there's some condition to it I guess. No men were allowed in my room, if they were to be in my room, the door had to

be open. My mom would usually throw indirect [sic] and say there's no sinning allowed in this home. It's one of those you're gay but don't be gay in the home."

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the coming out experience of Latino gay men and whether cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons and how sons are affected when coming out. This chapter identified the results from an analysis of fifteen identified Latino cisgender gay men who completed a self-administered survey via google forms. The study revealed that all 15 participants reported to having a positive response when disclosing their sexual identity to their families, specifically their fathers. In fact, many of the participants noted that their relationship with their father was stronger once coming out. All participants noted that their relationship with their families and father did not change once learning of their sexual orientation.

This concludes the chapter on the results of this study. The following chapter will discuss the findings in greater detail, including implications for social work practice, limitations, and areas where there remains a need for further investigation.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

This chapter will summarize the findings of this qualitative phenomenological research study related to the coming out experience of Latino gay men. The researcher will discuss the limitations of this study, implications for social work, and future research.

This study was the first to examine the coming out experience of Latino gay men and how their disclosure may impact their mental health as well as their relationships with their fathers'. The findings can offer social workers a better understanding of Latino gay men and inform their social work practice when working with this population. Participants in this study shared their lived experiences of coming out to their fathers, including barriers and supports they encountered in the process. The responses varied in terms of the challenges they experienced; however, three prominent themes emerged during this study: mental health, substance use, and cultural norms.

While all participants reported receiving positive responses from their families and fathers, there were various causes of distress for many men in this study. Men in this study reported struggling with mental health issues before disclosing their sexuality. Many reported feeling anxious and depressed before coming out as they feared losing familial support, rejection, expulsion from the home, and embarrassing their families. They also reported feeling uneased at the thought of their fathers finding out that they were gay. Many remained cautious in keeping their sexual orientation hidden until they felt safe enough to disclose it. The majority of the participants reported having sought out mental health services, support from their friends, and meditation to manage their anxieties and symptoms of depression. Others reported taking long walks to reflect and clear their heads. The majority of the

participants reported a sense of freedom once disclosing their sexuality to their families, mainly their fathers', stating that they could be their true authentic selves.

Regarding substance use, Latino gay men in this study faced similar challenges discussed in the literature regarding substance use and the intersection of ethnicity and sexuality. For example, almost half of the participants reported using substances, such as alcohol, to manage their anxieties around the fear of familial relationships being damaged due to their sexual identification (del Pino, 2014). Many reported using alcohol to manage their stress of coming out to their fathers. They each described drinking as a coping strategy. For these men, drinking allowed them to numb their pain and emotionally and mentally prepare themselves for possible consequences of coming out to their fathers, such as rejection, abandonment, and judgment. Some reported to have discontinued drinking or reduced their drinking after coming out to their fathers. One participant said that he continued to drink even after disclosing his sexuality to his father. This study revealed that that acceptance could still cause concern about sincerity.

Cultural norms common among Latinos such as familismo, which emphasizes a strong connection to family and extended family, may help explain the process of coming out for self-identified gay men in the Latino community. Findings in this study are consistent with research demonstrating that Latino gay men fear coming out to their families, especially their fathers, out of fear of disrespecting or shaming the family and severing family ties (Munoz-Laboy, 2008; Diaz, 2009; del Pino et al., 2014). Participants reported struggling with the idea of coming out to their fathers out of fear of hurting their families and severing family ties after coming out. Some noted that being gay becomes a barrier to procreating, impacting their ability to contribute to their generational growth. Despite the common anxieties surrounding coming out, all

participants reported being accepted by their families and fathers once coming out. Some were encouraged not to share with other family members to avoid judgment.

Machismo was another cultural norm that played a role in the coming out experience of Latino gay men. Machismo was considered part of being a provider but also caused severe anxiety for Latino gay men. Previous research has found that individuals with higher levels of machismo held more intolerance toward gay men (Hirai, Winkel, & Popan, 2014). Machismo is a socially constructed set of behaviors that shape male gender roles and expectations in Latino society. Many participants frequently monitored their behaviors, such as the way they gestured their hands, walked or, talked to avoid appearing feminine.

Gender norms were a reoccurring theme among participants. The majority of the participants agreed that to identify as gay, was a form of denouncing their manhood. The findings from this study on gender norms were consistent with previous research that found femininity or someone who participates in a passive role in sexual activities are often stigmatized and viewed as less of a man. (Diaz, 1998; Finlinson, Colón, Robles, & Soto, 2006). These participants reported being judged for their sexual role and for displaying effeminate behaviors. This study found a shift in the way Latino fathers respond to their son's disclosure of their sexual orientation. All participants acknowledged that machismo is deeply rooted in the Latino culture. Although machismo caused significant conflict between gender role expectations and sexual orientation for participants, most reported that their fathers did not impose this cultural norm in their homes.

While Latino theological literature describes religion as a core cultural value shared among the community, the findings from this study were conflicting with some participants experiences. Some participants did not find religion to have impacted them in any way.

However, some did note that before coming out, they vacillated between the idea of disclosing their sexuality to their father's and discussed their perception of religion in the Latino community as a barrier in the coming out process. They spoke about perceiving the risk of condemnation from the church and their families if they disclosure their sexual orientation. These participants described their sexual preference as an abomination and feared that identifying as gay will seal their fate to be destined to hell. Religion was viewed as a tool to guilt and shame individuals who identify as gay. Some men in the study identified as being more spiritual than religious. They explained that being spiritual allowed them to live their authentic self without feeling guilty or fearing punishment due to their sexual orientation.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, this was a qualitative study; therefore, the findings have limited generalizability because of its small sample (N = 15). It is noteworthy to mention that Latinos are not a homogenous group of men. For example, there are different lived experiences among Latino gay men born in Peru versus those born in the U.S. With that said, the experiences of some Latinos are not necessarily experienced by all Latinos.

Second, this study was conducted in English. As a result, it excluded Spanish-speaking gay men who could have potentially contributed meaningfully to the research to offer an in-depth understanding of Latino gay men's lived experiences when coming out to their fathers. Another limitation was that this study did not explore the coming out process of Latino bisexual men. Therefore, it limited our understanding of whether cultural norms would have the same impact on these men as it would on men who identify as gay.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The current study has implications for social work practice. For Latino gay men, coming out is complicated by cultural norms like machismo, familismo, and religion, which are common among their culture. As overlapping members of both sexual and ethnic minority groups in the country, there is no question that Latino gay men face unique challenges. While social workers do well in working with Latinos and the LGBT community, they might not have the experience with individuals who identify as members of both populations. This study can inform social workers of the knowledge needed to appropriately and effectively work with this population.

While participants in this study reported having very supportive and accepting fathers, some Latino gay men might not have such a positive experience when coming out to their families, specifically their fathers. When working with Latino gay men, it is important not to minimize their coming out experience. Social workers working with this population should acknowledge cultural norms and explore how they might have impacted the individual. Social workers should examine the strength of family support and frequently assess the client's risk and protective factors in the session.

Understanding that families might have difficulty accepting their son's disclosure of sexual identity, social workers should be prepared to have these discussions with the families and educate the families about how their reactions to their sons coming out might add to their pre-existing anxieties that are already present before coming out. Families should be encouraged to have open and honest conversations regarding their son's homosexuality. The lack of cultural awareness among social workers can contribute to oppression when working with this population, causing more harm than good. Social work practitioners who can competently work

with Latino gay men will have the necessary skills to ensure effective treatment delivery to this population.

Future Research

There are several implications for future research. Further investigation of the coming-out experience of Latino gay men should include larger samples. A quantitative study examining these men's coming out experience would help determine if the results of this study are generalizable to larger samples of Latino gay men. Another area of research is to have a variety of age range. The mean age of the participants was ($M=33.73$). There were no participants over the age of 40. It would be interesting to examine whether the shift in attitude towards homosexuality in the Latino culture has to do with generational changes. It appears that the younger generation has a different experience than those who might belong to an older generation. The majority of the participants were born in the mainland United States, while two were born in Puerto Rico, one in the Dominican Republic, and the other in Peru. Due to the small sample size and limited cultural identities, future research would benefit from including larger samples of men from different backgrounds.

Conclusion

The researcher explored rationales used by the men in this study when deciding whether to disclose their sexual identities to their families, specifically, to their fathers. The findings highlighted participants' perception of the coming out process as Latino gay men and strategies used before and after coming out. The current study also explored how unique cultural norms play a role in disclosing sexual orientation and its impact on the father-son relationship. This study discovered the unique challenges and strengths of these men that social workers can use in their practice. Understanding that cultural norms play an essential

role in the coming out process for Latino gay men enables social workers to be better

informed when applying interventions that meet the population's cultural needs and reflect

their lived experiences.

References

Abreu, R. L., Gonzalez, K. A., Rosario, C. C., Pulice-Farrow, L., & Rodríguez, M. M. (2019). "Latinos have a stronger attachment to the family": Latinx fathers' acceptance of their sexual minority children. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies, 16*(2), 192-210.

Adam, B. D., & Rangel, J. C. (2017). Migration and Sexual Health Among Gay Latino Migrants to Canada. *Canadian Journal of Sociology, 42*(4), 403-424.

Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 22*(4), 431-447.

Antebi-Gruszka, N., & Schrimshaw, E. W. (2018). Negative attitudes toward same-sex behavior inventory: An internalized homonegativity measure for research with bisexual, gay, and other non–gay-identified men who have sex with men. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 5*(2), 156-168.

Arditti, J. (2005). Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies. *Family Relations, 54*(1), 167-168.

Baiocco, R., D'alessio, M., & Laghi, F. (2010). Binge drinking among gay, and lesbian youths: The role of internalized sexual stigma, self-disclosure, and individuals' sense of connectedness to the gay community. *Addictive Behaviors, 35*(10), 896-899.

Baiocco, R., Fontanesi, L., Santamaria, F., Ioverno, S., Marasco, B., Baumgartner, E.,Laghi, F. (2015). Negative parental responses to coming out and family functioning in a sample of lesbian and gay young adults. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(5), 1490-1500.

Banks, J.A., Banks, & McGee, C. A. (1989). Multicultural education. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Babbie, E., & Rubin, A. (2010). Essential research methods for social work (2nd ed.).

    Belmont, CA: Brooks/ Cole.

Barker, R. (1999). The social work dictionary (4th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Ben-Ari, A. (1995). Coming Out: A Dialectic of Intimacy and Privacy. *Families in Society:*

    The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 76(5), 306-314.

Bicchieri, C., Muldoon, R., & Sontuoso, A. (2018). Social Norms. *Stanford Encyclopedia of*

    Philosophy 2018. Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-norms/

Brumann, C. (1999). Writing for Culture. *Current Anthropology, 40*(S1).

Bucher, J. (2014). "But he can't be gay": The relationship between masculinity and

    homophobia in father-son relationships. *The Journal of Men's Studies, 22*(3), 222-237.

Burke, J. (2015). Investigating psychological distress in Latino romantic relationships. race,

    gender & glass, 22(3-4), 172-194.

Bush, K. R., Supple, A. J., & Lash, S. B. (2004). Mexican adolescents' perceptions of

    parental behaviors and authority as predictors of their self-esteem and sense of

    familism. *Marriage & Family Review, 36*(1-2), 35-65.

Cialdini, R. B., & Trost, M. R. (1998). Social influence: Social norms, conformity and

    compliance. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social*

    Psychology (4th ed., Vol. 1, 2, pp. 151-192). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

Caelli, K. (2000). The changing face of phenomenological research: Traditional and

    American phenomenology in nursing. *Qualitative Health Research, 10*(3), 366-377.

Campesino, M., & Schwartz, G. E. (2006). Spirituality Among Latinas/OS. Implications of

    culture in conceptualization and measurement: *Advances in Nursing Science, 29*(1), 69-

    81.

Castellanos, H. D. (2015). The role of institutional placement, family conflict, and homosexuality in homelessness pathways among Latino LGBT youth in New York City. *Journal of Homosexuality, 63*(5), 601-632.

Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual Identity Formation: A theoretical model *Journal of Homosexuality, 4*(3), 219-235.

Chan, Z. C. Y., Fung, Y. L., & Chien, W. T. (2013). Bracketing in phenomenology: only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process? *The Qualitative Report*, 18(59), 1-9.

Clarke, J. M., Brown, J. C., & Hochstein, L. M. (1989). Institutional Religion and Gay/Lesbian Oppression. *Marriage & Family Review, 14*(3-4), 265-284.

Comas-Díaz, L. (2006). Latino healing: The integration of ethnic psychology into psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 43*(4), 436-453.

Cramer, D. W., & Roach, A. J. (1988). Coming out to mom and dad: A study of gay males and their relationships with their parents. *Journal of Homosexuality, 15*(3-4), 79-92.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry & research design. London: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Cuevas, A. G., Dawson, B. A., & Williams, D. R. (2016). Race and skin color in Latino health: An analytic review. *American Journal of Public Health, 106*(12), 2131-2136.

Diaz, R. M. (1998). *Latino gay men and HIV: Young men's stories*. New York: Routledge.

Diaz, R., & Ayala, G. (2001). *Social discrimination and health: The case of Latino gay men and HIV risk*. Washington, DC: The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Diaz, R. M., Ayala, G., Bein, E., Henne, J., & Martin, B. V. (2001). The impact of homophobia, poverty, and racism on the mental health of gay and bisexual Latino men: Findings from 3 to US cities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(6), 927-32.

D'augelli, A. R., Hershberger, S. L., & Pilkington, N. W. (2001). Suicidality patterns and sexual orientation-related factors among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 31*(3), 250-264.

Del Pino, H. E., Moore, M. R., McCullers, W. J., Zaldívar, R. L., & Moore, A. A. (2014). Negotiating Emotional Support: Sober Gay Latinos and Their Families. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 26*(2), 222-243.

Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Esparza, R. (2017). Queering the homeland: Chicanidad, racialized homophobia, and the political Economy of homopatriarchy. *Feminist Formations, 29*(2), 147-176.

Espinosa, G. (2008). The influence of religion on Latino education, marriage, and social views in the   United States. *Marriage & Family Review*, 43(3), 205-225.

Etikan, I. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1.

Fragoso, J. M., & Kashubeck, S. (2000). Machismo, gender role conflict, and mental health in Mexican American men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 1*(2), 87-97.

Finlinson, H. A., Colón, H. M., Robles, R. R., & Soto, M. (2006). Sexual identity formation and AIDS prevention: An exploratory study of non-gay-identified Puerto Rican MSM from working class neighborhoods. *AIDS and Behavior, 10*(5), 531-539.

Finlay, L. (2002). "Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), 531-545.

Frost, D. M., Lehavot, K., & Meyer, I. H. (2013). Minority stress and physical health among sexual minority individuals. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 38*(1), 1-8.

García, D. I., Gray-Stanley, J., & Ramirez-Valles, J. (2008). "The Priest Obviously Doesn't Know That I'm Gay": The Religious and Spiritual Journeys of Latino Gay Men. *Journal of Homosexuality, 55*(3), 411-436.

Gattamorta, K., & Quidley-Rodriguez, N. (2019). Coming Out Experiences of Hispanic Sexual Minority Young Adults in South Florida. *Journal of Homosexuality, 65*(6), 741-765.

Gattamorta, K. A., Salerno, J., & Quidley-Rodriguez, N. (2019). Hispanic parental experiences of learning a child identifies as a sexual minority. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 15(2), 151-164.

Gentle-Genitty, C., Chen, H., Karikari, I., & Barnett, C. (2014). Social work theory and application to practice: The students' perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, 14(1), 36–47.

Germán, M., Gonzales, N. A., & Dumka, L. (2008). Familism values as a protective factor for Mexican-origin adolescents exposed to deviant peers. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 29*(1), 16-42.

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, Selecting, And Integrating A Theoretical Framework In Dissertation Research: Creating The Blueprint For Your "House." *Administrative Issues Journal Education Practice and Research*.

Gray, N. N., Mendelsohn, D. M., & Omoto, A. M. (2015). Community Connectedness, Challenges, and Resilience Among Gay Latino Immigrants. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 55*(1-2), 202-214.

Guarnero, P. A. (2007). Family and Community Influences on the Social and Sexual Lives of Latino Gay Men. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 18*(1), 12-18.

Guarnero, P. A., & Flaskerud, J. H. (2008). Latino Gay Men and Depression. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 29*(6), 667-670.

Hamill, C., & Sinclair, H. A. (2010). Bracketing – practical considerations in Husserlian phenomenological research. *Nurse Researcher, 17*(2), 16-24.

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation: How Many Interviews Are Enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, *27*(4), 591–608.

Hirai, M., Dolma, S., Popan, J. R., & Winkel, M. H. (2017). Machismo Predicts Prejudice Toward Lesbian and Gay Individuals: Testing a Mediating Role of Contact. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 15*(4), 497-503.

Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations*: Software of the mind. London: McGraw-Hill UK.

Hurtado, A., & Sinha, M. (2016). *Beyond machismo: Intersectional Latino masculinities.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Jadwin-Cakmak, L. A., Pingel, E. S., Harper, G. W., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2014). Coming out to dad. *American Journal of Mens Health*, 9(4), 274–288.

Jindal, A., Singh, G., & Pandya, K. (2015). Qualitative research in medicine – An art to be nurtured. *Medical Journal Armed Forces India, 71*(4), 369-372.

Johnson, M. T. (2013). What Is Culture? What Does It Do? What Should It Do? *Evaluating Culture,* 97-119.

Kågesten, A., Gibbs, S., Blum, R. W., Moreau, C., Chandra-Mouli, V., Herbert, A., & Amin, A. 5(2016). Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review. Plos One, 11(6). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0157805

Kroeber, A. L., Kluckhohn, C., Meyer, A. G., & Untereiner, W. (1952). *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. Cambridge, MA.

Krumpal, I. (2011). Determinants of social desirability bias in sensitive surveys: A literature review. *Quality & Quantity, 47*(4), 2025-2047.

Li, M. J., Thing, J. P., Galvan, F. H., Gonzalez, K. D., & Bluthenthal, R. N. (2016). Contextualising family microaggressions and strategies of resilience among young gay and bisexual men of Latino heritage. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 19*(1), 107-120.

Lolai (2015). "You're going to be straight or you're not going to live here": Child support for LGBT homeless youth. *Law & Sexuality*. 24, 35–98.

McDonald, R. I., & Crandall, C. S. (2015). Social norms and social influence. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, *3*, 147–151.

Merighi, J. R., & Grimes, M. D. (2000). Coming Out to Families in a Multicultural Context. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 81*(1), 32-41.

Mitrani, V. B., Santis, J. P., Mccabe, B. E., Deleon, D. A., Gattamorta, K. A., & Leblanc, N. M. (2017). The impact of parental reaction to sexual orientation on depressive symptoms and sexual risk behavior among Hispanic men who have sex with men. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, 31*(4), 352-358.

Monroe, E. J. *Drawing upon the experiences of those who are out: A qualitative study of the coming-out process of gays and lesbians* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).

Muñoz-Laboy, M. A. (2008). Familism and Sexual Regulation Among Bisexual Latino Men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 37*(5), 773-782.

NASW, Code of ethics (2017). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Neri de Souza, F., Neri de Souza, D., & Costa, A. P. (2016). Asking questions in the qualitative research context. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(13/Special Issue), 6-18.

Padgett, D. K. (2008). Qualitative methods in social work research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Padilla-Díaz, M. (2015). Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence, 1*(2), 101-110.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.⌷SEP⌷

Pew Research Center. (2015a). 2014 Religious landscapes study, chapter 1: Importance of religion and religious beliefs. Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/chapter-1-importance-ofreligion-and-religious-beliefs/. Accessed 27 February 2020.

Pistella, J., Salvati, M., Ioverno, S., Laghi, F., & Baiocco, R. (2016). Coming-out to family members and internalized sexual stigma in bisexual, lesbian and gay people. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(12), 3694–3701.

Polkinghorne DE (1989) *Phenomenological research methods*. In: Valle RS, Halling S (eds) Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology. Plenum Press, New York, pp 41–60.

Quidley-Rodriguez, N., & Gattamorta, K. (2019). Constructing interventions for Hispanic sexual minority youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 16*(3), 278-299.

Rhoads, R. A. (1995). Learning from the coming-out experiences of college males. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36, 67–67.

Rodriguez, R.A. (1991). A qualitative study of identity development in gay Chicago men. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2007). Essential research methods for social work. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Sandfort, T. G., Melendez, R. M., & Diaz, R. M. (2007). Gender nonconformity, homophobia, and mental distress in Latino gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Sex Research, 44*(2), 181-189.

Santiago-Rivera, A. (2003). Latinos values and family transitions: Practical considerations for   counseling. *Counseling and Human Development*, 35(6), 1.

Savin-Williams, R. (1989). Coming out to parents and self-esteem among gay and lesbian youths. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 18(1).

Savin-Williams, R. C. (2001). *Mom, dad, I'm gay: How families negotiate coming out*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Schuck, K. D., & Liddle, B. J. (2001). Religious conflicts experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 5(2), 63.

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2013). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity, 48*(3), 1291-1303.

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2013). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage.

Steidel, A. G., & Contreras, J. M. (2003). A new familism scale for use with Latino populations. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 25*(3), 312-330.

Strommen, E. F. (1989). Family member reactions to the disclosure of homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality, 18*(1-2), 37-58.

Tajon, M. M. (2009). Identity development of Latino gay men. Retrieved from
http://aura.antioch.edu/etds/128/

Tourangeau, R., & Yan, T. (2007). Sensitive questions in surveys. *Psychological Bulletin, 133*(5), 859-883.

Thyer, B. A. (2001). What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? *Journal of Social Work Education, 37*(1), 9-25.

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice, 11*(1), 80-96.

Turner JC (1991). Social influence Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Turner, F. (1996). Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

US Census Bureau. (2019, October 09). Hispanic Heritage Month 2019. Retrieved May 03, 2020, from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2019/hispanic-heritage-month.html

Weber, G. N. (2008). Using to numb the pain: Substance use and abuse among lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 30(1), 31-48.

Wegesin, D. J., & Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. (2000). Top/bottom self-label, anal sex practices, HIV risk and gender role identity in gay men in New York City. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality, 12*(3), 43-62.

Welman, J. C., & Kruger, S. J. (2004). *Research methodology for the business and administrative sciences*. Johannesburg, South Africa: International Thompson.

Williams, C. (2011). Research Methods. *Journal of Business & Economics Research (JBER), 5*(3).

Williams, D. R., Neighbors, H. W., & Jackson, J. S. (2008). Racial/ethnic discrimination and health: Findings from community studies. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98.

Wood, M. L., & Price, P. (1997). Machismo and marianismo: Implications for HIV/AIDS risk reduction and education. *American Journal of Health Studies*, 13(1), 44-52.

Appendix A

Conflict between Culture and Sexuality: A Qualitative Study of the Coming Out Experience of Latino Gay Men

Dear: Participants,

My name is Carlos Gerena and I am a doctoral candidate at Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work. I am requesting your participation in a study about the coming out experiences of Latino gay men.

The purpose of the Study:
This study seeks to explore if and how cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' and how sons are affected. There is a need to investigate this because there is little known about the coming out experience for Latino gay men due to the lack of research done on this population. This study hopes to generate more knowledge around the impact coming out has on the health and quality of life of these men and their relationship with their families after disclosure. Findings may also be able to enrich clinical work with these Latino gay men. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Our survey contains questions about your experiences coming out to a family member, specifically your father, as it relates to the Latino culture and personal history. We'd like to have you fill out this survey by July 17, 2020.

Consent Information:
The survey was developed to better understand the coming out experience for Latino gay men. The survey will ask a little about your own coming out experiences as a Latino gay man. To protect confidentiality, the survey will NOT ask for your name or any other identifying information. Therefore, the surveys are anonymous. At any given time, you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without any consequences. You may also decline to answer any single question or group of questions asked in the questionnaire. We see no foreseeable risks involved in your participation. We take steps to protect your anonymity. For additional confidentially, you may wish to complete this survey on a computer that is only accessed by you. To protect your privacy, we recommend that you clear the browser cache and page history following completion and submission of the survey. Please keep in mind that once you have cleared the cache, you will not be able to return to the survey.

I would be grateful if you would share information about this study and the survey link with anyone you know who may be interested in participating.
Survey Link: https://forms.gle/cTzbiMUig3xiKD4b6

The Institutional Review Board of Yeshiva University has approved this study.
- **The survey is online and by hitting the Agree button, you are consenting to participating in this study.**
- **Your participation is entirely voluntary and will be de-identified.**
- **You can discontinue participating in the study at any time without any penalty.**
- **All written and published information will be reported as group data with no references to agency or names.**

Thank you so much for participating!
Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher, Carlos Gerena at:
gerena@mail.yu.edu

Appendix B

Conflict between Culture and Sexuality: A Qualitative Study of the Coming Out Experience of Latino Gay Men

Thank you for taking your time to complete this study about the coming out experience of Latino gay men. Your perspective is important to us. This study seeks to explore if and how cultural norms in the Latino community influence the way family, especially fathers, respond to their sons' and how sons are affected. There is a need to investigate this because there is little known about the coming out experience for Latino gay men due to the lack of research done on this population. This study hopes to generate more knowledge around the impact coming out has on the health and quality of life of these men and their relationship with their families after disclosure. Findings may also be able to enrich clinical work with these Latino gay men. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Our survey contains questions about your experiences coming out to a family member, specifically your father, as it relates to the Latino culture and personal history.

The survey was developed to better understand the coming out experience for Latino gay men. The survey will ask a little about your own coming out experiences as a Latino gay man. To protect confidentiality, the survey will NOT ask for your name or any other identifying information. Therefore, the surveys are anonymous. At any given time, you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without any consequences. You may also decline to answer any single question or group of questions asked in the questionnaire. We see no foreseeable risks involved in your participation. We take steps to protect your anonymity. For additional confidentially, you may wish to complete this survey on a computer that is only accessed by you. To protect your privacy, we recommend that you clear the browser cache and page history following completion and submission of the survey. Please keep in mind that once you have cleared the cache, you will not be able to return to the survey.

I would be grateful if you would share information about this study and the survey link with anyone you know who may be interested in participating.

Survey Link: https://forms.gle/cTzbiMUjq3xiKD4b6

Please note that completion of the survey constitutes consent to participate.

1. What kind of changes have you seen in your mental health since coming out to your father?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What resources have you utilized to manage any mental health issues?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What mental health symptom, if any, caused you the most distress in relation to coming out to your family?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. What, if any, substance have you used to manage the anxiety of coming out?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What aspect of your relationship with your father after coming out has influenced any of your substance use?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How do you perceive your relationship with your father after coming out?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. How do you perceive machismo affects the coming out process?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. How do you think machismo affects the relationship with your father since coming out?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How do you think machismo affects your sexual identity

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. How do you perceive familismo affects the coming out process?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. How do you think familismo affects the relationship with your father since coming out?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. How do you think familismo affects your sexual identity

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. How do you perceive religion affects the coming out process?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. How do you think religion affects the relationship with your father since coming out?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. How do you think religion affects your sexual identity

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. How old are you in years?

_____

17. What is the highest level of education

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Some high school
- ( ) High school diploma / GED
- ( ) Some college
- ( ) College degree
- ( ) Graduate degree
- ( ) Post-graduate studies

18. Are you currently employed

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) No
- ( ) Part-time
- ( ) Full-time

19. What is your approximate annual income?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) 0-10,000
- ( ) 10,000-30,000
- ( ) 30,000-60,000
- ( ) 60,000-90,000
- ( ) > 90,000

20. In what country were you born?

_____

21. What religion do you identify with, if any?

Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ Christanity
- ⬭ Catholicism
- ⬭ Muslim
- ⬭ Judaism
- ⬭ Mormon
- ⬭ Seven day

1019 39th Ave SE / Suite 120
Puyallup, WA 98374
855-818-2289
www.wcgirb.com

October 20, 2020

Lynn Levy, PhD
Yeshiva University
500 West 185th Street
New York, New York 10033

Dear Dr. Levy:

SUBJECT: IRB EXEMPTION—REGULATORY OPINION
                    Sponsor Contact: Lynn Levy, PhD
                    Sponsor Protocol ID #: 800006565
                    Protocol Title: Conflict between Culture and Sexuality A Qualitative
                    Study of the Coming Out Experience of Latino Gay Men

This is in response to your request for an exempt status determination for the
above-referenced protocol. WCG Institutional Review Board's (WCGIRB's) IRB
Affairs Department reviewed the study under the Common Rule and applicable
guidance.

We believe the study is exempt under 45 CFR § 46.104(d)(2), because this
research will examine the coming out experience of Latino gay men, and the
research procedures involve an online survey to be completed by adult subjects.
Data will be recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the
human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers
linked to the subjects.

This exemption determination can apply to multiple sites, but it does not apply to
any institution that has an institutional policy of requiring an entity other than
WCGIRB (such as an internal IRB) to make exemption determinations. WCGIRB
cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other
institutional mechanism for determining exemptions. You are responsible for
ensuring that each site to which this exemption applies can and will accept
WCGIRB's exemption decision.

WCGIRB's determination of an Exemption only applies to US regulations; it does
not apply to regulations or determinations for research conducted outside of the
US. Please discuss with the local IRB authorities in the country where this
activity is taking place to determine if local IRB review is required.