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An exploration of gender identity and gender roles within the context of Latinas' military service

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AN EXPLORATION OF GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER ROLES WITHIN THE

CONTEXT OF LATINAS' MILITARY SERVICE

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology

by

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This clinical dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

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ABSTRACT

Although Latinos have historically served in the U.S. military, recent increases in the number of Latinas who have been recruited for the military make it imperative to explore how this experience affects their well-being. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Latinas who are serving or have served in the U.S. military, focusing on their identity and gender roles. I utilized a qualitative research design, wherein I interviewed four Latinas currently serving in the U.S. Army. The focus of the study was how Latinas experience their gender identity and gender roles through the perspective of identity theory and social identity theory. It also explored how they negotiate these aspects in a military environment. I used an interpretative phenomenological approach for this study, as this method allowed sufficient flexibility to delve into previously unexplored concepts in this population. Furthermore, I utilized the Marianismo Beliefs Scale (MBS; Castillo, Perez, Castillo, & Ghosheh, 2010) to perform data triangulation and to have a better understanding on how the women's belief structures affect their experience. This research study is significant because it informed a salient gap in the literature regarding Latinas and the military. Furthermore, it will allow mental health practitioners to have a clearer understanding of how Latina military women experience military culture, which can affect treatment decision.

INTRODUCTION

Since the all-volunteer military was established in 1973, more women and minorities comprise the ranks than ever before (Segal & Segal, 2004). Military service in the United States has increasingly become an option for impoverished young adults to achieve what otherwise would not be possible, such as higher education and financial stability. This is particularly true for young Latinas in urban areas seeking independence and financial benefits for themselves and their families (Lutz, 2008; Pérez, 2006). In 2010, an estimated 19% of new recruits were Latinas and it is expected that 9% of all military veterans by 2020 will be Latinas (Cárdenas & Kerby, 2012). This current trend of higher recruitment and enlistment of Latinas make it a necessity to explore their needs within the military and the possible effects of their service on their well being; in particular, on their gender identity and gender roles.

Understanding the effects of the intersection of cultures (i.e., the dominant culture, the military culture and their native culture) on the gender identity of these women enables mental health providers to treat and guide these women in a culturally sensitive manner, and help their family members cope with the challenges inherent in military service. It is first necessary to examine these women's identities outside their military experience, and understand how they negotiate and navigate conflicting messages about gender roles within a cultural context. It is also important to understand the culture of the military, with its biases and slow move towards change as well as the history of Latinos and women within the military. Finally, examining the current situation of these women who choose this career and how they are currently perceived in the military is imperative to provide an accurate contemporary context for mental health practitioners who work with these women.

BACKGROUND

Latinas in the United States

Latinos are one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the U.S. with almost 52 million Latinos as of 2013 (Lilley, 2013), an increase of about 48% in the past decade. Of these 52 million people, about 25 million are females (Cárdenas & Kerby, 2012). Given the rapid growing numbers of Latinos in this country, it is interesting to see that very little psychological research has been done to understand fully their experience as a growing population within the dominant culture. The Dictionary of Sociology (1998) defined dominant culture as "one that is able, through economic or political power, to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving on a subordinate culture or cultures" (para. 1). In particular, Latinas in the U.S. have often been overlooked in research and as a focus of treatment implementation. However, before delving into a particular subgroup of Latinos, it is important to address what exactly is meant by this term.

Latinos are a very diverse group, and as a consequence, it has been a challenge to find a fitting term to encompass such diversity (Castañeda, 2008). Many Latinos have adopted other labels throughout history to describe themselves, their experience and the current times. For example, in the 1960s and 70s' labor movements, particularly activists originally from Mexico, adapted the term *Chicano* to honor their country of origin, while also highlighting that they were part of the larger U.S. society (Castañeda, 2008). Another term often used to describe this ethnic group is *Hispanic;* a term created by the U.S. government to group and identify people living in the U.S. from Spanish speaking countries (Valdeon, 2013). However, of all the terms created to label this group, the term *Latino/a* was more readily appropriated because it was a self-descriptive term, which encompasses all countries and ethnicities of this group. This term is also descriptive of men and women born in the United States but whose families immigrated from

Latin American countries (Castañeda, 2008; Valdeón, 2013). Unfortunately, this chosen descriptive term encompasses both men as well as mixed groups whereas *Latina* only describes women, resulting in the overarching label to be considered gendered. Despite this challenge, the term Latino/a has evolved throughout the years and is currently the generally accepted term to describe this ethnic group by its own members and the rest of the society.

The Diversity and Similarities of Latina Experiences

Despite the efforts to develop a term that feels congruent to most members, it is important to note that there is a danger of glossing over the differences by choosing one descriptor for a heterogeneous group. This is particularly relevant in the study of Latinas. Up until the 1980s, very few studies had been focused on the unique experiences that Latinas have within the dominant culture (Castañeda, 2008). Once interest in this population grew, the focus appeared to be on the experience of Mexican American women, as they are the largest Latina group (Castañeda, 2008; Patten & Motel, 2012). This hyper-focus on one particular group of Latinas may result in missing an opportunity to understand their diversity, particularly regarding their experiences and their heritage. For instance, in the U.S., Mexican Americans have a median age of 25, the lowest of all Latinos, while Cubans have a median age of 40, the highest in the group. This disparity in age may influence their experiences given that these women are in different stages of life. Similarly, education levels also differ according to country of origin. As of 2012, Colombians tend to have a college education with 32% having a college degree, while Salvadorians have the lowest education level, with about 7% completing college (Patten & Motel, 2012). Women from these two countries of origin will likely find themselves in very different employment circumstances, which inevitably will affect their lifestyle and every day experience.

Despite these differences, most Latinas have experiences that unite them and affect them regardless of their country of origin. One such experience is the traditional values imposed upon them, which are often perceived as restrictive (Denner & Dunbar, 2004). Such values relevant to Latinas are described in the concept of *Marianismo.* Marianismo is a concept developed from the values derived from Catholicism, which is the main religion for many Latinos (Castañeda, 2008). It is the veneration of the Virgin Mary and her assigned qualities, such as self-abnegation, motherhood, and sexual purity (Castañeda, 2008; Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009). Marianismo tends to define expectations for Latina girls who come from traditional families. These expectations include being self-sacrificing, maintaining family commitment, respecting authority, particularly authority of men, and limiting their own mobility (Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009).

A second shared experience that most Latinas have and that is important for the understanding of how they navigate their environment is the concept of living *entre fronteras* (between borderlands). This concept was coined by Gloria Anzaldúa to illustrate how Latinas in the U.S. must navigate several cultures at the same time (Keating, 2006). This concept is closely tied with Marianismo because entre fronteras is descriptive of Latina's experience of trying to reconcile the values and beliefs held by their family of origin, and their need to adopt the dominant culture's values to survive and thrive. For those attempting to navigate the values embraced in Marianismo and the values endorsed by the dominant U.S. society, it may truly seem as the embodiment of living in the borderlands of two very different worlds. This feeling of not being neither from here nor there is one reason why ethnic as well as gender identity in Latinas is an important subject of study.

Latina Ethnic and Gender Identity

Gender and ethnic identity are important concepts to consider in the field of psychology as they help guide treatment and case conceptualization in a culturally sensitive manner. However, to better understand these categories, it would be beneficial to discuss the most current theories regarding identity as a whole, to include identity theory, ethnic identity development and construction of a global identity through the Seven Stages of Conocimento (Seven stages of Knowledge) espoused by Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002).

The concept of identity formation has been thoroughly discussed by Erik Erikson within the context of theory of developmental stages. However, due to limited sampling, particularly regarding minorities, Erikson's theories do not address the issues such as ethnic identity, relevant to the large minorities that live in the U.S. In order to address this gap, several theories will be reviewed. These theories include the work of Stryker and Burke (2000), which focus on the link between social structures and identity formation; the works of Henry Tajfel in the 1970s which explore intergroup relations; Quintana and Scull who focus on ethnic development in children and the work of Phinney (1989), who furthers the theories of Erikson and Marcia to address the ethnic gap in the development of an identity. Phinney (1989) also address issues regarding development of identity in young adulthood and beyond.

Among the many different strands of research focusing on identity development, one of the most relevant to this research is the theory developed by Striker and colleagues in the 1960s. It explains how social behavior occurs in the context of a reciprocal relationship between individuals and their society (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). This theory states that behavior is mediated by society through its influence on the self (Hogg et al., 1995). Society has influence on the self by prescribing roles to each individual. These roles become meaningful to the

individual who begins to self-refer and define by the roles they play and the interactions with others in the context of these roles. This leads to one of the core tenets of identity theory, which states that because individuals play more than one role, the self becomes a multifaceted and organized construct around these roles. These multiple components of identity are known as role identities (Hogg et al., 1995). According to this theory, role identity invokes a call to action to successfully meet the requirements of each role (Hogg et al., 1995). When an individual is able to meet the requirements of the roles prescribed, they experience a surge of self-esteem. However, if they perceive that they are not meeting the demands of the roles they identify with, their self-esteem suffers and they experience a sense of inefficacy. In order to reduce the psychological stress that arises from not meeting role expectations and from feedback incongruent with their identity, individuals tend to modify their behavior (Hogg et al., 1995). Another important aspect of this theory worth mentioning is that it does not focus on social attributes, such as gender, race, or ethnicity, known as *master statuses* (Hogg et al., 1995). For this focus, a second theory was created to explain how belonging to these statuses, or groups, affect individuals.

The second relevant theory is known as social identity, originally developed by Henry Tajfel in the 1970s in order to explore and understand intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1982). This theory asserts that individuals have two separate identities, a personal identity, and a social identity (R. Brown, 2000). These identities are different in that personal identity describes how personality variables affect interpersonal situation, whereas social identity describes how category-based processes affect group situations (R. Brown, 2000). According to this theory, social identity is derived from belonging to defined social groups. However, what seems to be missing from this theory is the acknowledgement of intersectionality, the instances when an

individual belongs to multiple groups. In fact, Brah and Phoenix (2004) described

intersectionality as "the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when

multiple axis of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and

experiential—intersect in historically specific contexts" (p. 76). Although the individual has

stronger identification with one group over the others to which he or she belongs (Ferguson,

2007), all groups significantly affect how individuals perceive themselves and their world.

Furthermore, social identity states that individuals attempt to maintain positive social identity

through positive comparisons between the groups the individual belongs to, known as *in-groups*

(R. Brown, 2000), and relevant groups he or she does not belong to, or *out-groups*. If individuals

find that the group they belong to compares unfavorably, they will engage in *identity-protecting*

(R. Brown, 2000) tactics. Although more research is needed in this area, preliminary studies

suggest that if individuals perceive that they are able to move away from a low status group, they

will do so. If, however, they perceive there is no possibility of removing themselves from a low

status group, they will engage in tactics such as reevaluating the groups with which the

comparison is made, or contesting the higher status group's right to the superior status (R.

Brown, 2000). Other tactics more recently discussed include members of low status groups

perceiving variability within the in-group to lessen the effects of the low status on their self-

esteem (R. Brown, 2000). That is, members of a low status group may rationalize that not all the

members of the group have the perceived negative qualities that lower the status of the group.

This is further complicated when there is intersectionality, particularly when individuals belong

to low status groups and high status groups at the same time. For instance, Latinas belong to two

groups that are marginalized, that of being women, and that of being an ethnic minority

(Ferguson, 2007) however, when women join other social groups that may be considered higher

in social ranking, for instance, the military, they have to contend with managing and negotiating these three contending social groups. Although these theories of identity are hardly ever discussed together, they serve as springboards to understand how Latinas may identify themselves given the roles prescribed by their culture, thus creating their identity, and how they negotiate belonging to minority and marginalized groups when their circumstances or choices also place them within a high-ranking social group.

Intersectionality. In the late 1980s, the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term *intersectionality* to describe the lived experiences of women of color in relation to their gender, ethnicity and social status, among other factors that influence their experience of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). In her 1989 article "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"*,* Crenshaw built on earlier multidisciplinary works such as *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, which addressed issues of complex convergence of identities (Boryczka & Disney, 2015). Intersectionality can be understood as "a method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool" (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 312). It became an important concept to understand the multifacets of identity in minorities and how these inseparable facets overlap and increase the experience of oppression particularly in women of color (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008). This oppression shapes minorities' possibilities and limitations in the development of opportunities to succeed and thrive (Boryczka & Disney, 2015). Initially, intersectionality served to highlight instances when the law and those in power conspired to legitimize power relations that with minority groups (Carbado et al., 2013). However, what was most significant was the identification of how, although race and ethnicity clearly converge in the everyday experience of women, feminists and anti-racists movements never seemed to acknowledge the overlapping factors that create a

complicated location for women of color, thus marginalizing their experience (Crenshaw, 1991). In 1989, Crenshaw identified a significant problem in the way feminists and anti-racist movements focused mainly on the most privileged members of a minority group, effectively marginalizing those who bear the burden of belonging to multiple minority groups and erasing their unique experience (Boryczka & Disney, 2015; Nash, 2008). Although the framework of intersectionality was solidified in the late 80s, Black scholars had long identified the importance of the intersections between race, gender and sexual orientation in the development of identity in women of color (Nash, 2008). As such, intersectionality serves as "a way of describing both the simultaneity of multiple oppressions and the complexity of identity" (Nash, 2008, p. 2).

At present, intersectionality has been well recognized in several arenas, including legal scholarship, psychology and feminist, critical and queer theorizing (Boryczka & Disney, 2015). This concept provides a method of analysis and perspective to help scholars and those involved in social justice to understand the complexity of the current dynamics in the world related to confluence identities (Boryczka & Disney, 2015). This is particularly true for countries, like the U.S., where constant influx of immigrants create a significant impact on their lived experience as well as on those who are native to the country. Boryczka and Disney (2015) argued that issues such as immigration create nativist backlashes, often silencing the most vulnerable of immigrants. In order to counteract this effect, they argued that the utilization of intersectionality in the analysis of the current issues of the world outlines how power shifts related to the identity of these individuals, allowing for their voice to resurface. As such, continued work on identity and intersectionality is relevant at this time despite assertions that the world and particularly the U.S. have progressed to a postfeminist, postrace and postidentity stage.

Development of a Latino ethnic identity. Ethnic identity development for Latinos is a unique experience, given the intrinsic complex cultural contexts Latinos have to incorporate from a young age to maneuver and survive in the dominant culture. Quintana and Scull (2009) described how identity development for Latino children appears to occur at a much more accelerated rate than that of nonminority groups. This is particularly true for their process of understanding that their ethnic group is not the only ethnic group in existence. In fact, Latino children must quickly understand that they belong to a group, which is often considered inferior to other ethnic groups around them. Aside from the rapid processing Latino children must undergo in order to establish their ethnic identity, they also have to contend with the reality that having the label Latino does not equal unifying qualities among those who endorse this label. Latinos have a cultural and racial mixture of heritages, complicating the process with which they understand who they are and how they fit in their society.

Within the context of identity development in the United States, Quintana and Scull (2009) maintained that development of ethnic identity involves three main processes. These processes include the individual's development according to their age, which affect what it means for the individual to be labeled as Latino, ongoing social psychological processes, related to social identity theory, which highlights the implications of being labeled Latino and finally, sociological processes such as acculturation and enculturation.

Quintana (1998) created a model that presents an outline of how children develop their understanding of ethnic identity through five levels based on the different developmental stages. These levels highlight how individuals initially identify race and ethnicity at a superficial level and then slowly mature into understanding their ethnic identity in a complex, culturally grounded manner.

10

In the first level of development, children begin to have a basic awareness of race (Quintana, 1998). Children are able to understand race in a different manner. The most basic manner of their understanding of race is based on what they experienced physically. That is, if they were asked about their race, children under the age of five would likely described themselves in physical terms such as "pink, chocolate or vanilla" (Quintana, 1998, p. 33). However, Hirschfeld suggests that children also begin to differentiate race based on affect, developing racial preferences, before they are able to identify how physical aspects relate to race (as cited in Quintana, 1998, p. 33). In fact, Quintana (1998) argues that these early preferences and attitudes, often favoring Whites even over the children's own race, are greatly influenced by the larger society, more so than from the attitudes of the children's parents or even peers and schools. The children's psychological development further influences their attitudes and understanding of race and ethnicity. Quintana (1998) argues that young preschool aged children's prejudices and perceptions of race may be explained by their tendency to think in a dichotomous manner as well as their tendency towards generalizations based on minimal experiences. These tendencies, and thus the strength of prejudice and attitudes attenuate as children develop more mature cognitive processes.

Following this developmental stage, Latino children begin to develop a more literal understanding of race and ethnicity, a stage, which Quintana (1998) labeled Level 1. In this stage, children have developed more sophisticated cognitive abilities that allow them to hold multiple attitudes towards an object or a group. This means that children between the ages of six and ten shift from relying on external and physical cues to being able to describe internal, non-observable characteristics that make up ethnicity and race (Quintana, 1998). During this age, the previous biased views of earlier childhood begin to decline, as children are able to have more

complex ideas of groups and individuals. Despite these advances, children still mainly

understand ethnicity and race based on physical, biological and historical concepts.

During Level 2 of development, children between the ages of 10 and 14 years of age

undergo an important developmental process that allows them to understand ethnicity and race in

a more in-depth manner (Quintana, 1998). Children at this stage move from basic, literal

understanding of race, to being able to incorporate social concepts related to ethnicity. These

concepts include differences in social class, how ethnicity affects social groups and interactions,

and that members of other ethnic groups different from their own may hold prejudices against

them because they are Latinos. During adolescence, children enter Level 3 of development. In

this stage, adolescents attempt to integrate everything about themselves into a coherent whole. In

order to accomplish this task, adolescents engage in an active exploration of what it means to be

Latino and how to express this Latinidad, which is then integrated into the working sense of self

(Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Quintana, 1998). Along with this development, adolescents

begin to have a group perspective of ethnicity composed of cohesion based on similarities related

to race, solidarity among members of the group, loyalty to the group and intragroup relations

based on similarities of members' experiences (Quintana, 1998). At the end of this stage,

adolescents are said to reach ethnic identity achievement (Quintana, 1998), which for some may

mean that ethnic identity is a core aspect of themselves as opposed to just one more attribute they

possess.

Although Quintana offered a stage model of identity development in children, and to

some extent adolescents, the theory does not provide information on how ethnic identity

development continues past adolescence and into young adulthood. To address this gap, Phinney

(1989) expanded on Erikson's identity theory and Marcia's (1966) ego identity development

12

theories to provide a more detailed and fluid explanation of ethnic identity development in adolescents and adults (Phinney, 2004). Identity formation has long been recognized as the central developmental task of adolescence and emerging adulthood since Erikson's developmental stages (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Syed and Azmitia described identity as a sense of wholeness achieved through the experience of an identity crisis, which spurs exploration of the individual's own abilities, interest and lifestyle options (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). This leads to a commitment to a personal identity, which serves as a template for their life (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). According to Erikson's developmental stages, if adolescents fail to achieve a secure identity, they fall into what is known as identity confusion, which is a lack of fundamental knowledge about who they are and what their role may be (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Between 1966 and 1980, James Marcia extended Erikson's work on identity where he identified the development of identity as a psychosocial task (Marcia, 1966). In exploring this concept, Marcia developed four ego identity statuses that may be achieved depending on whether the individual explored identity issues and committed to a personal identity (Marcia, 1966; Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Marcia (1966) identified identity diffusion as a similar Eriksonian term describing individuals who have not experienced a crisis or made a commitment regarding their identity. He also identified a second status, those in identity foreclosure, as individuals who have made a commitment in identity without experiencing a crisis, thus adopting the opinions and attitudes others have provided (Marcia, 1966; Syed & Azmitia, 2008). A third status is that of individuals who are in the process of exploring their identity and have yet to make a commitment. This status is termed moratorium. Lastly, individuals who have engaged in their identity crisis, have explored their options and have arrived to a secure sense of self are said to be identity-achieved (Marcia, 1966; Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Marcia (1966) declared that these statuses are not

13

necessarily in a developmental continuum, thus individuals may remain diffused or foreclosed throughout their life or they may move back and forth among the statuses (Syed & Azmitia, 2008).

Although ego identity developmental models have focused on several psychosocial factors such as occupation, religion, political orientation and sex roles, they have not addressed issues of identity development pertaining to ethnicity, particularly in minority populations, which is a major gap in a society with significant number of minority adolescents (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Jean S Phinney addressed this issue by developing a three-stage model of ethnic identity development that is theoretically based on both Erikson's developmental theories and Marcia ego-identity model of developmental statuses, applicable across multiple ethnicities (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). According to Phinney (2004), ethnic identity commitment, a major concept specific to ethnic identity development, refers to the importance given and attachment to an individual's ethnic group. Ethnic identity commitment has been correlated with psychological well-being such as increased self-esteem, lower substance abuse and absence of depression (Phinney, 2004). The three statuses Phinney identified related to ethnic development are 1. The unexamined ethnic identity, 2. Ethnic identity search/moratorium, and 3. Ethnic identity achievement.

The unexamined ethnic identity. In this status, the individual has yet to engage in exploration of their ethnicity. Previous research called this time frame *pre-encounter* (Phinney, 2004), when the individual's worldview is strongly influenced by Western and particularly American values. Other researchers call this stage *White identified*, as individuals have internalized white values and standards, and sometimes the individuals may even consider themselves very similar to Caucasian individuals. At this time frame of development, individuals

14

tend to prefer the dominant culture values and worldviews over their own (Phinney, 2006). This may be consider similar to identity foreclosure, which is based in the absence of explorations of issues, along with commitments made based on attitudes of others. In this case, it is society's values that have been internalized (Phinney, 2006).

*Ethnic identity search-moratorium***.** The status of unexamined ethnic identity tends to continue until an individual encounters a situation that forces him or her to initiate their ethnic identity search. This is very similar to the crisis described by Erikson that initiates identity development (Phinney, 2006). This crisis may be started by a shocking personal or social event (Phinney, 2006) that disrupts the individual's typical worldview forcing him or her to examine new interpretation of their identity. Phinney reported that in her studies, subjects described situations that created cognitive dissonance and an awareness that dominant cultural values are not always beneficial to ethnic minorities as precipitating events for their identity search (Phinney 2006). This is a time frame when individuals experiment and question values and customs. It is also a time when individuals clarify what it means to be of their specific ethnicity and how they are viewed in the world. Individuals redirect their preference and focus on their ethnicities, which leads to individuals experiencing strong emotions, often of anger and frustration. (Phinney, 2006).

*Ethnic identity achievement***.** Following the exploration of the ethnic identity search status, the ideal outcome would be that the individual is able to achieve identity. This achieved identity is defined as a clear confident sense of their own ethnicity, as well as an acceptance and internalization of their ethnicity, culture and preferred costumes (Phinney, 2006). While the previous status was full of emotionality and defensiveness, ethnic identity is characterized by a

calm and secure demeanor (Phinney, 2006). Individuals are psychologically open, flexible and self-confident. The individual's ethnic identity is blended with the rest of their identity.

Although it is tempting to view these status achievements as linear and assume that ethnic identity is achieved by adolescence, studies have shown that ethnic identity is likely to be revisited as a result of changing contexts throughout life (Phinney, 2006). Furthermore, statuses are not stages, and thus progression does not always follow a step-wise sequence (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). It is often the case that individuals continue exploring their ethnic identity well into their emerging adulthood years given the variety of experiences that can enhance identity exploration (Phinney, 2006). This is particularly true for young people from American ethnic minority backgrounds as they have to constantly negotiate the same issues as do their White peers, as well as additional challenges that influence their experience of ethnic development (Phinney, 2006). Part of the reason why young minority young adults experience fluidity in identity can be related to constant conflicting messages about their ethnic group in America. This is often exacerbated once they move away from their communities and into the larger society. Phinney (2006) argued that once young people move from their home and attend universities and colleges, their ethnicity becomes a central aspect of their experience that provides additional context for them to re-explore conflicts they may have addressed earlier. However, if young people move directly into jobs within their community and remain in the same environment they grew up, they may not have to face conflicts that ask them to reexamine, and thus redefine, their ethnic identity. If the young adults did not experience a crisis during their youth, they may always remain in identity foreclosure, as they may attain markers of adulthood yet never having had the opportunity to engage in extended exploration of their ethnicity (Phinney, 2006).

Furthermore, there are other arguments regarding the continuation of ethnic identity exploration past the adolescence point to developmental changes in early adulthood that can make ethnic identity more salient (Phinney, 2006). For instance, Phinney identified increased cognitive abilities as responsible for increased ability to become aware of the implications of the individual's ethnic group membership. This, coupled with new experiences faced in either college and universities or diverse work environments, makes for a perfect opportunity for further ethnic identity exploration and questioning of traditional cultural values of their ethnic group (Phinney, 2006). In fact, Phinney argues that it is common for people in their 20s and early 30s who have attained several markers of adulthood such as having their own families and being financially independent to continue "wrestling" (Phinney, 2006, p. 129) with identity questions. As such, although the understanding of the typical achievement of ethnic identity development status is important, it is also important to understand that completion of identity exploration and achievement of ethnic identity cannot have an assigned age rage, as crisis may come up throughout adulthood that will force the individual to re-explore previously settled questions.

Construction of a global identity. This continued exploration may facilitate a deeper, more encompassing understanding of identity, a process encouraged by several scholars in diverse fields of study. One of the champions for a deeper, more encompassing sense of identity is Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa used her own experience as a Latina in the United States to convey the challenges of being in the threshold, between competing groups, both inside and outside them (Keating, 2006). Although Anzaldúa does not provide a psychological framework to understand the construction of identity, she does provide an interdisciplinary perspective, which highlights the complexity of the phenomenon of identity in minorities, particularly Latinos.

Anzaldúa calls for a replacement of "restrictive identity politics" with encompassing new forms of communities where individuals, particularly Latinas from distinct backgrounds work together, instead of against each other to change the current society (Keating, 2006, p. 6). In order to achieve this goal, Latinas must begin by engaging in the path of *conocimento,* the path of knowledge, which will open up their minds to consider their stance in the world from all cultures embodied as well as the stance and viewpoint of those that are considered others. This conocimiento will allow the development of a more comprehensive identity, void of social and cultural restrictions. It will start the path towards a "mestizo nation" or "cosmic race", concepts championed as early as 1920 by Jose Vasconcelos, a Mexican philosopher who views the future of humanity through the lens of interconnection between races (Keating, 2009, p. 203).

Like Quintana, Anzaldúa also describes stages for the development of a more encompassing identity for Latinas. She names these stages the Seven Stages of Conocimiento or the seven stages of knowledge, utilizing personal experiences to illustrate how each step can be taken through the perspective offered by everyday occurrences, and often painful experiences. In the first stage, *El arrebato* (rupture, fragmentation), Anzaldúa describes the loss and confusion when facing a difficult situation that robs the individual of their sense of safety and stability. This is a painful stage, as everything that has been known through the individual's culture is now lost but is also a stage of opportunity, as the individual is pulled to truly observe one's surroundings and acknowledge every cultural space one inhabits. Anzaldúa argues that each rupture is an opportunity to question what the world itself is about (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002).

After this initial shock, Anzaldúa describes arriving to a place of ambiguity, where the new identity is beginning to be negotiated. This is the second stage, *Neplanta*, torn between the past and the present (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). In this stage, the individual is able to

acknowledge belonging to more than just one group, one culture at the same time. This acknowledgement leads to the acknowledgement of divisions within the cultures, which pulls at the individuals to different, often opposite sides (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This is where self-identity becomes the most central concern of an individual. For individuals embodying different cultural groups, this stage, Neplanta, becomes the most well known territory (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). Despite this being a confusing stage, it is also where individuals gain the most knowledge about themselves, their cultures and how they surf in and out of them. They also learn how race itself is not a specific trait but more of an "experience of reality" (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, p. 569) from one specific perspective in a specific context. Here, Anzaldúa states that the individual belonging to minority groups begin to see through the myth of inferiority often espoused by the ethnic culture (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). Unfortunately, this stage is too painful and individuals often opt to negate what has been learned. This is what Anzaldúa calls the Coatlicue state (Anzaldúa & Keating 2002), the state when the individual must make the choice of forging ahead, armed with new knowledge gained in the second stage and building a new identity, or retreating and choose *desconocimiento*, the unknown, by engaging in fantasies, addictions and distractions. This is the stage of denial, but eventually, individuals must face their realities, their *shadow-beast* (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002), and grow despite the pain. This is an important stage of embracing everything the individual is, the good and the bad, the prized and the disowned allowing to "relinquish [their] victim identity" (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, p. 554).

The following stage, *El Compromiso*, the call stage, calls to widen ideas and perceptions about identity (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). It calls to learn and acknowledge that identity is fluid that it changes and is always in transition. Identity is not a static state. As such, Anzaldúa

encourages Latinas to define themselves not as who they have been, but who they are becoming every day (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). She also encourages Latinas to be conscious of who they become by the choices they make about their life and how they can be contributing members of a society (Anzaldúa & Keating 2002). In this transition, it is likely that the shadow beasts reemerge. These beasts may be past failures, fears, even qualities of gender and culture that have been identified as shameful (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). In order to overcome these beasts, parts of the individual must be left behind; however, when faced, the individual realizes that many of these identities are social constructs that are not real and are often imposed on each person by the dominant culture (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). Given this, Anzaldúa argues that because identity is made up, each person has the freedom to create and build their own identity as it best fits them (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This gives rise to the fifth stage, the *Putting Coyolxauhqui together* stage. In this stage, individuals are asked to review their personal histories, with their beliefs and stories about themselves as well as cultural narratives that insist individuals embrace western ideologies and abandon native teachings (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This insistence can be even seen in other academic writings suggesting that the only way to thrive in this culture is by assimilating into the dominant culture (Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009). Similarly, Anzaldúa discusses how the *ethnic tribe* also pulls individuals to remain within racial boundaries isolating themselves and creating a sense of victimhood and *otherness*. These two competing cultures often leave individuals in between isolation and assimilation, both of which Anzaldúa argues, are debilitating (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). After reviewing cultural expectations and narratives, it is time to create alternatives to the new self, to build a personal narrative that confronts and challenges western narrative as well as ethnic cultural narratives. Though each individual is free to choose his or her own identity, Anzaldúa urges Latinos to

adopt a global, unifying identity that embraces all spiritual traditions and cultures. This process and the seeking of knowledge, *conocimiento,* gives life meaning.

Until this point, the path of knowledge has mostly been about a personal path of discovery and reworking of an individual identity. However, in stage 6, the Blow Up, Anzaldúa describes how this path of knowledge, when embracing a global identity, often leads individuals to confront their warring cultures and they may be compelled to affiliate with one over the other (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). However, as an individual in the path of *conocimento* is called to embrace all cultures, Latinas become *Neplanteras,* inhabitants of Neplanta, the no-man's land (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). As such, they must be careful to not take sides; instead, they are called to facilitate understanding to allow each group to see the perspective of the other and to help the groups acknowledge their own *desconocimientos* (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This is a very vulnerable position for Latinas, as they risk being judged as disloyal and perhaps be threatened to lose their affiliation to a particular group. However, the risk is worthwhile, as it ideally will help beginning the healing of groups that misunderstand each other, feeling that the other is the enemy (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This stance allows individuals to move into stage 7, Shifting Realities. This stage is where individuals begin to empathize and accommodate other people and groups' perspectives (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). This ability to take the other group's perspective allows individuals to create an inclusive, nondefensive identity. This new identity allows individuals to observe the world from all angles, creating a new reality barred from racial barriers, and cultural exclusions (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). In this space, individuals can help create more connections and better insights about the world. This is a place of respect and true understanding between cultures and divergent groups and the stage that calls for Neplanteras to become involved in what Anzaldúa called "spiritual activism" (Anzaldúa &

Keating, 2002, p. 569). Spiritual activism is described as using spiritual tools to cope with both personal and global concerns and teach others to utilize these tools to disengage from "negative energy" (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002 p. 570), and other aggressive tactics. Helping others through spiritual activism allows for conflict resolution through reflective dialogue, enabling those in conflict to access compassion and understanding for each other despite disagreements allowing for healing of racism and "cultural desconocimentos " (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, p. 570). Despite this call for openness and respect for other groups, Although Anzaldúa's writings and perspectives come form a literary perspective, they are important to help us warn that to engage in spiritual activism, individuals must take care of themselves as well, even if this means to separate and create psychological armors against negative and dangerous influences (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). Through this conscious self-care, individuals who engage in this path are able to rebuild themselves, expressing their new identity and sharing ideas that form intercultural bonds creating a *new tribalism* (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). The new tribalism that Anzaldúa writes about is what she hopes all members of any community, whether racial, gender, or sexual orientation, can create to build a larger encompassing identity that does not exclude, the way current society vetoed identities tend to do. Although this global identity is not yet a reality, Latinos everywhere, and Latinas in particular seem to be starting this movement by engaging in cultures previously prohibited to them. The current challenge, however, is to open their mind and the minds of those within these cultures and communities to not reject each others differences and to compassionately understand the challenges of meeting distinct cultures and work cohesively towards a shared goal.

Despite this call to embrace a more global identity and leave behind the constraints experienced by the social constructs of racial and gender identities, many Latinas in the United

States find pride and meaning in their specific heritage providing them with a sense of stability and continuity, and prescribing them with roles within their families and their societies. This helps them create their personal identity as well as maintaining a sense of belonging through their social identity. This identity is particularly beneficial if they are immigrants, as it provides a strong foundation while they acclimate to new surroundings and culture (Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009). Unfortunately, early studies into Latinos' functioning within the dominant culture and their acculturation status asserted that the more they retained their native culture, the less likely they were to function well and find success in the U.S. Society. These studies suggested that Latinos should to shed their cultural affiliations and merge completely with the U.S. culture (Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009). This pressure to abandon their social identity as Latinas, along with their every day experience of racism and low social status within the dominant society are likely contributors to the negative social identity most Latinas continue to experience. Furthermore, belonging to a social group that has marked differences from the dominant group means that its members have to constantly make allowances where ill treatment is accepted to survive. This also leads to the group becoming politicized by social movements, which highlights the low status of the group (Tajfel, 1982). These characteristics present more challenges by members of this group to incorporate a positive sense of self (Hurtado & Cervantez, 2009). For Latinas, this signifies that they must contend with a heritage they may be conflicted about. Although they value their culture, they may also experience insecurity and perhaps shame, as being of Latin heritage is often denigrated by the dominant culture and experiencing racism may make them question the value of their culture and identity

This negative social identity is further complicated by a gender identity informed by both their native culture and the dominant U.S. culture. This often results in contradictory

23

expectations for Latinas, particularly for those who grew up in the U.S. or are 2nd generation and beyond. Within their families, they are expected to be family oriented, virginal and embrace traditional gender roles. However, outside of their families, they are expected to value autonomy, be sexy and embrace choices, which may not always be seen as feminine within their family of origin (Arredondo, 2002; Denner & Dunbar, 2004). Furthermore, Latinas learn what it means to be a woman from their mothers including what women can and cannot do, or more precisely, what they should and should not do (Denner & Dunbar, 2004). It is then each young Latina's burden to choose whether to embrace their cultural teachings transmitted by their mothers and adopt a traditional gender role and identity or critique these teaching and embrace the dictates of the dominant culture, risking alienation from their families (Castañeda, 2008).

This contradictory pull for Latinas is observable in their representation within popular culture. In a study by Guzman and Valdivia (2004), the popular images of Jennifer Lopes, Salma Hayek and Frida Khalo were analyzed in order to understand how symbols pertaining to *Latinidad*, that is being, or at least appearing to be Latino, are gendered and racialized. This well researched tendency of popular culture in media to racialize and genderize renders images of Latinas as less powerful, creating a dangerous construction of femininity and otherness, which may be internalized by young Latinas. These constructions have strong demands and expectation for Latinas to be sexy, seductive, curvaceous, sexually available and desirable (Guzman & Valdivia, 2004). These demands, however, create a dilemma for Latinas, because once they meet these demands, they are often denigrated and typified as sultry seductresses, ignoring their intellectual and professional abilities. Examples of this include Jennifer Lopes' lack of recognition for her talent as a businesswoman, and instead, having her body as the main focus of attention by the media (Guzman & Valdivia, 2004). Some Latinas have tried to counteract the

tendency by the popular culture to sexualized Latinas. For instance, Frida Khalo attempted to symbolize her ethnicity through the use of her marked ethnic facial features and choice of clothing for her drawings. Furthermore, she attempted to bring the focus away from being a mere body to be desired and highlighted her intelligence and strength by bringing the focus to her eyes and strongly defined eyebrows. Unfortunately, these attempts were lost to popular culture and instead, these characteristics signal physical aberrations to be used in marketing of earrings and shirts (Guzman & Valdivia, 2004). In more recent years, a new iconizity of Latinas has been on the rise. That is the image of the tough, warrior-like Latina in the Hollywood action genre (Beltran, 2004). This trend has been on the rise since the late 1990s where Latinas are presented with a sense of physical prowess, where their bodies are used for both sex and war (Beltran, 2004). Although this presentation continues on the same line as having Latinas as objects, it allows for some more dimensionality, particularly their assertive qualities. In recent films, Latina characterizations have challenged gender stereotypes concerning physical and mental abilities, allowing them to express qualities associated with heroism (Beltran, 2004). One such actress that has driven much of this heroine iconization has been Michelle Rodriguez, a woman who, in most of her career, has given life to tough Latinas, who are not afraid to demonstrate intelligence and physical dexterity. In a recent film, Rodriguez embodied a fighter in a paramilitary team set to save the world. She is presented as a woman born and raised in the inner city, who learned to survive and thrive in difficult situations. Because of these challenges, she became an adept soldier, who is a hero despite the challenges she endured growing up. These new characterizations of Latinas in popular media may have a greater effect on Latinas who may be able to relate to these characters. Suddenly, their wishes for freedom to express different roles from the ones prescribed by their culture and even the dominant culture are being acted out and

praised publicly. This opens possibilities for Latinas to explore new career goals and roles in arenas that previously had not been an option.

One of these options is becoming a soldier in the U.S. military. As previously mentioned, the portrayal of Latinas in the military being accepted and often chosen for important missions in media presentation may entice young Latinas to choose this path. To better understand this choice, it is necessary to first understand the U.S. military and the culture inherent to it including the changes it has had to endure to include women and minorities within the ranks.

U.S. Military

The U.S. military is a unique organization with members that identify with each other, and with a culture created from shared experiences, beliefs and values (Dunivin, 1994). In this culture, the members are socialized to its rules and customs. Idiosyncratic symbols and language, meaningful only within the context of the military, are shared with pride. This culture must also be able to adapt to changing conditions within the larger society, which include inclusion of individuals not previously permitted to join the ranks (Dunivin, 1994). Military culture throughout history and across countries has been identified with the masculine, combat ready warrior image (Dunivin, 1994); as such, it is not surprising that the members of this organization are protective of it and fear change.

U.S. military components. The U.S. military has different components in which individuals can serve. These include active duty military, reservists and the National Guard. The difference between these components is related to whether the individual is a full time military member or serves part time (U.S. Army, n.d.). For active duty members, soldiers focus on day-to-day operations and each individual has a specialized training within their unit (U.S. Army, n.d.). Their lives tend to revolve around the military base they are assigned to, often living within

the base. These individuals tend to be more involved with military life as they spend greater amount of time within the base (U.S. Army, n.d.). If individuals have families, they have the choice to live on or off base, which affects how connected they are with the military community. Reserve components in contrast serve in the military on a part time basis, while being able to keep a full time job or go to school in the civilian sector (U.S. Army, n.d.). These individuals often serve one weekend per month performing military duties and two weeks per year in training. Despite their service as part time soldiers, reservists may be called for active duty should the need arise (U.S. Army, n.d.). Similarly, the National Guard is a part time component, which focuses on homeland security and humanitarian relief (Department of Defense, 2016). They have the same requirements as reservists, with training drills one weekend a month and two full weeks per year; however, they focus on assisting the local communities during disasters and emergencies (Department of Defense, 2016). The Army National Guard is controlled by the state; nevertheless, during wartime, the president can take control of the guard and deploy its members overseas. In this regard, the guard members and reservists serve similar functions and have similar training and service requirements (Department of Defense, 2016).

Masculinity, sexism, and the military. The military is an institution historically known for encouraging its members to embrace certain masculine characteristics, presently known as militarized masculinity (Lopes, 2011). This type of masculinity is closely associated with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This concept is related to patterns of behavior that allow for men's dominance and power over men with differing masculinities and women by embracing and enacting traditional traits and behaviors such as aggressiveness and dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Although it is not necessarily normal, as only few men might embrace it, it is considered normative and a benchmark of how men are measured against in patriarchal

gendered systems (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity highlights a position of power that dictates certain beliefs and behaviors, which might change depending on the context, but overall, it defines and idealizes overarching ideals and fantasies of the image of maleness (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). An important aspect of hegemonic masculinity is that the behaviors and ideals are defined within organizations. For example, in the military, there are well-defined patterns of desirable behaviors for men, which, as discussed previously, create a militarized masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Lopes, 2011).

Militarized masculinity can be understood as a group of traits that define what it means to be a man in the military. These traits include heightened aggression, courage, ability and willingness to inflict corporal injury and death to others, and uniquely, a willingness to sacrifice their life for their nation (Lopes, 2011). In fact, the act of joining the military is often understood by men as a decision specifically taken to become "real men" by joining an organization that promises to train them into warriors, a typical male archetype (Lopes, 2011, p. 3).

Unfortunately, the particular brand of militarized masculinity indicates that in order to be able to belong to this elite group, recruits must learn to "dehumanize the enemy" so that they are able to eradicate them in time of war (Lopes, 2011, p. 4). In order to do so, these men must first reject parts of themselves that do not fit the ideal of militarized masculinity and instead nurture exaggerated ideals of what a male warrior should be. This is typically achieved by demeaning everything and everyone that is deemed as *other* such as women, people of color and homosexuals (Lopes, 2011). This practice is dangerous as it can be generalized to outside the military realm and men who embrace these ideals become aggressive, dismissive and even violent to those they deem as others (Lopes, 2011).

This militarized masculinity has been cited as a reason why some people, including feminists, warn against allowing women to join the military in combat roles. For instance, Jeffreys (2007) argues that women in the military are by definition facing a double jeopardy due to the threat they pose to this militarized masculinity culture which breeds sexism. She states that sexual dominion has been an integral part of military masculinity since historical times, as evidenced by the use of rape to terrorize and subjugate the enemy. She further discusses how several feminists have highlighted the error of allowing women to join the military, because it is not just a masculine institution but also requires heightened hegemony masculinity to function properly (Jeffreys, 2007). She further cites the danger women face when they enter this gendered institution, stating that men who feel threatened by this intrusion tend to engage in gendered harassment, identified as sabotage, indirect threats, gossip, malingering and sexual harassment. In addition, Jeffreys argues that women in the military threaten the very core of the historical ideal of the military given that soldiers are taught to see women as the other whom they must differentiate from while also being the ones they are commission to protect and defend. When women join military ranks, these constructs are shaken, if not completely destroyed. Jeffreys (2007) argues that this causes reactionary behaviors from the men as evidenced by the rampant sexual misconducts and rapes. She further argues that in addition to these reactions, women would never be seen as equals given their biological differences as well as their social position not just in the military, but also around the world. In fact, she argues that women in the military, particularly in combat positions, may pose a risk to the troops as enemy combatants may use them as pawns by being targeted, raped and impregnated (Jeffreys, 2007). Jeffreys states that the misogynist attitudes in the military are inherent of its structure and though there have been

efforts to change its culture by introducing women into more active roles, there has not been a significant change in the danger women face in the hands of one of their own.

Despite this slow change, there are active components in the U.S. military that are championing change towards a more inclusive military, which has introduced transformation in the last decades in regards to the military structure imposing some changes in its culture. Two of these changes are the increase in numbers of ethnic minority soldiers entering the military and the amount of women it has accepted into its ranks. As of 2011, the Pentagon released the statistic that women make up 14.5% of active duty military (Smith & Smith, 2013) compared to 1.6% in 1973, while Latinos make up 11.4% (Sanchez, 2013). This current surge occurred after a long history of women, particularly Latinas, fighting to be recognized as valuable assets to the military.

History of Women in the U.S. Military

Women in the military have a long history of service starting in the American Revolution, where they served in domestic roles such as nurses, cooks and other roles, essential to the survival of the troops (Bellafaire, n.d.). In the early 1900s, the military recognized the need for qualified nurses to be full time caretakers of the troops, thus creating the Army and Navy nurse corps. By the time WWI broke out, women were given other roles such as telephone operators, clerks, and on-shore positions, thus freeing the men to fight oversees (Bellafaire, n.d). By the 1940s, the Army created the Women's Army Corps, a group of women whose jobs were non-combatant, supportive roles such as communications, intelligence, supply, medicine and administration (Bellafaire, n.d). Despite these supportive roles, more than 150,000 women served in both Europe and the Pacific, often facing capture and captivity as POWs. These new women-soldiers served in the post throughout most of the war (Bellafaire, n.d). However, all these roles

were meant to be temporary, lasting only as long as there was a need. It was always assumed that as soon as the war ended, women would go back to their *appropriate* roles of caring for their families and homes (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). It was clear that the senior officers of the military strongly subscribed to gender roles, traditional notions of femininity, heterosexuality and morality. The women who were allowed to serve were confined to very specific feminized roles, and these service women were often the target of ridicule and objectification (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). In fact, not only those in power but also the large majority of Americans felt that women in more central, long lasting roles would not be able to adapt to the discipline necessary to succeed, and that the training would only masculinize the women, thus damaging the American culture (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). Furthermore, those in power were very protective of the military culture, which embraces the ideal of the masculine-warrior as a central aspect (Dunivin, 1994), and for an extended period, refused to acknowledge that the roles the women played in the service were as important as the ones of the men (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). However, the women's ability to meet and often surpass the expectations placed on them has converted many of those initially reluctant to work with them, particularly in the most recent decades (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). For example, despite ongoing debate on the ability of women to meet the demands of combat roles, in 2013, the ban on women in combat roles was lifted (McClam, 2013). This ban was nominal in nature, as many female soldiers have experienced increased participation in front line operations in the last conflicts serving as pilots, aircrew, military police and others (Matthews et al., 2009). During these unofficial roles, women have been expected to perform at the same level as the men they are serving with, and have proven to meet the demands just as well as the men do. However, much like their predecessors, once these unofficial assignments are completed, these same women, once praised for their

strengths, are then demonized for not being feminine enough (Fenner & DeYoung, 2001). This places military women in a very difficult position of having to balance the femininity needed to not threaten the status quo in the organization, with the strength to survive and help carry out the mission (Matthews et al., 2009).

Latinas in the U.S. military. The history of Latinas in the U.S. military is difficult to trace, as little research has been devoted to this particular group (Lutz, 2008; Mondragon, 2011). Although it is tempting to blame the dominant culture, research has indicated that within group neglect is as much, if not more, at fault for this lack of interest in Latinas who have chosen to join the military (Mondragon, 2011). Most history focuses on male Latinos joining the military, particularly in WWII. This increase in involvement was due to a "macho ethic permeating Mexican society" (Mondragon, 2011, p. 159). However, not much discussion or explanation has been had as to why Latinas, despite familial constrictions, also chose to join during this time (Bellafaire, n.d.; Mondragon, 2011).

Despite this lack of interest in the performance of Latinas in the military, they have indeed made great impacts during their service. From WWII until the most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Latinas have stepped up to the challenge that military service entails, with the added layer of having to navigate their native culture, the dominant culture and the military culture (Bellafair, n.d.; Dunivin, 1994; Mondragon, 2011). In World War II, Latinas joined the Women Auxiliary Corps when there was a high need for bilingual women to fill particular positions in communication and cryptology. Latinas also served in the Naval women's reserve, under Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service in World War II. Latina involvement in the military continued throughout 1950s during the Korean conflict and 1960s in Vietnam; however, their numbers remained small. The small number of Latinas involved in the military

during these times mostly served as nurses, medical specialists and administrative personnel (Bellafaire, n.d.). By 1970, when the U.S. military became an all-volunteer force, more women of every race started to join every branch of the military. As of September 1977, 3,640 Latinas were serving in the military. Of those, 260 were officers and 3380 were enlisted (Bellafaire, n.d.). By late 1970s and into 1980s, Latinas' presence in the military increased and was no longer limited to positions in hospitals and administrative offices. For instance, in 1978, Sergeant Gianna (Fimbres) Nenna Church served in the Air Force and the Army in the 80s as a petroleum specialist who often was sent for duty to the frontlines where she encountered enemy fire (Bellafaire, n.d.). Latinas have been known to volunteer for risky positions and are willing to put themselves on the line to accomplish the mission. This presence of Latinas in the military is likely to continue incrementally as in one of the latest surveys, 13% of enlisted members in the military are Latinas, showing a drastic increase in recruitment for this particular group (Patten & Parker, 2010).

Motives for military participation. It is notable that in the 2000s, Latinas have joined the military in increasing numbers. Due to this increase, it is important to understand what drives Latinas to join the military, particularly given the aforementioned context of gender roles prescribed by their family and country of origin and how do they manage the choice of a military career. A recent study of young Latinas in urban cities suggests that these women are targeted early, during middle and high school, by recruiters of various armed forces (Perez, 2006). The increase in Latinas signing up for military service is particularly clear in the ranks of JROTC, a program designed to introduce middle and high school children and teens to military life with the purpose of encouraging them to join after high school or continue ROTC in college. Proponents of this program emphasize the benefits of this introductory program by stating that it provides at-

risk youth with discipline and a sense of pride, protecting them from gangs, drugs and crime (Perez, 2006). Recruiters and proponents further emphasize particular benefits for young women, especially Latinas, such as avoidance of unplanned pregnancies, thus aligning with the cultural norm of attempting to control women's sexuality (Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Perez, 2006). However, when young Latinas involved in this program are questioned about their motives to join JROTC, the most mentioned motivator is financial need. Recruiters know of the dire financial situation of young minority students and lure them into joining the program with promises of immediate financial compensation as well as scholarships and other benefits, which are out of reach for these students otherwise (Perez, 2006). Further studies have also concluded that the greatest benefit for Latinas is financial (Gade, Lakhani, & Kimmel, 1991). These studies suggest that the military provides opportunities for education and job training, which may not have been available to them, thus providing a bridge to financial stability. Interview responses in the studies indicated that the military had been beneficial, particularly if they came from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This was especially true of Latinas in comparison to White males (Gade, et al., 1991). Overall, given the perceived limited opportunities Latinas have to advance financially and professionally, it appears that Latinas view the military as a way out of poverty and oppression, and pursue careers that may otherwise not be sanctioned by their families (Gade, et al., 1991; Perez, 2006).

Military and Latin cultures. An important reason why Latinas feel that they can pursue a career in the military is that the military presents them and their families with values embraced by most Latin cultures. Some of these values include honor, respect, discipline and structure (Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Perez, 2006). Young Latinas have indicated that besides financial reasons, wearing a military uniform increases the respect with which the members of their

community treat them. Although Latinas may view the military as a way to achieve freedom and autonomy (Perez, 2006), their parents and family members may feel confident that the disciplined lifestyle of a soldier may provide adequate boundaries to keep their daughters within the confines of gender appropriate behavior. These beliefs may be backed up by the military's own culture, which, research has indicated, continue to hold traditional patriarchal beliefs and gender role attitudes similar to those espoused by traditional Latino families (Matthews et al., 2009; Prividera & Howard, 2012). These values were observed when cadets from several military schools and Reserved Officer Training Corps units were questioned about roles for women in the military and many of them endorsed stereotypical roles for women as the best choice for their jobs in the military (Matthews et al., 2009). Although these attitudes are a hindrance for the development of a Latina's career, and impair women's ability to prove organizational effectiveness (Prividera & Howard, 2012), it may assure their families that Latinas continue embracing the values expected of them (Perez, 2006). This support ensures that Latinas continue to increase in numbers within military ranks, thus making them an important part of the organization whose experience and needs must be understood and taken into serious account.

Current status of Latinas in the military. Unfortunately, due to the military's militarized masculinity and tendency to confine women to traditional gender roles, women soldiers of all ethnicities continue to experience sexual harassment, violence due to their gender, lack of support and opportunities relative to the opportunities given to men, and overall placement on low staff positions regardless of training and capabilities (Prividera & Howard, 2009). As previously discussed, women of all races faced double jeopardy in the sense that they face danger from enemy combatants, and unfortunately, from fellow male soldiers. For Latinas,

this problem is tenfold as they must endure both race and gender based discrimination (Foynes, Shipherd, & Harrington, 2013). Because Latinas embody otherness in the sense of race and gender (Lopes, 2011), it is likely that they may be targeted at higher rates than women who are not ethnic minorities. In fact, Whitworth indicates that military women have reported increased PTSD symptoms due to sexual harassment and abuse at higher rates than due to combat trauma (Whitworth, 2008). Comparably, minorities have increased emotional distress due to being tasked with the most dangerous and riskier missions (Withworth, 2008). As such, it is conceivable that Latinas, being both ethnic and gender minorities, are likely experiencing significantly more negative experience in the military compared to their white counterparts. Withworth (2008) further discusses that both ethnic and gender minorities quickly learn that they were never truly accepted into what she calls the brotherhood of the military, a myth all military members are indoctrinated to during their basic training (Withworth, 2008). As such, they are more likely to experience more trauma and more mental health concerns, including PTSD and other related disorders.

   Latinas' achievements in the U.S. military. Despite these challenges, Latinas have been able to reach a level of excellence in the military allowing them to the achieve positions of responsibility and power. Examples of these women are U.S. Army Colonel Irene Zoppi Rodriguez and Lieutenant Colonel Olga Custodio. Col. Zoppi Rodriguez joined the Army in 1985, at a time when women were still negated the possibility to succeed in the military. She endured discrimination and denigrating comments based on her gender and race, as well as added challenges due to her limited English abilities (Puga, 2013). However, in an interview, Col. Zoppi Rodriguez cited her family's support as her strength and motivation to reach her goals despite the challenges presented, achieving 25 years of successful military service, two masters'

degrees, one Ph.D. from the University of Maryland and mastering five languages (Puga, 2013). Col. Zoppi Rodriguez currently is focused on encouraging other Latinas to follow their goals despite perceived challenges, stating that "'no' is an invitation to try harder" (Zoppi Rodriguez 2016, para. 1). Another successful Latina in the military is Lt. Col. Olga Custodio, the first Latina to complete service in the U.S. Air Force as a pilot (Tiscareño-Soto, 2014). Lt. Col. Custodio was born in Puerto Rico, and had been exposed to military life by her father, a Non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. Although Lt. Col. Custodio's dream had always been to fly, when she learned that her father had been denied a commission while he was in the military due to his ethnicity, it sparked a stronger drive to pursue her goal in the U.S. Air Force. She also encountered rejection when she approached her local ROTC detachment while in college, where she was informed that women were not allowed in the program. She refused to accept this rejection and continued to pursue a commission with the U.S. Air Force. After much perseverance, she was accepted to Officer Training School at age 26 and was allowed to continue onto Undergraduate Pilot training, thus becoming the first Latina to complete UPS and become a U.S. Air Force pilot (Tiscareño- Soto, 2014). These achievements, while surpassing institutional challenges, are just examples of what most Latinas in the military endure and overcome. This ability to overcome challenges could be due to the inherent resilience needed to survive as a minority in the U.S.; however, further studies are needed to better understand this phenomenon (Foynes, et al., 2013).

Consequences of military service for Latinas. Latinas have proven a strong resilience to overcome discrimination and challenges inherent with being minorities when pursuing their goals, particularly in the military. However, it is interesting to consider how exposure to added pressures affect the mental and physical well being of Latinas. Some studies conducted on

Latinas in male dominated civilian positions have suggested that consistent exposure to gender and race based discrimination may increase the likelihood of experiencing depression and anxiety (Foynes, et al., 2013). However, other studies conducted on Latinas in the military measuring the same effects of double jeopardy do not appear to have the same findings, as results indicated that although there were negative effects of discrimination, they did not experience additive effects found in civilian women (Foynes, et al., 2013). Although Latinas are thought to experience more challenges, studies of all women, regardless of ethnicity have suggested that women tend to have a higher ability to habituate to stress (Adler et al., 2005). A study comparing the response of women to longer deployment times to that of men indicated that men presented with increased depression and PTSD as deployment length increased, while women did not present with this same pattern (Adler et al., 2005). The hypothesis of this study indicates that women have inherent abilities to habituate to stress due to their tendency to create meaning through relationship, which they use to ameliorate stress and fatigue (Adler et al., 2005). Although this study did not differentiate women based on their ethnicity, it gives a starting point to understand the difference in responses of women to military stress and it raises the question of whether Latinas could potentially have even higher resiliency given the strong family ties and importance placed on relationships in Latino cultures (Arredondo, 2002). Another important risk that must be addressed is the danger many Latinas face in regards to sexual abuse and harassment. Unfortunately, recent studies suggest that the current military stance towards rape and sexual harassment continues to be one of indifference out of fear of causing friction within the ranks (Mondragon, 2011). What is more disconcerting is that this particular study evidenced high levels of this indifference and victim-blaming attitude in female members of the military including Latina soldiers (Mondragon, 2011). Although this is not an encompassing

study, it suggests that some Latinas may tend to displace the responsibility for sexual harassment and sexual violence on the victims, which puts them at even higher risk of becoming victims themselves.

Although there are obvious physical and mental risks Latinas face during military service, interviews with current and former Latina soldiers have also identified several positive consequences due to their involvement in the military (Mondragon, 2011). A repeated positive consequence was a gain in self-confidence, and the modification of their self-perception as Latinas, citing no longer feeling like second-class citizens, which was common prior to military service (Mondragon, 2011). They also appear to have an increased sense of financial stability, and a hope for a career, which they may not have had in the past (Gade, Lakhani, & Kimmel, 1991).

Therapeutic Relevance and Purpose of the Study

Despite important findings in the research focusing on Latinas and some of the impact of their involvement in the military, there is a general consensus that there is still a lot more research to be done to fully understand the impact of Latinas' military service on their well being (Foynes, et al., 2013; Lutz, 2008; Mondragon, 2011). The gaps in the literature regarding Latinas in the military are necessary to address, as this heterogeneous group has become increasingly more involved in the military, becoming an important part of this organization. The military's constant change, including the lift of the combat role ban also means that Latinas will find themselves in new roles, which may demand more of them, particularly in regards to flexibility in gender roles. Because of this likelihood, effects of military service on gender role and identity in Latinas was the focus of this study. This aspect was one of the most salient gaps in the literature and an important one to understand if psychological treatment for this population is to

be sensitive to the unique cultural challenges Latinas face in the military. As such, the research questions guiding this study were the following:

1. How do Latinas experience serving in the military, particularly in regards to their

    (a) gender identity, and

    (b) gender roles?

2. How do Latinas cope with challenges of being military members?

3. How has the experience of serving in the military modified the meaning they give to being Latina and female along with gender roles attached to these identities?

Understanding how being in yet another strong cultural group different from them affect, if at all, their gender role identity; how they negotiate these challenges, and how they perceive their experiences to affect their relationships and life will allow practitioners to become aware of subtle signals of distress as well as signs of resiliency that may be encouraged during treatment.

METHOD

Introduction

Because very little research has investigated the specific questions identified in the current study, I chose a multi-method design using qualitative methods as the primary source of data and a quantitative scale as a secondary source to create triangulation. Due to the intricacy of social phenomena pertaining to culture and identity, using a qualitative method with added quantitative tools is often preferred to understand the complexities that arise during research (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). Furthermore, a qualitative method allowed me the flexibility necessary to explore an understudied population such as Latinas in the military to begin identifying common experiences these women have as well as the meaning they assign to these experiences.

Qualitative approach. For this study, I chose interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to assist with the understanding of Latina experiences in the military and the meaning each participant draws from these experiences. In IPA, my main focus was to "make sense" (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 101) of participants' experiences by gathering detailed accounts as accurately as possible and grounding these experiences in relevant psychological concepts given the meaning the participant assigned to these experiences (Groenewald, 2004; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). This approach borrows its most salient aspects from phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith, 2011). Each of these approaches has a similar but distinct focus. For instance, phenomenology focuses on the lived experience of an individual, as close to the factual experience as possible. However, I can only listen to the participants' description of the experience and interpret this account through her own lens, which is an approach closely related to hermeneutics. Finally, in IPA, I analyzed in close detail each

individual case, a focus related to idiography (Smith, 2011). In essence, IPA focuses on the meaning a person creates from an experience as well as how she processes this experience. IPA looks at the person-in-context, that is, it focuses on the meaning the participant draws from the experience given the context in which she finds herself at that given moment. Furthermore, this approach considers me, the researcher, an instrument with which data is processed and analyzed. As such, my context, assumptions and biases were also taken into consideration, as it is nearly impossible to process an experience in a vacuum.

Researcher as instrument. In IPA, as in most qualitative research, one of the most important instruments to gather and analyze the data is the actual researcher. The researcher is responsible for gathering and interpreting the data and the meaning ascribed of her experiences using personal interactions such as one-on-one interviews. As such, the quality and depth of the observed data depends on how well the researcher executes the research (Xu & Storr, 2012). In order for researchers to execute competent research, they must hone their interviewing skill, but most importantly, they must be constantly aware of their own biases and prejudices that may inform how they interpret the data collected.

In this study, I served several roles namely, being a point of contact, interviewer, and interpreter. Because I also was in charge of creating the questions for the interviews, it was imperative that I became aware of my biases and assumptions early in the research process. To this end, I kept a self-reflective journal where my subjective experiences, biases, assumptions and point of view were explored and examined throughout the research study. By taking these precautions, I attempted to capture my internal processes and to ensure that the data gathered were the full experiences of the participants, while my own biases were accounted for.

Self-reflective journal. Because the integrative phenomenological analysis is highly dependent on the researcher's ability to keep the data as minimally impacted by her biases as possible, I kept a self-reflective journal as one of the necessary steps to ascertain trustworthiness of the study. I discussed the process of creating the research questions, particularly my biases and expectation. During the interviews, I continued to journal about my own process during each meeting with the participants including how my expectations changed, the subjective experience of facing these women and their stories. Finally, during the process of analyzing the data obtained, I focused on maintaining the fidelity of the data, regardless of my assumptions. In order to ensure this, I maintained a journal about the possible pulls to interpret the data in a way that confirmed my biases when the data was ambiguous. The journal also reflected discussions with my chair and committee members relevant to the project and my perspectives.

Self-reflexive statement. I chose the current project due to my experience during my undergraduate education as a reserve officer cadet in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). As a Latina woman involved in an organization dedicated to transform civilian students into Air Force officer, I often wondered if other Latinas had the same experiences as I did when joining the military given the cultural norms I had grown up with. After attending for two years, I noticed that some of the teachings from my childhood were a hindrance to my performance in the organization and I struggled to reconcile what I was being taught with what had been ingrained in me. Although I did not complete the training due to administrative issues, I continued being interested in working with the military and while in the process of developing this project, I received a commission as an officer the Air Force. This development spurred my previous interest in the experience of Latinas in the military given my early observations of lack of presence in officer training programs, and my experience as a cadet, which clashed with my

43

cultural expectations of womanhood. I am well aware that these experiences may have caused

me to have expectations and assumptions about how other Latinas experience the military, which

increased my resolve to be vigilant not impose my own views.

The most salient assumptions I have in regards to this topic is that the demands placed by

the military on its members often clash with ingrained roles and gender identity Latinas grew up

with in their families of origin. Particularly, my bias is that Latinas come from a culture where

being feminine means that we are not supposed to raise our voices, wear masculine clothing or

be overly assertive. However, when joining the military, these, as well as many other demands

are placed on both men and women, which may be disconcerting and difficult to obey for

Latinas. I have also become aware that I assume all Latinas have the same rules growing up and

that because I am a Latina, I understand the culture of every other woman who also identifies

that way. Throughout the study, I explored these assumptions within myself and gained

sufficient insight into my biases to ensure that the experiences I discussed were solely of the

participants I interviewed.

Rigor and trustworthiness. In qualitative research, it is important to keep certain

concepts in mind to ensure the studies meet appropriate levels of rigor and trustworthiness. Some

of these qualities include sufficiency of immersion in the data obtained, a focus on subjectivity

and reflexivity, gathering of appropriate data given the research question, and appropriate

interpretation of the data obtained (Morrow, 2005). As such, I took several steps to ensure that

these standards were met. One of these steps was to recruit external auditors, such as my research

supervisor, to minimize researcher bias and ensure the experiences and meaning were a true

representation of the participant's views. Furthermore, by creating a self-reflective journal, I

made my implicit assumptions and biases overt, a process known in phenomenology as

bracketing (Morrow, 2005). In order to address adequacy of data, I ensured recruiting an appropriate number of participants that meet the necessary criteria to explore similar experiences from each individual's point of view. According to Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997), three to five interviews are the minimum necessary to provide enough diversity to identify thematic patterns. However, more important than sheer numbers, I ensured that the interviews provided rich data by identifying appropriate participants; I created meaningful interview questions, provided enough time for the participants to reflect upon their experience and encouraged elaboration on important aspects of their experience (Morrow, 2005). Furthermore, the mode of recruitment was purposeful and criterion-based to ensure that the participants selected had the background and experiences necessary to address the research question and minimize confounding factors (Palinkas et al., 2013). To ensure adequate variety of evidence, I used triangulation in the form of the Marianismo Belief Scale (Castillo et al., 2010). Just as important as having adequate data, it is particularly important for trustworthiness to ensure adequate analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data collected (Morrow, 2005). To ensure trustworthiness during the data analysis, it is imperative to immerse oneself in the data. This is achieved by repeated readings of the interview transcripts as well as repeated listening of recordings and reviews of notes taken during the meetings with the participants. I engaged in these practices to ensure that I gained in depth knowledge of every aspect of the data and its nuances (Morrow, 2005). For the interpretation of the data, I kept analytical memos to collect queries and hunches made throughout the research process. Finally, I made sure that the findings have a balance between my findings and notations and the participants' voice and direct experiences (Morrow, 2005).

Participants

      Demographics and sampling strategy. Because sampling is one of the most important aspects of a qualitative study, I chose to follow the framework of four pan-paradigmatic points outlined by Robinson (2013) to guide me in my quest to obtain an appropriate sample for this study. For my target population, I identified Latina women, who are serving the U.S. ARMY. This choice to restrict participation of military women belonging to one branch was deliberate in order to ensure specificity and depth of data obtained. This target population had further inclusionary and exclusionary criteria, which will be discussed later, to create a sample as homogenous as possible, given that this is the preferred type of sample in IPA (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Because the study has an idiographic aim, a sample of four participants were sought to allow for each of the participant's voices to come through in the study and to allow for a more in-depth analysis (Robinson, 2013; Smith et al., 2009). Lastly, in IPA, certain methods of collecting data are preferred, such as selecting the participants purposively to ensure that the participants are able to provide insight into their experiences relevant to the research question (Smith et al., 2009). The sampling strategy that I chose for this study was a purposive sampling strategy using recruitment flyers provided to a professional contact. This professional contact distributed this flyer to individuals who met the study requirements. Those individuals who chose to participate contacted me directly to inform me of their interest in the study.

      Criteria for inclusion. All of the participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this research project after being debriefed on the purpose, procedures, confidentiality, risks and benefits, of the study. Given the focus on Latinas' experience in the military, only females who identified as Latina from Mexico, whether because of birth, having one or both parents as Mexican or because of family heritage, were included in this study. Participants were also

current members of the military as members of the Army Reserves. In order to maintain homogeneity of the sample in regards to generational experiences, age range was restricted to ages 20 to 35. Furthermore, because an aspect of interest was how Latinas navigate both receiving order and then, as they progress in rank, how they manage the expectation of commanding others, the study focused on Latinas who are officers, as they have both experiences of interest.

Criteria for exclusion. Exclusionary criteria are established to ensure data is properly analyzed. To this end, the interviews were recorded; therefore, if potential participants were not comfortable with being voice-recorded during the interview, they were not included in the study. Furthermore, to ensure privacy and confidentiality, the interviews were carried out in person at a location agreed upon by both parties or through the secured video chat service VSee. If prospective participants could not meet in person, and were not willing to use this secure data service, they were not included in the study.

Rationale for sample size. As previously discussed, IPA has its roots in the idiographic approach, with a focus to understand a phenomena within a particular context. As such, IPA research studies are conducted on a small sample size (Smith et al., 2009). Due to these characteristics, experts suggest that sample size for student projects should be kept between three to six participants (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, I chose to keep the sample relatively small with four participants. This number of participants provided enough representation of the individuals and the experiences sought for this study.

Setting for Data Collection

I conducted the interviews in person at a locale convenient for the participants such as their homes. Participants that do not live within the Southern California area were interviewed

47

via VSee (2014), a secured audio/video chat, which is encrypted and HIPAA compliant.The participants were provided all information required by the Institutional Review Board of Pepperdine University, such as the Informed Consent form, my contact information as well as contact information for my research advisor, and the chair of the Institutional Review Board. I made every effort to answer questions about the study to make them feel comfortable sharing such personal information.

Procedure

Prior to the interview, the participants were required to complete an informed consent document from Pepperdine University, which included a section regarding audio recording (see Appendix A). Participants were also given a pseudonym not related in any way to their identifying information to protect their identity. Once these documents were completed, the participants were reminded that participation in this project was voluntary, they could choose not to answer questions they were not comfortable with and that they could stop the interview at any time without any consequence to their employment status. Following this, the participants were asked a series of semi-structured interview questions, including introductory questions, and were encouraged to add any information they deemed relevant (see Appendix B). Upon completion of the interviews, participants were asked to complete the Marianismo Belief Scale (MBS; Appendix C).

Sources of Data

In regards to data collection, an IPA approach is designed to encourage participants to provide detailed accounts of their experience. As such, in-depth interviews were the best means to achieve this end (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, individual, semistructured interviews are known to be the preferred method for collecting detailed stories due to their tendency to evoke

thoughts and feelings from the participants (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). This method of data collection also allowed me to build the rapport necessary with each participant, as well as help the participant feel more comfortable during the interview process (Smith et al., 2009). As a form of triangulation, I collected data using the Marianismo Belief Scale, which provided additional information regarding the beliefs and level of enculturation of the Marianismo construct (Castillo et al., 2010). Once the data were collected, I made field notes reflecting upon my impressions during the interview in order to contextualize the data collected.

  Semistructured interviews. Given the recommendation of the literature for data collection, I scheduled individual interviews at a mutually convenient location. After providing the necessary information, including the approximate length of the interview (about one hour to one hour and thirty minutes) and collecting the informed consent forms, I began the semi-structured interview. This interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared prior to the meeting. The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device approved by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board. I took the necessary precautions to maintain confidentiality of all data obtained by securing the recordings and written material in an encrypted file with a digital password. A pseudonym was assigned to all participants and their real names were not used in any document, data or report. Furthermore, any demographic information was kept in a locked and encrypted, password protected file separate from questionnaire data to further ensure confidentiality.

  Given the sensitive nature of the interviews, I ensured that there was sufficient rapport with each participant to allow them a sense of safety and comfort. The interview schedule was set up in a manner that allowed for flexibility during the interview to encourage greater detail and richness in descriptions of experiences and emotions (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, I

49

ensured the participants felt they had ample time to reflect upon their experiences and explain

them as well as the meaning they drew from them. Because these were in-depth interviews, I

used pre-determined prompts at appropriate times in order to gather as much information as

possible about the experiences discussed.

     MBS. The MBS is a tool created to measure Latina's adherence to culturally derived

beliefs about womanhood informed by the construct of Marianismo, a construct developed by

Evelyn Steven (Castillo et al., 2010). As previously discussed, Marianismo encompasses the

guiding rules Latinas are encouraged to follow which are drawn from the virtues ascribed to the

Virgin Mary. While it has origins within the Catholic faith, these beliefs have permeated the

cultural beliefs of womanhood for many Latino families. The Marianismo Belief Scale was

created by Castillo et al. (2010) to help clarify to what extent Latinas subscribe to this construct.

The scale consists of 5 subscales including Family Pillar, Virtuous and Chaste, Subordinate to

Others, Silencing Self to Maintain Harmony, and Spiritual Pillar with a total of 24 items. These

five subscales seek to embody the most relevant cultural values often adopted by Latinas, such as

familismo, respeto and *simpatía* (Castillo et al., 2010). According to the authors, they conducted

an analysis by subscale, as opposed to the total scale score, during their validation study. As

such, the results of the internal reliability indicated that the subscales have a coefficient alphas of

0.77 for Family Pillar, 0.79 for Virtuous and Chase, 0.76 for Subordinate to other and 0.85 for

Self silencing to maintain harmony (Castillo et al., 2010). Furthermore, the authors hypothesized

that the subscales would be correlated to measures of behavioral and cognitive enculturation.

This hypothesis helped established convergent validity and the correlation coefficients indicated

a medium to large effect size ($r = 0.3$ to $r = 0.5$; Castillo et al., 2010). In regards to discriminant

validity, the authors reported no significant correlation between MBS and Anglo Orientation

Scale (Castillo et al., 2010). One limitation mentioned in the validation study of this measure indicated that the majority of the participants were of Mexican American heritage, which may affect the generalizability of the scale. This limit was taken into consideration during this study; however, because the participants of this study were also of Mexican Heritage, this concern may not be relevant. Given that the current research sought to understand how Latinas perceive their gender identity and gender roles affected by military service, it was useful to understand the level they subscribe to these cultural norms and whether what they describe during the interviews is similar to the beliefs expressed on the MBS.

Data Management

  Transcription. The interviews were audio recorded on a digital recorder and then transcribed by a professional transcription service. I took the necessary steps to ensure confidentiality of the research subjects by using only pseudonyms during the interview and not discussing or revealing any personal information. I also ensured confidentiality of the information through the use of a reliable and professional academic transcription service that provided me with a non-disclosure agreement and ensured all transcriptionists sign a strict confidentiality agreement. In order to ensure fidelity, I crosschecked the transcript by listening to the interview and reviewing the written material. The transcription focused on the content relevant to the research question, as IPA approach is more directed towards the meaning behind the content rather than actual words or utilization of silences (Smith et al., 2009).

  Electronic data. The interviews were downloaded to my personal, locked computer and were kept in a file secured using encryption and a digital password. Once downloaded from the recording device, the interviews were deleted from the device. The interviews were transcribed onto a Microsoft Word document and were also secured with an encryption and digital password

and will be maintained for five years, after which the interviews will be permanently deleted. The interviews were analyzed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, also encrypted and password protected.

Data Analysis

According to Smith et al. (2009), data analysis in an IPA research project is intrinsically a flexible procedure, where the focus is maintained in the participant's attempts to make sense of their experiences. Despite the flexibility inherent in this type of approach, there are several strategies aimed at ensuring that the data is thoroughly analyzed. These strategies include a close analysis of the participant's claims and concerns, achieved by reading several times over the transcripts obtained. In order to obtain these data, I made detailed analysis of the content, context, linguistics, and conceptual ideas that came up when I read and noted the data (Smith et al., 2009). Once the data were noted, I searched the notes made during the analysis for recurring themes, interrelations, and connection between all the notes made in the exploratory section of the analysis. Once these themes were identified, I used abstraction to identify superordinate themes within the data. I also examined the data for polarization to identify differences within the themes that emerged throughout the interview. Contextualization also helped in clarifying the data by identifying the narrative elements of the analysis (Smith et al., 2009). This process was repeated for each case, taking steps to ensure that each case was analyzed individually, in order to keep with IPA's idiographic roots (Smith et al., 2009). During this individual analysis, the results from the MBS were also considered. I compared the results of each scale using the established cut off scores against the most relevant themes that arose during the interview to better understand whether Marianismo beliefs influenced the experiences and behaviors reported. Any salient discrepancy between the subscales, idiographic details and the descriptive interview

were a focus of discussion and interpretation. Once all cases were analyzed, themes were identified across the cases, creating a series of master group themes and finally a discussion of the findings explored both individual and group themes.

Ethical Considerations

The participants for this study were asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Upon first contact, I provided information about the study and the purpose of the project. This information also included assurance that the information provided in these interviews were to be kept confidential. The most salient ethical challenges of this project included that the participants may have experienced uncomfortable feelings, such as embarrassment, discussing topics of sexuality and gender roles. They may have also experienced boredom or fatigue during the interview. In order to circumvent these ethical challenges, I made it clear at the beginning of the interview that any topic too uncomfortable to discuss did not require elaboration, and they were allowed to take breaks as necessary to relieve fatigue. In the event that the participant experienced psychological discomfort, they were provided with information about local mental health services (Appendix E) and were informed that if needed, I could assist them in contacting the nearest mental health clinic. However, none of the participants reported discomfort and none indicated that they needed mental health services for follow up after the interviews.

The Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University was consulted to approve the methods of this study. I took care to maintain the ethical standards of research posted by the American Psychological Association. The project was also be closely monitored by my dissertation chair Carrie Castañeda-Sound, Ph.D.

RESULTS

Military service is a very personal choice made by 0.5% of the American population (Eikenberry & Kennedy, 2013). Those who make this choice must take into account how it will affect every aspect of their life, and perhaps every aspect of their identity. This is particularly true for Latina women, who often have to contend with experiences such as racism and gender based discrimination, as well as rules for behaviors depending on the context they are living in. The purpose of this study was to investigate how Latina Army officers experience their military service in relation to culturally informed gender roles and their gender identity. The participants provided a rich account of their experiences as Latina women as officers in the Army Reserves. The data yield three superordinate themes along with corresponding themes, presented in the table section in Table1, which will be discussed in depth in this section. The study focused on their experiences as Army officers, how, if at all, it affected their view of themselves as women, and whether their life in their communities and families was influenced by the teachings and culture of the Army. The participants also completed the Marianismo Scale Questionnaire (Castillo et al., 2010). The results of this questionnaire will also be presented in the table section in Table 2 and the scores on this questionnaire will be discussed in light of the themes from the interviews in this section. In order to create context for the results, each participant will be introduced below using pseudonyms to protect their identity. A short descriptive narrative and basic demographics will be included.

Participants

Luisa. Luisa is a 23 year-old, single Mexican American woman. She has been in the Army National Guard for less than 5 years and joined when she was in college. Luisa is a first

generation Mexican American and is the oldest of her siblings. During her childhood, her mother was a stay at home mother while her father was the main financial provider for the family.

Ashley. Ashley is a 22 year-old, single Mexican American woman. She is currently commissioned in the United States Army Reserves, and works as a medical services officer. She completed a bachelor's degree in Health and Physical Science. Ashley's mother and other females in her family have always been stay-at-home mothers. Her father was the sole provider for her family. She is the youngest of her siblings. .

Anna. Anna is a 24 year old, single, Mexican-American, female and is commissioned in the U.S. Army Reserves. Anna's mother, who was a doctor in Mexico, brought her up. Her father has not been a part of her life. She viewed her mother as "playing both roles" of mother and father. She is the oldest of two children and is planning to stay in the military until retirement.

Angela. Angela is a 25 year old, single, Mexican American female. She has been commissioned in the U.S. Army Reserves for five years. She grew up in an intact family and she is the family's middle child. Her mother was a stay at home mother and her father was the main provider for the household. Angela would like to cross-train to become a nurse in the Army.

Superordinate Themes and Themes

Family influences. The participants discussed their choice of joining the military and how they have perceived the experiences in their military career thus far. A common thread in these discussions was how their families and family culture affected this choice and how it affected the way they continue to interpret their experiences in the military. This included issues such as generational gaps, cultural differences between immigrant parents and first generation children, and beliefs regarding gender roles, among others. This superordinate theme focused on

the diverse ways families influenced the participants, and how the participants viewed these influences.

   ***Initial lack of support from family due to Marianismo gender roles*.** For members of the military, one of the most important decisions of their lives is whether or not to enlist or commission in the armed forces. This decision can sometimes be impulsive, and at other times, takes years to develop. As with any important decision, some military members have to contend with whether their family supports this decision. For the participants of this study, a recurrent theme was that of having a lack of support from their family members when they initially made the decision to join. For Latinas in this study, the lack of support from families is closely tied to the family endorsement of traditional gender roles. In fact, all participants reported a form of strict endorsement of traditional marianismo gender roles in their immediate families by at least some of its members, which affected how the family members responded to the participant's decision to join the military and how the participants understood their decision to commission. For example, Angela, one of the participants, discussed her family's concerns regarding her commissioning in the Army due to adherence to strict gender roles. She understood this strict adherence to gender rules based on the fact that her family is Mexican. She described, "…women are supposed to be staying home, provide for the family. I mean well…staying at home and the male is supposed to be the one providing for the family, as in he's the one that works and does the hard part."

   Even if their families did not explicitly demand that they conform to these gender roles, the participants often learned what was expected of them through the examples given by their mothers and other female family members. For instance, Luisa stated, "for my upbringing as a female… it wasn't really enforced or taught but it was what I observed around me, that the

female would always be stay-at-home mom, always providing for the family, the husband." She further stated, "My mom…was always a stay-at-home mom. She would never work until recently but would always take care of me and my sister and my father…, and always in the kitchen cooking, providing for the family." For Luisa this was "[her]" view and upbringing as far as being a female.

Some of the participants identified their fathers as the members of their family who had most difficulty with their choice to join the military due to the father's upholding of how the participants should behave as a female, for example, Ashley reported, "My father didn't want me to be in the military at all." Ashley believed that this was due to her being a woman. She stated, "I think me, as a female, he doesn't believe…He's very traditional in that sense, I shouldn't be in the military." For Ashley, the rules had been laid out clearly by her family of origin regarding what was expected of her as a woman. Similar to Angela, Ashley was taught that "As a woman, very, especially Hispanic…It's just very traditional. The woman stays at home, cooks, cleans, etc., takes care of the children. That's pretty much how it's always been for me, in my household." Likewise, Angela discussed how her father had difficulty supporting her decision to join the Army. She understood her father's difficulty accepting her choice to join the military "because he was more of the *machista* side."

In fact, all the participants described a sense of stepping out of their role as women when they made the decision to join the military. For some, this was a difficult experience, one that encouraged the participants to seek compromise. For instance, Ashley described, "ROTC was kind of like that happy medium…I was going to school and…knew once I finished I would be able to go in…he was happy with that." Despite her father not wanting her to join the military,

she made a compromise with him so that he could become more accepting of her decision, as she described, "I was still going for my education, that's all that mattered to him."

While this compromise seemed to work out well for Ashley, Anna discussed her difficulty having her extended family members understand her decision, as they seemed to have narrower views of not only what women should do, but also what women are capable of and what purpose they could serve in the military. She stated "Being a woman, well everyone kind of, was a little discriminatory. They're like, 'Well what are you gonna do? What do women do in the military?'" Anna further discussed how she understood this challenge with her extended family, "I think like especially when it comes to like my mom's side of the family, very like Mexican, Hispanic values it's like you have to have a husband. You have to get married and have kids." Anna understood their reactions as being outraged by her not doing what she was dictated to do by her gender. She explained, "…To them, me joining the Army is kind of like 'what's she doing?' I don't wanna say stepping out of my role, but…I was doing something that not a typical I'll say female does in Hispanic society, culture." She rationalized these reactions as learned behavior, explaining, "I think that they are set back a bit but it's because that's how they've been taught in the traditions are like that."

Although most of the participants cited their families as being unsupportive of a military career because it would go against prescribed roles, for Luisa, choosing to join the military was more than just going against her family values. She viewed her choice as going against society's traditions and expectations of her as a female, regardless of her ethnicity, religion or culture. She explained, "…Traditionally females are seen as stay-at-home and being that person that you know, not much information is given to…or they're not expected to go work or be successful, or go to school for that matter."

While these marianismo values were acknowledged and explicitly rejected by the participants, a theme of ambivalence was identified for some of them as well. For instance, on one hand Ashley longs to be on active duty in the Army to reach her career goals. However, she views her career as an impediment to being a mother and wife due to her beliefs that she will never find a man who would be willing to give up their career to support hers. This belief was elucidated in the following explanation regarding her choice of joining the Army reserves, "…I knew as a woman going active duty would be so hard to try and have a family." Ashley stated that those around her further reinforced this belief stating, "everyone always told me, if you want to have a family, you're better off just going reserves." Her decision to join the reserves when she indeed likes to join the active duty section of the Army stems from the belief that men are not likely to quit their career and uproot their life to support their wife's military career. In fact she believes that "… It's easier for a male, in the military, to find a wife who's just going to drop everything and be an army wife…" Ashley seemed to believe that the decision to support a partner's career has to do more with gender than any other variable, which in turn discouraged her from pursuing her career goals in favor of building a family in the future. This decision seems to be supportive of the marianismo value of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the family.

Overall, the participants identified traditional marianismo values as a significant factor in their experience. From being questioned about the wisdom of their choice, to becoming an intimidating member of the family because of their choice to rebel against traditional mandates. Anna summarized this experience of having their choice questioned and dismissed as, "I think they do feel a little more intimidated a bit on that end. Especially that I'm a girl. I think if I was a male they would be like oh that's cool, like that's awesome." Anna further described how she understood the reasons behind her family being intimidated, "I think again it has to do with the

machismo, the male role in the family…That's just the way it is." She continued explaining, "The way sometime they see it is like being in combat or being in the army or being in positions like that is a male thing to do…" She believed that the reason for being intimidating is that she has made a stand against what she has been told she must be as a woman, and has proven that the gender role has no basis in the actual capacity of a woman to fulfill the role of a soldier.

Mother primary influence. Despite this consistent upholding of marianismo values by family members that often affected the participant's military experience, a second important theme related to family support and female rebellion against traditional culture was identified in the interviews. This second theme is related to maternal influence and support of the participants' quest to move past the bonds of marianismo rules regarding what they as women can and should accomplish.

For most participants, their mothers have been a source of support and encouragement, and a vote of confidence in their choices and decisions. For example, Angela identified her mother as a supportive ally from a young age, saying, "…At first my mom has been a little more supportive and…I know that since I was young…If I wanted to do something, I would do it." Angela goes onto describe that this support started when she was young, "I started working at the age of 14. Therefore, my mom said, 'Okay, you're not doing anything wrong. If you have a plan, go for it.'" Angela also trusted her mother with her idea of joining the Army. She described her experience of telling her family members about commissioning in the Army, saying, "I was afraid of telling my parents because I had first enlisted in the army while I was in ROTC program… I was afraid of telling my parents, not my mom, not much because I actually told her first." In fact, Angela described being more comfortable sharing her military experiences with

her mother throughout her career, for instance, she stated, "when I found that I was deployed, right away I told my mom, but with my dad it took me a while."

Other participants, like Angela, saw their mothers as supportive and the one member of the family who encouraged them to pursue a career that is not considered typical for females in their family of origin. For instance, Anna described how her mother, an immigrant from Mexico, not only encouraged her to join the Army so she could pursue an education, but also served as a role model of a woman who was not afraid to engage in a job that is typically male dominated. About her mother, Anna said, "I think part of the fact that her job was like kinda hardcore, she kinda pushed me and my sister actually to join the U.S. Army." Anna further identified her mother as a direct influence in her sense of independence. This was mainly due to her mother's need to survive and support her and her siblings as a single mother; "My dad kinda like, I don't wanna say took off, but they separated when I was about eight and then so I didn't have a male role model in the house. So my mom kinda had to play both roles." In fact, Anna identified her mother's support as instrumental in her facing her fear and moving forward with her decision to join the Army. She stated, "So I was a little scared but when it came to my family it was more like, the fact that my mom was the main one that was kinda pushing me toward it kind of helped."

Although most of the participants indicated that their mothers served as role models, Luisa stated that her mother's life served as a deterrent for her in not following and not embracing traditional gender roles. She described her experience observing her mother's life as follows; "Within my family I have seen it… especially with my mother and father. There are times where whatever he says she just kinda rolls with, but myself, personally being in the military, I haven't, that doesn't clash with me." She appears to reject the model she observed in

her family of origin where her mother agreed and followed her father's command. Likewise, Angela viewed her mother's experience and her aunt's experiences as cautionary; "And like our moms…they went through the whole, where he drinks a lot and then they fight physically… and us…we saw that. And I think we all had about the same feeling where I don't want to be that person." Angela and her younger family members appeared to have learned to reject not just traditional gender roles but also the expectations of enduring abuse and maltreatment in the name of maintaining traditional roles.

The most relevant aspect of this theme is how important the mother support and life experiences have been for the participants. Some of these mothers appeared to want to encourage their daughters to go farther than they were able to, in a society that will allow their daughters to do so.

Family pride. Although all the participants initially experienced a lack of support from their family of origin, they all indicated that their families have accepted their decision and have expressed pride in their accomplishments. The participants understood this change in their family members as indicative of their own roles as role models for their younger family members, and an inspiration for the elders to move past the barriers they constructed around gender roles and marianismo values. For example, Anna stated, "They think it's awesome now. At first they were like you're 18, you don't know what you're doing. And now it's like okay, actually we think it's one of the best things that ever happened to her."

Similarly, Luisa's family is proud of her accomplishments, particularly because she is the first one in her family to attend college. It seems that Luisa views their support in light of their inability to reach the same levels of education as she did as a testament of them wanting her to help her family progress and prosper. She reflected, "…Most of my family…didn't even make it

to high school… They're definitely proud of my decisions and they support anything I do…
They weren't able to make it themselves so they definitely want me to get as…far as I can."

Anna reported a similar experience due to her being the first one in her family to attend
college. It seems like her family views her success as their success. Although her education was
important, her military experience as an officer brought added pride to the family. Anna related,
" I think I definitely knew that I was going to college.…So I think they already saw that coming.
And then going in the military was just something like topping it."

Some family members showed initial hesitation and even condemnation of the
participants' choice, such as the one evidenced by Angela's father, who initially was mad. When
she initially told him about her decision to join, he responded, "Ok tú veras lo que haces, yo no
sé por que estás haciendo eso, pero ya tú vera, siempre haces lo que tú quieres" (Ok, you do
whatever you want, I don't know why you are doing that, but its up to you, you always do
whatever you want). These negative reactions eventually shifted and Ashley and other
participants explained that their families now see their participation in the military as officers
bringing prestige to the family. This support allows the participants to fully engage in their career
knowing that the most important people in their lives, their family members, particularly their
parents, back them up in their decision and are proud of their efforts.

Participant's Self-Perception

An important theme that is a factor in the participant's decision to join the Army and
continue building a military career is how they perceived themselves and how this perception,
often maintained since childhood, affected their choice to be in the military. This self-perception
also influences their behavior as an Army officer and the way they face and cope with the
challenges of being a female in the Army.

Different from family. One of the unifying characteristics of these participants is the sense that they are different from their family of origin. They each cited qualities that differentiated them from how they saw other women in their households behave. For example, in Angela's household, it was expected that she would make different choices than those of her parents or other relatives. Angela explains, "Like I said before I just didn't want to…I didn't want to just stay home and be a stay home mom. I wanted to do something different." For Angela, the main difference between herself and her family of origin, particularly her mother, was in her choice of who she wanted to be regarding gender roles. Despite her family example that women stay at home, she decided to go out, join the Army, and be independent. Angela reflected, "I knew I wanted to do it [be in the army] because I didn't want to stay stuck in that same position where my mom was." For Angela, it was important to be an example and inspire her family, even if they chose a different path than she did, including her parents. She embraced the belief that "you can be more than what you're told," and described how her female cousins have also followed her lead regarding separating from the traditional culture of their parents and gaining a higher education.

Angela realized that moving away from traditional gender roles was a very personal choice that was right for her but she did not discount that other Latinas may not agree with her choice and did not condemn them for it. Moreover, from Anna's perspective, choosing to not follow established gender roles for Latinas meant that she had to disobey her elders and perhaps be perceived as arrogant, as she described, "I think you have to be narcissistic sometimes in life even if I was 18." Anna reasoned that "they're not gonna pay my bills later on and they're not gonna be paying for me to go to college," which allowed her to pursue her goals regardless of the comments she may have gotten from her extended family. In Anna's mind, her family members

"already did their life. They might be 30 or 40 and they have kids or whatever. But it's my turn." Although she sounded proud of this choice, she still appeared to have a negative view of what she had to do to follow her goals given that she labeled her attitude "narcissist". This label alludes to perhaps her conflict with doing what she thought was best for her versus obeying her family members, and resolving to rebel and embrace a negative label in order to follow her goals.

On the other hand, another participant, Ashley took a less radical route. Although she also defined herself as somewhat different from her family members, she was able to embrace some of the more traditional teachings of her culture. She described, "I think that a woman does need to take care of some things with kids and I'm very traditional in that sense. But I'm also very independent and…A woman can have her career and being in the military." Ashley appeared to be trying to find a compromise between traditional roles and more independent modern attitudes. She believed she can live in both worlds, being a caretaker and mother, and being a soldier and career woman. It seems that Ashley attempted to compromise and find a middle ground where her needs and goals are met while also living by the rules laid out for her by her culture and family. Because she related, "I guess growing up, I… is the biggest part I could see, is how I would be defined, how I should be as a woman, I guess…for me, I'm more traditional, like I said.…Um, but, I'm very career oriented."

Most of the participants are able to understand that the many differences they see between themselves and their family members are due to generational gaps and cultural differences. For instance, Luisa understood being different from her parents as a result of being born in different countries, different cultures, and different times. She reflected, "What I observed they were traditions, you know, of my parents.…Being born here in the U.S. I don't want to say I disagree with that type of tradition, um… but I don't agree with it either." It seems

that Luisa struggled to marry both ideas of embracing tradition yet living in a modern society; she continues, "So I guess I see it as I shouldn't be living that tradition, it's a different environment, different times, it's almost… to me, impossible for me to keep that tradition." For Luisa, the traditions she observed in her family of origin may have made sense in the culture her parents were raised. However, for the culture she is currently living in, it is not feasible to keep those traditions and thrive. Luckily for Luisa, she was able to navigate other cultures, perhaps at school and within her community that allowed her to learn other options of behavior as a woman. She stated, "I don't believe I should be stuck at home. I see that I should be out working for myself, making money for myself so I can be successful, so that I can have my family be successful later down the line." She further commented on where she learned how to be independent; " Um… I guess I learned that with the school I went to, the organizations I joined, especially the military." The organizations she cited, schools and the military, allowed her to expand her horizons, even though this means that she moved farther away from her family's strong traditions.

All these women have several traits in common, however, the one that all embraced is that of being different from their families of origins because they all realized that there is more that they can achieve, even if this means rebelling against some of their family members' expectations and setting out on their own. Because of this, the participants highlighted some of the traits that perhaps make them different from their family, and ultimately, allow them to see themselves as role models.

Perseverance. Very few traits discussed with the participants induced a stronger sense of pride than that of being hard working and persevering despite challenges. For most of the participants, being a hard worker is the defining trait that has allowed them to persevere when

difficult circumstances arise and when doubt sets in. They described being hard working as an innate trait that helped them reach goals, such as attending and completing school and gaining the skills that allowed them to be effective leaders and professionals. For example, Angela recounted that since she was young, she was known in her family as the hard working individual who persevered. Her pride in this fact shined through in her description of her parents asking her to not work so hard. She described,

> … my parents have…Sometimes we don't talk much but …the little times where we do sit down and talk, I know that many times my parents tell me like, "… take it easy. Don't work too much. Try to take some time for yourself and rest. Don't…I mean, We're still here for you." So I know that…and I know that they are. It's just that, you know, you got to work for what you want. Sometimes it's hard.

She also discussed how being in the military increased her already strong work ethic and helped her be more professional. She stated,

> I think my demeanor has changed where… it's helped me be more professional and… I think my work ethic. I know that a couple times at work, I've been told that my work ethic is good because I always try it whether it's worked or wherever it is that I am, I try to do the right thing even if sometimes it's hard… I try to always be ethical in whatever I do.

Similarly, Ashley identified a stronger work ethic and punctuality after joining the military. She explained, "And that's number one thing, that I would say I've learned. Just, you can never be early enough, for things."

For these two participants, their work ethic is closely tied to their values and integrity, something that was apparent even as young women, given their achievements. Angela further

disclosed how much pride her hard work has brought her, including being able to do a good job as a soldier despite initial fears that she could not do it. She reported, "I feel really proud of myself because I didn't think I was going to be able to do it…there was always that fear like, 'Oh, what if I'm not able to,' you know?" Because she persevered and coped with the challenges that entail to be a soldier, she gained the confidence to pursue more difficult goals, she disclosed,

It's been like three weeks that I've been thinking about it (becoming a nurse) and I think that I want to reach that goal. And, I know it's going to be hard. It's going to be very tough because Sciences is just something that won't stick to my head, you know, but I feel like I want to do it because if I don't do it, I'm always just going to be thinking about it like how come I didn't do it.

This is an important goal for Angela, as it makes her an asset to the Army and reinforces the concept that hard work can prove she is capable of things she did not think were possible.

Another participant, Anna, also felt very strongly about being a hard worker. In several instances during her interview, she highlighted the importance of working hard and excelling, particularly as a Latina in the Army. For example, in the following quote, she described what it takes for a woman to reach goals in the military: "You have to work hard and you have to let other people know what you want. And if you don't work hard for what you want, you're not gonna get it." This participant had a strong belief that the only way to reach her goals is to excel, be assertive, and work hard. This perspective is likely to have been adopted from an early age, and has been rewarded by high achievements. For Anna, it was important to her that all her achievements, whether material or otherwise, have been earned by her own hard work and that she was not given anything free. Most achievements and perhaps objects gained value, because

of the hard work it took to obtain them. Anna said, "Yeah so that was, like I work really hard so everything that I have is mine. I own it and that's because I've worked really hard for that."

This belief was further reinforced during her Army training. Once in the military, Anna learned that being hard working was not just a matter of pride, but of survival.

In the following passage, Anna describes the teachings of a female trainer for all her female recruits:

And one female drill sergeant finally came in and she said, "I wanna tell you guys something. Like you guys have to understand that you're not in a female world, so you have to be tough and…you have to be tough, and that's why we act the way that we do with you because we need to work two times to ten times harder to make you like this while they only have to work this hard."

For these participants, hard work has been an important quality they identified with, which has helped them overcome difficulties allowing them to reach high levels of achievement, often surpassing expectations from their own families and even their culture. It is what has compelled them to pursue difficult goals, even in the face of discrimination because of gender or ethnicity. This perhaps is the quality that has impacted their life choices the most.

Self-efficacy. A second important, self-defining quality is that of having self-efficacy and being independent. For many of the participants, this sense of being independent was closely related to being financially independent. For some of the participants, independence was understood as being able to make their own decisions regardless of tradition or familial requirements due to gender. Some of the participants identified this quality as one of the most salient that have enabled them to push back against their family of origin's traditional values,

where a woman is dependent on her husband for financial survival. For instance, Anna balked at the idea that a husband would support her. She reflected,

> I think the fact that sometimes my family says you should get married and have kids and all that stuff is because they assume that your husband is gonna support you, you should stay at home. Like, absolutely not. I don't think like that.

Anna explains her mother, school, and the Army combined to teach her to be independent, which in her case could be defined as being financially self-sufficient and find meaning in her career as opposed to finding meaning in her role in relation to another person. As a result, she had strong beliefs about being dependent and how that affects her sense of well-being. She related, "I don't like that feeling of depending on something or someone and have nothing. So I think it's better learn how to fall back on yourself and then learn how to be with other people." It is almost as if she had a sense of safety in her independence. Whereas by being dependent, she feared she would lose everything she had achieved, and perhaps even herself.

Some of the participants also identified the Army as an establishment, which, though continuing to have a significant gender bias, has allowed them to continue to develop their sense of self-efficacy. For example, Anna described, "I think the Army most definitely made me way more independent. At first I did rely on people and it's not a bad thing to still rely on but I feel I don't much at all." Luisa also credits her Army experience for allowing her to become more independent, something those around her have noticed in her. She shared, "They probably see me as more independent now. I mean, I've always been independent but that is probably more reinforced now." She also identified her independence as a trait she had prior to joining the military. However, she believed her military experience brought more of this trait to the surface so that her family and friends seemed to notice it more. Although these women have joined an

organization that is structured and by definition limits the liberties of their members, they are able to find a sense of self-efficacy, financial independence and the ability to make decisions regardless of the desires and expectations of their family members and society, even if it is within the constraints of the military.

For these women, independence is an important trait, as it allowed them to pursue their goals without fear of losing the support of those around them. They wrap their independence about them as if it were a shield that protects them from the difficulties of not fully pleasing their families and not fully being accepted in a male dominated environment.

Role model. For the participants, being able to achieve an education and being financially independent has been important factors that defined them. Their ability to move past traditional roles for Latinas has signified a positive movement toward greater personal growth. Because of this, some of the participants identified themselves as role models for other Latinas, younger family members and even their parents, and identified this characteristic as an important trait that gives meaning to their hard work.

For some of the participants, being a role model for their younger family members was important. For instance, Angela and Luisa wanted to be positive example for their younger siblings. Angela wanted her sister to know that she could pursue her dreams. She wanted her younger sister to know that it is possible to rise above cultural expectations of what she is supposed to be as a female if she chooses to. She related, "I didn't want to be seen as weak or as same as everybody else… Also I do have a younger sister, so I also kinda wanted to show her like, 'See, you can be somebody.'" For Angela, it was important to show her younger sibling that she could achieve whatever she decided to do, despite cultural restrictions. Similarly, Luisa felt that as the first born in her family, she had the responsibility to set the example and lead her

71

sister. She described, "I was the first born so I kinda made decisions on my own… I guess maybe my sister was born then I took the role upon myself as being that leader for my sibling."

Angela also feels this same responsibility to other younger family members. She indicated, "With my little cousins, I always try to like, encourage them. Because of my experience…I know that a lot of my little cousins will look up to me because in my family we don't have any military…"

For Angela, being a role model goes beyond being an independent female; for her, it is about being a gainfully employed Latina, in a profession her family sees as prestigious as seen in the following excerpt:

> One of my brothers is a Marine. The other one is Navy. I'm Army and then my sister is going to be joining the Marines soon, but all of my cousins, my Tías, Tíos, nobody has done military before. So, they really look up to us a lot and I just want to make sure that I'm…I let them know that whatever you want to do, it doesn't have to be military or whatever, but whatever you want to do, you can do it.

For Angela, being a role model for her family allowed her to experience pride and meaning. She also felt a deep responsibility to the soldiers she is in charge of. In the following quote, she described her experience with younger, lower ranking female soldiers: "With females it's more comfortable and then sometimes they see me as like a role model because…I.…Most of the females I interact with are lower enlisted or enlisted soldiers."

Anna also reported a significant sense of responsibility having female soldiers under her care, particularly regarding issues of sexual harassment in the Army. She reported, "I think what's worse is the fact that now being on this side, like I have some enlisted females getting harassed and that kinda like breaks my heart." She described a sense of powerlessness stating,

"…I think that's why it's worse dealing with sexual harassment as an officer than it is enlisted. As an officer you have to deal with the whole problem, not only just you but everyone else." She further reported what she has attempted to do to protect her female soldiers, "I…got a new team and I…sat them down and told them… I have zero tolerance for sexual harassment.…I would do everything in my meager Butter Bar power to…get you demoted as low as I can 'cause it's not right."

Similarly, for Luisa, being a Latina officer in the Army brought a sense of pride and responsibility, as she felt that she was representing not just herself and her family, but her ethnicity and gender. She described, "…I probably am glad they see me that way only because I am a female and I am a minority, so…inside it feels like I am the 1% change in the world or something."

Aside from being role models to their family members, these women took the role of leaders seriously and saw as part of their responsibility to be a role model to their families, female enlisted soldiers, and community.

Confident and assertive. A significant area where the participants identified having had significant growth due to their military experience is in their confidence and assertiveness. For some of them, assertiveness and confidence were taught by their families, while for others, it was a characteristic they did not associate with themselves prior to their military service. However, all of the participants identified their military service as a catalyst to their increase in confidence, and their ability to state their opinion and stand up for themselves and their troops. For example, confidence and assertiveness is something that Angela learned from a very young age from her parents. Despite their humble beginnings, they instilled in her that everyone was deserving of respect, and thus, should not be afraid of speaking up in a respectful manner. She related. "I

know…this was something that I learned from my parents that they… told me that to never…feel like you're above anybody… and to always be respectful in the way that you speak to others…"

Building upon her assertiveness and confidence encouraged by her parents, Angela felt that her military experience positively affected these areas of her life. This is particularly due to her deployment experience; as it was a challenging experience, she initially did not think she could survive. She described, "I feel stronger and more confident… I learned a lot. It was really tough, very stressful. Coming back now I feel like …not like invincible but…I feel like I can take more than what I was able to before." She highlighted her assertiveness with an example of when she confronted her commander, who was not following the rules she had to enforce for her troops. She recounted:

When it comes to expressing my opinion when something is wrong, I don't really have a problem with that, and I think that's something that maybe my commander didn't like because if I saw something and that for example that he did wrong, I would talk to him. I would sit with him and let him know like, "Sir, you know I don't think that…if I'm going to be telling a soldier like, 'Don't be smoking in this area' but then you're there smoking, liked, how do you want me to or us to abide by the rules that this building has if you're doing it?" You know, and we had like a few issues with that but I wasn't afraid to let him know because I knew that it's the right thing to do and I mostly did it for my soldiers.

This quote highlights how, for Angela, speaking up was not just to assert her opinion but also to ensure that her soldiers were taken care of and were not unfairly punished. Similarly, Luisa experienced her military service as a reinforcement of what she described as leadership tendencies. She stated, "I guess that I, maybe I just reinforce my trait of being the first-born

74

leader type personality. Maybe it's just something they saw… but it definitely reinforced that whole aspect of me going out to get things, getting things done, and seeking more knowledge or things for myself."

Despite her innate tendencies, Luisa also discussed how her military service increased her confidence and ability to actually lead her soldiers. She reported, "…I started off by observing first and had people tell me what to do before I really gained the confidence to dive into what it was I was supposed to do and actually take charge." She further went onto discuss why she feels she has no choice but to actively pursue her goals, "I won't wait around to get something anymore. I'll just go straight only just because I know I have to go after everything myself… because I have to be better than what the expectations of society are of me."

In this quote, Luisa seemed to be acknowledging that to be confident, assertive and self-sufficient is a form of rebellion towards that which she believed society prescribed for her as a female.

For other participants, like Ashley, their military experience helped them gain confidence they may not have had prior to joining. For instance, her experience as an ROTC cadet provided her with added confidence in herself as a woman. For example, after finishing ROTC, Ashley said she felt stronger and "I'm more confident in myself, as a woman, versus before." Despite this growth, Ashley acknowledged that there was still a lot more room for her development of confidence. She said, "I definitely know that I could be doing better, but it's just something that has drastically changed for me. But still, like, doing a brief in front of people, that still terrifies me."

Although she identified her weaknesses and areas of growth, the likelihood that she will continue to develop these skills are high due to the nature of her job in the military.

Life as a female Army officer. Becoming an Army officer was a challenge these women embraced. For these participants, this decision seemed to be influenced by their cultural and family values as well as their own self-perception. This superodinate theme focuses on how each of the participants experiences being an officer in the U.S. Army, with a lens on being a female in a male dominated field. This includes issues such as managing expectations of peers regarding what they can and cannot do, proving themselves worthy of being called soldiers and transformations made to survive in this environment.

Triggering of stereotypes. The participants shared that being Latinas, being females and being in a position of power as officers have been the most challenging things they have had to face. Throughout the interviews, one of the most salient themes related to the experience of these women in the military is how being female and a Latina affected how they have been perceived, how they have been treated, what has been expected of them and how much harder they have had to work to obtain their goals and carry out their mission as officers. As such, some of the participants endorsed having to work harder than expected to prove themselves. For instance, Angela discussed how being part of two minority groups, a female and a Latina, might have influenced how those around her viewed her. She described,

> Because we are a minority in every which way that you look at it, being a female, being a Latina, I think that you need to make sure that people see that you mean business, that you're not just…that you're not looked at as a minority.

Likewise, Anna felt that being Latina was a difficult challenge because she experienced her ethnicity as something that was looked down upon. As such, she had to work harder to prove gender and racial prejudices wrong. She recounted:

I guess just the fact that like I'm a minority. I think it's sometimes it's probably looked down upon at times. I think it is harder for me to establish my dominance sometimes just because I think I'm Hispanic and Latina and people have sometimes these mindsets that they make up in their heads of how maybe Hispanic women are, how certain people are. So I think breaking some of those barriers is one of the most difficult things to do.

In fact, Luisa described how being Latina and an officer was somewhat of a surprise for those around her, stating, "Being a female and being Hispanic is already like, "Wow!" Like, "How did you get here?" Almost as if it was unheard that a Latina could amount to a position of power in the military. This caused her to strive to gain more knowledge and skills to combat the stereotype that Latinas do not have what it takes to be an officer.

When questioned about what type of stereotypes they have encountered in the Army, Anna identified being "ignorant and uneducated" as the most prevalent stereotypes. For example, she described how it was an implicit message that she did not know what she was doing, and for her it was specifically because of her ethnicity. She stated, "…People have these mindsets… they just have these mindsets that… being Hispanic… They probably think I'm more ignorant, probably I might not know. I think that might be it. It's just a weird feeling that sometimes you have." Anna felt that because of her ethnicity, her competence in her job was questioned, she related, "Yeah that I might not know what I'm doing. Probably haven't been doing my job for a long time or maybe I have parents that like don't know, you know. Just stuff like that."

While being Latinas has presented as a significant challenge, the participants identified being females is the one that triggers the most stereotypes. For example, Angela had several instances when being in a position of leadership was difficult for her, particularly with her male supervisees. She described, "I felt like they would see me as like, 'Oh, why are you going to tell

me what to do. You're younger. You're a female. Who are you to tell me what to do?'" She further discussed how these were implicit messages, "…Even though they don't say it, you can …see it? That is how they feel because if I would tell somebody what they're supposed to do, they'll do it, or the way that they respond it's like, 'Okay, yes Ma'am.'" Angela also identified how her experience with the men differed significantly from her experience leading women. She stated, "With females it's different. With females it's more comfortable and then sometimes they see me as like a role model." This participant identified a very significant difference between the response of female soldiers and that of male soldiers to her requests and commands. She felt more challenged and questioned by the males in her unit even when they were lower ranking than by the females who might have been higher-ranking officers. Angela also identified her gender as being the most significant factor in her difficulties leading within the Army. She reported, "I've never really had any issues with females. It's mostly with males and I think that it's because they also feel like… 'Oh I'm a man why is it that a woman is going to tell me what to do?'" Similarly, Ashley described what it was like for her to attempt to lead men in her unit:

> …Having a female as a platoon leader, they're, they just don't take anyone really seriously, as a female…It sucked a lot of times, just cause you're trying to do as much as you can… and there's just so many things that you fall short on. And just because you are female, you're never gonna be able to get to that certain point, as the same as a male, on the arm-, or, in the military.

In fact, she related how she witnessed other female officer have difficulty with leadership because of their gender. She recounted "…They're not taken as seriously… Coming from men, any woman that's in charge, they don't.…Every single, well almost every single case I've seen,

they don't take them seriously." Ashley views being a female, regardless of rank, as easily dismissed and not taken seriously.

Luisa had a very similar experience regarding her role as a leader and how much work she had to do to gain the respect of her troops. She described her experience commanding women in comparison to men as "Definitely easier than males. I wouldn't say it's extremely difficult but there is a difference and obviously the females will be closer to a female than they will to a male." She continues explaining why it has been much easier for her to lead females than males, "Let's say I was in charge of a project…females were more inclined to be on my side, whereas…males I would have to have more persuasion in to what my plan was in order for them to help me." She further discussed how despite her rank, being a female has negatively affected how much her soldiers respect her authority. She explained "…Coming from a female, when you tell them to do something they want a little more explanation or more in-depth of the plan in order for them to follow you." She understood her difficulty in leadership as coming from the doubt expressed by her male troops on her judgment and decisions.

Even some of the participants themselves stated that they initially trusted a male commander more than a female commander. For example, Anna discussed how much more trusting she was of male commanders before she had the opportunity to be led by a female commander. She stated,

> To be very honest with you, I felt more comfortable receiving orders from a male at the time because I just felt like they should know it all…I was young. I thought that they were the ones that we should be really like maybe trusting more towards. But I loved the fact that there were females that were like higher up than sergeants that were like officers. Although Anna was proud of seeing female commanders in leadership positions, she

trusted her male commanders more until she experienced a female commander whom she came to admire. She stated, "…Before I went to battalion level I had captains. And most of them were males and I've only had one female commander. And I loved her so much because she got things done". As an officer, she continued to admire females in leadership roles. However, she described these females, particularly those with very high ranks, as stern and intimidating, which she understood as attributable to how hard they had to work to reach those levels in a male dominated world. She described her current leadership as follows:

> Having a full bird colonel as a male, as a commander, I don't have an issue with it at all. But again I think if it was a female it'd be super awesome. But I think I'd be more scared…If I had a female colonel I'd be definitely way more intimidated…Because I do think that some females when they get in a higher rank like that, I don't wanna call it a power trip but they are more stern because I think they worked so hard to get up there that I get it.

She continued discussing how females that reach a high position in the Army are seen as intimidating, "…I do think that males see higher ranking females kind of a little scary because they're like shit, like they kind of, they can be very stern, very mean…" It seemed that Anna equated success in the military with having to be stern and "mean," as she described high ranking female commanders and how she described herself now that she is an officer.

Overall, all the participants identified being a Latina in the Army as a challenge to surmount. They often felt disrespected, dismissed and had to convince their lower ranking troops to follow their orders. They often described a sense of frustration, yet, at least one of them admitted that she, too, initially felt more confident when the orders came from a male leader. This gender and ethnic bias seemed to have significantly impacted these participants' experience

and highlighted the challenges of being a female in the Army, whether the soldier is enlisted, a brand new officer or a seasoned Colonel.

Change to fit in. For these women, being in the military has resulted in significant changes. A lot of these changes were due to the rigors of military life but most salient were the description of changes made consciously to fit in the military culture, to be part of the group, to be taken seriously and to be respected. For example, Luisa described how she had to get used to a different expectation of cleanliness and personal space that was markedly different from how she grew up. She explained:

> Cleanliness, obviously is not a priority. There [are] females that try to keep that…There's also like just interactions with each other, being around, I guess males. And in the military it's…there isn't personal space, I guess you can say, for each other because everybody's so comfortable with each other, they treat you like you're one of them. So being a female at first that might take you as a shock, I guess at first.

These differences in culture and behavioral expectations created a lasting change in Luisa. She described how at this point these changes of expectation in herself and those around her are no longer as jarring as when she initially joined. She described:

> I'm not as feminine as I used to be, like I don't care about not being able to take a shower in three days or something, or I don't care about somebody eating before I do. It's not a huge thing that I…I guess need or want anymore.

Aside from expectations in regards to behavior and the culture of the Army, there are also added expectations for these women due to the rank they have achieved. For instance, Ashley described the pressure to always embody what she believed to be the appropriate behavior of an officer even when she is out of uniform. She stated, "Especially now it's more…Like you're an

81

officer and you have to present yourself a certain way." She reported feeling specially pressured by her family members, she reported, "…Everything is, 'Well you're an officer now, so you have to,' Or 'You are an officer, and everything, 'Your car can't be dirty'… 'Now you have to be presentable.'…You never know who you're gonna see there."

It seems as though she needed to present herself in a certain way at work and she was also feeling pressure from her father in order to fit what he believed is the image of an officer. For these women, it seemed that joining the military, being accepted as an officer and performing their jobs well was not enough to be considered being part of the group. They have to change who they are to embody the ideal of being a soldier and the ideal of being an officer.

Be tough to survive. As previously seen, these participants described the many ways they had to change their habits, expectations and behaviors to fit into the Army culture. One aspect of this change is the idea that these women had to become "tough" to survive and carry out their tasks in the Army. For example, Angela described how in her early experiences in the Army, she dealt with disobedience from the males of her unit. She understood this disobedience as a direct result of being female. In the following excerpt, she described a typical scenario where a male soldier would disobey her orders.

> …with males, sometimes it was a little harder because there were a couple who would give me a hard time at first. Like I would tell them, "You know you need to get this done." Like "Yes, Ma'am, I'll get it done." A day later what happened like, "I'm sorry is because I was doing this." "Okay, make sure you get it done." The next day it's not done. It's like, "Are you playing with me?" Like… That's when you need to make sure that you're a little more assertive.

Angela learned that the only way to have these men respect her authority was by being assertive and command authority. She further employed tactics that perhaps males would not necessarily have to employ in order to be taken seriously. She related:

> …Let them know, "Okay look, this is not about um…me just want to bug you, have you do stuff for fun or just because I'm trying to make you do something. Like, this is important for you to do because we need to accomplish the mission and put it in writing and that's when they're like, 'Okay, I guess I have to do it now.'" It happened a few times with a few of the males, but eventually like I said um…they learned not to um…I guess…mess with me because they knew that I wasn't that type of person that they could just play around with.

Angela went on to describe how she taught her soldiers to see her with respect and take her commands seriously. She stated, "…If you don't do counseling statements, they are never going to change. I started writing them up and I would go over with them… Just writing them up and actually presenting it to them…" Angela had to become stern and strict to get the respect of the males in her unit. She had to go as far as doing documentation and not just verbal warning, as the men were also dismissing these verbal warnings. These were circumstances that forced her to change who she was and become someone with a more strict personality. In the following quote, she reflected upon this change:

> It was hard at first, because that's not the type of person I am. I'm not like a really hard person. And like I said, I'm kinda quiet and that's what I think they kinda saw at the beginning… But when they saw that I actually did write them up and I followed up with them and I talk to them and I always made sure that like, it was professional. That's when they realized, "Okay, I got it.

This example of changing herself to portray a tougher persona goes hand in hand with the idea of having to change to fit in and even be able to do the jobs they are commanded to do. In fact, Anna also described how she understood she had to change to be respected by the males in her unit. She stated, "…If you come off really soft …some males will walk all over you… If you come off really strong they might find you stand offish. They might think that…you know you are a bitch and might not wanna…mess with you." Anna's experience taught her that not only does she have to be assertive and strict, she may sometimes have to be aggressive and even unpleasant in order to gain respect of the men in her unit. This belief was initially taught and reinforced by her training officers when she first joined the Army. Anna recounted,

> When I was in boot camp I sincerely hated my female drill sergeants because they were assholes…And one female drill sergeant finally came in and she said, "I wanna tell you guys something. Like you guys have to understand that you're not in a female world so you have to be tough… and that's why we act the way that we do with you because you need to work two to ten times harder to make it while they only have to work this hard…And that's because you know we have to toughen you up."

Anna got a very clear and an overt message from her female trainers that she and her companions had entered a world that did not belong to them and they must prove themselves from the beginning. Anna continued describing the lesson taught by her female trainers, "There's only three types of females that enlist in the Army… 'There's three types.' she said, 'There's sluts, there's dykes and there's bitches. That's it. Chose one of the three.'"

This lesson elucidated what most of these women described during the interviews. They must be tough to survive in an organization that is not always welcoming. In fact, it seemed that there are very few ways in which females are understood in the Army, none of them pleasant.

Therefore, Anna had to choose the lesser of evils to survive and if she worked hard enough, thrive in this organization. Luisa also experienced some of these ideas; particularly, she could not expect things that perhaps were important for her at one point to be "one of the guys". She related,

> Being within that environment you have to be a part of the guys, if that makes sense.
>
> …You can't be modest or you can't expect people to open doors for you or things like that. You just kinda have to put yourselves in their shoes and be a part of the group.
>
> Luisa understood the shift she had to make to fit in as putting herself in the men's shoes, as if expecting things like being able to be modest would be taxing for the men to cope with, and something she had to give up to ensure the men's comfort.
>
> Overall, this theme highlights how not only these participants had to change in the way they behaved and the cultural values they embraced joining the military but also how they had to change their personality to adopt a more strict and even abrasive persona to survive in an environment that has explicitly been described as not their own.

Code switching. Despite the expectation of behaving like an officer and a soldier, and presenting an image of toughness, these women still contend with the demands of being Latina women in their civilian lives. During the interviews, they discussed how most of them "switch" from being an assertive, disciplined soldier when they are in their military job, to being more relaxed, "soft" and "toned down" in their civilian jobs. For some, this switch is not as marked. For example, Angela described how at work, she does take on a more serious persona, but at home, she described a more subtle change regarding her interacting with others in a more relaxed manner. She described, "When I'm in the work…it's different because I'm viewed as the leader

and I need to make sure that whatever I say goes in…as opposed to once you get home it's just relax like, 'Oh, I'm home.'"

This change may be seen in most professional contexts given that most people are likely to adopt a more serious, professional manner at work compared to the one at home with family. However, she did indicate that she must represent the image of a leader so that "whatever [she] says goes."

Similarly, Anna described this switch as "toning it down" when she is not in a military environment, including when she is in her civilian job. She related,

> I do tone down, when I'm in my civilian career… I deal with clients all the time so I'm not mean to them. Again, I'm very respectful like that so like you would see me as a very nice person at work and I'm very friendly. I get along with everyone. I'm like you guys don't even know. I can be super loud but that's my job. So yeah, I do shift and I tone down a bit.

Her description almost sounded as if she adopted a different persona in her military job, so much so that those she works with in her civilian job may not even be able to imagine how she is when she is in a military environment. This is further emphasized when she described how she reacted when she felt disrespected in both a military setting and her civilian job. She stated, "…I know when I deserve respect in the military and there has been times someone forget[s] to salute…I won't yell…but I will be like 'Hey did you forget your hand?'…But in the civilian world…I'm a lot more humble…" It seemed like for Anna, being in a military environment gave her the permission to demand overt signs of respect, such as being saluted and having her rank recognized. It also seemed that being in the military gave her the permission she needed to assert herself. Especially, when she felt personnel, particularly those of lower rank, did not give her the

respect she felt she deserved. This is something she seemed to not be able to do outside of the military environment, where there are no visible insignia or outside factors that would justify her demand for respect. In further discussion, Anna described this ability to "tone it down" as an advantage and a sign of resilience. She stated, "I tone down, yeah, because the environment is different. So and that's being resilient and being able to adjust to the environment that you're in and being adaptable." Likewise, Luisa described her early experiences in her family of origin of having to switch back and forth between traditional female role and living in an environment of mostly males. She recounted "…I was brought up with the traditions but I was also brought up with…non-female tradition… So I don't feel like my role changes as I move back and forth between family and work", she further discussed how due to her being used to her family dynamics it was not difficult to code switch and explained that she had to do it "because being within that environment you have to be a part of the guys…" She further discussed her experience growing up in a household full of men, where she was expected to accept and fit in with males, "I grew up with both of those roles, but I do see it in other females… it's apparent that they're not used to it or they haven't been able to adapt to the environment."

In fact, Luisa clearly saw that living as a soldier and living as a Latina meant sharing two different cultures. She stated, "It doesn't bother me as much [To switch from civilian to military environments] maybe just because I understand that it's two different worlds." It seemed that these women have been so used to living between cultures that entering the military culture and having to switch back and forth between that and their civilian lives is natural and a normal part of their everyday experience.

Marianismo Scale Questionnaire Results

Overall, the study identified various common experiences and qualities amongst the participants as reported during the interviews and reflected in the superordinate themes. As discussed in the methodology section, I chose to utilize the Marianismo Scale Questionnaire as a form of triangulation and to better understand the beliefs of the participants. Table 2 in the table section depicts the scores for each subscale and the total score for each participant. The results of the marianismo questionnaire indicate that all the participants significantly align with several of the marianismo values and in fact, all of them are very close to, or exceed the cut-off score of 2.5, signifying that these women tend to have high affinity to marianismo beliefs. For instance, Anna exceeded the cut-off score of the total scale by 1 point. Similarly, Angela exceeded the cut-off score by .74 points. Ashley came close to meeting the cutoff score with a 2.46 points. Luisa had the lowest total score of 2.24 points. These are interesting findings, particularly that Anna had the highest scores overall, given that she consistently described herself as independent and different from her family members. This may indicate that although Anna wants to move away from these teachings, they may still significantly influence her.

Regarding the subscales, all the participants indicated a high level of alignment with the Family Pillar subscale, with scores well above the 2.5 cut off score, ranging from 3 to 3.8 points. This finding aligned with the accounts by all the participants regarding the sense of responsibility they have towards their younger siblings and family members. They also identify wanting their families to be proud of them and feel responsible for moving their family forward and showing them that they can be more than what the society expects of them.

The second most endorsed subscale is that of Spiritual Pillar. Angela obtained the highest score of 4 in this scale, indicating a high sense of responsibility for her family's spiritual growth.

Anna and Ashley also obtained high scores of 3.7 and 3 respectively, suggesting similar high levels of responsibility and importance of spirituality for them and their families. On the other hand, Luisa obtained a score of 2 in this subscale, suggesting that although she may not feel such high levels of responsibility, spirituality may still be important in her life. There were no indications of this belief in the interviews. However, this could be due to a lack of focused questions regarding spiritual beliefs.

A third scale that had a high number of items endorsed by most of the participants was the Virtuous and Chaste subscale. Angela and Anna both had elevated scores in this scale, both scoring a 4. Ashley also scored above the cut-off score, with a total of 2.6 points. These scores suggest that these women tend to believe Latinas should be morally pure in all respects. Luisa has a moderate score of 2.2, which does not reach the cut off requirement, indicating that although the belief that Latinas must be morally purity may be in some ways important for Luisa, it is not a significant factor in her behavior.

The subscales that evidenced the lowest scores by most of the participants were the Subordinate to Others and the Silencing to maintain harmony. In fact, only Anna had scores that exceeded the cut-off, scoring 3.6 points in the Subordinate to Others subscale and a 3 in the Silencing To Maintain Harmony subscale. These scores suggest that Anna may have strong beliefs that Latinas should respect and obey the hierarchical structured build within the Latino culture. She also seems to endorse items indicating that she believes Latinas should not voice their needs or problems to avoid interpersonal difficulties. Conversely, Ashley, Luisa and Angela had scores that fell under the cut-off scores for these subscales, indicating that these women do not align with the beliefs that Latinas should not voice their needs or that they should unequivocally respect the Latino hierarchical structure.

This is an interesting finding, because although only Anna aligned with the subscale Silencing to Maintain Harmony, there were several instances when other participants decided to keep quiet to avoid problems. For example, regarding the issue about sexual harassment and the letter Ashley received at her command, she described, "Once I came back…to my unit, then it was, it was like, 'Okay yeah, we'll take care of it.' But then nothing ever happened again. And I had tried setting up meetings and stuff and it just, it never went anywhere, so I just gave up on it." When further questioned about her ability to stand up for herself in this situation, she cited this instance as a time when she wished she had pursued the issue, stating, "I probably should have pursued it more just because, that could have really messed me up for my evaluation, during that training but I'm, I'm really not sure what happened with it." Despite acknowledging that this could have negatively affected her evaluation, Ashley decided to "let it go" even though she thought she was going to get in trouble. In fact, when looking at the total scores of the scale for the participants, all of them closely aligned with these values, which was not evidenced during the interviews, given the staunch proclamations of all the participants regarding not wanting to live by the same rules their mothers lived by. Despite this finding, it is almost to be expected, given that the interviews did highlight how important and influencing the family of origins are for these participants.

Summary

The results of the interviews have identified the most salient and common experiences of these Latinas who have chosen to join the U.S. Army as officers. From challenges navigating very defined cultures making demands and expecting them to fulfill traditional gender roles, to identifying the greatest support and source of inspiration, the excerpts in this chapter have shed light on how these women understand their current world and experiences. They have described

a complex experience being Army officers, expecting respect because of their rank and instead encountering doubt, disrespect and even harassment because of their gender and ethnicity. And yet, despite these negative situations, these women are able to appreciate the positive aspects of being a Latina in the Army, with such pride and honor that it is hard to miss the resilience and flexibility of the participants, an attribute likely learned from an early age, as part of their cultural heritage, living in the borderland of cultures as discussed in the literature review.

In the Discussion section, I will delve deeper into the experiences of these participants utilizing research literature to gain a better understanding of the challenges these women face, how they have gained the resilience and adaptability to overcome the challenges of being females and Latinas in a male dominated organization with strict gender rules. I will further discuss the strengths and limitations of this research project, will suggest implications for future research. Lastly, I will discuss how these findings can assist the mental health community in providing support and adequate treatment given the unique challenges Latinas are likely to face in the Army, and the strengths likely to endorse them to be successful in such a challenging environment.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research study was to explore how the military service affected how Latinas experience their gender identity and gender roles. Through interviews with four Mexican American women who are currently commissioned as Army officers in the reserves, I was able to explore some of the biggest challenges these women faced when engaged in their military job, in their community and their civilian job due to their gender identity and prescribed traditional gender roles. I was also able to explore how they negotiated being a soldier and an officer with their already multifaceted personal identities. These findings provide important information regarding the experiences Latinas may encounter when deciding to join the Army. How such experiences affect their understanding of themselves and how they may navigate between their family's expectations of them as women within the context of their culture, and their responsibilities as a soldier and as an officer.

The results of this study were consistent with previous research in several areas that help understand how Latinas make sense of their gender, their ethnic background and the gender roles prescribed by their ethnic background. For instance, in the superordinate theme regarding family influence, the results indicated that Latinas' families have a significant impact in how they understand and process their military experience. This is largely due to the initial dismissal, unsupportiveness and negative judgment from the participant's families when they first decided to join the Army. These negative reactions were mostly due to the belief that the participants were rejecting their proper role as women, causing concern and even anger from family members. Furthermore, these reactions affected how Latinas made their decision and how they experience themselves as women, including feeling like they were overstepping their boundaries, being rebels and "narcissist" as one participant described her decision despite her family's

92

disapproval. These results correlate with the work of Martinez et al. (2012), which indicate Latinas understand themselves and their identity in the context of their family dynamics. The authors also suggest that Latinos' tendency to subscribe to familism drives the significant influence that family and family dynamics has on Latinas regarding the understanding of themselves and their experiences.

Findings regarding participants' challenge of gender roles and thus engendering rejection and negative feedback were corroborated by a previous study from Castañeda(2008), which indicated that family influence for Latinas is particularly strong related to gender roles. Castañeda's study suggests that if Latinas reject familial teachings about their proper place in society, they are at risk of being rejected as they are refusing to conform to expectations that maintain the status quo in the families and ultimately the Latin culture. Despite family member's initial rejection, a significant finding of this current study is the change of mind that family members have when Latinas prove that they can be competent and succeed after they choose to reject traditional gender roles. This finding is significant because it puts into question whether Latino families truly believe women should not engage in traditionally male dominated roles or they just have a misunderstanding of female's mental and physical capabilities, and when shown that women are capable, they become proud and supportive of their family members.

A related finding is that the participants viewed their mother as a significant figure who taught them how to behave as women, and whom they see as either a role model or cautionary tale. These findings were corroborated by Denner and Dunbar's (2004) study that identified Latina mothers as the main parental figure who teaches their daughters how to behave appropriately and teaches them what they are allowed to achieve as women. Similar to findings in this current study, Denner and Dunbar (2004) identified the daughters' tendencies to reject

marianismo teachings by critiquing their mother's life, and her choices in career and lifestyle. Although Latina mothers do teach their daughters marianismo values, this current study revealed that they also have a tendency to support and encourage their daughters to educate themselves and pursue a career. This finding was supported by Ramos (2014), where Latina mothers were found to utilize some of the marianismo values such as sacrificio (sacrifice), as well as consejos y apoyo (advice and support), in order to encourage their children to "be a professional…be somebody" (Ramos, 2014, p. 3). This study found that the participants' mothers wanted their daughters to have a better quality of life than themselves. This suggests that although other members of the family, particularly men, may not believe women are capable, older Latinas—the mothers of new generations, know that women are capable of achieving success outside the home. These older women offer their encouragement and support to their daughters to reach their potential.

Regarding findings on the superordinate themes of life as a female Army officer, and the participants' self-perception, the results indicated that the participants have faced significant challenges, including gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and racism in the Army. The participants described several instances where men under their supervision questioned their authority on the basis of their gender and their ethnicity. The participants cope with these challenges by changing who they fundamentally are in order to fit in and be respected, which creates the illusion of a being part of the "in group," but at the expense of losing parts of themselves. These findings were supported by studies conducted by Prividera and Howard (2012) and Dunivin (1994), which indicated that Latinas continue experiencing difficulty carrying out their mission as military members because of continued traditional gender role endorsement and upholding of the masculine-warrior image in the armed forces. In fact, Dunivin

argues that the masculine warrior paradigm is ultimately the basis of traditional military culture (1994), which makes a shift to a more egalitarian culture where women are accepted and respected difficult and slow. Matthews et al. (2009) and Prividera and Howard (2012) further identified how our current military continues to endorse patriarchal values and tends to have the same gender roles as Latino families. Although Prividera suggests that this endorsement of traditional gender roles would make it easier for the family members to accept the choice of joining the military, this current study suggests instead that the women are looked down upon by both their family and the military for stepping out of their "appropriate" female role, and their authority is constantly questioned. Prividera and Howard (2012) argue that women in the military face a double bind, that of fitting the archetypal female and that of fitting the archetypal soldier. They argue that these two archetypes are at odds with each other, both encompassing opposite sides of the spectrum in regards to behavior therefore, a female soldier is seen as a paradox (Prividera & Howard, 2012). The endorsement of traditional gender roles and the view that women by definition cannot and should not be soldiers, puts these women at risk of gender discrimination, and even sexual harassment.

The issue of gender discrimination is further complicated by racism, which was also identified in this study in the descriptions the women provided regarding being passed over for awards and being humiliated by lower ranking personnel largely due to their ethnicity. This finding was also supported by a study from Estrada (as cited in Young & Nauta, 2013), which indicates that women and minorities do not have the same opportunities as White men. These two challenges combined were discussed in the literature review section concerning the concept of double jeopardy (Foynes, et al., 2013). This concept was consistently endorsed by the participants in this study who identified being Latinas as problematic when attempting to lead

95

men, who questioned their capacity to be leaders in the male dominated organization. This concept was supported by a study of Biernat et al. (1998), which found that White officers in the Army, who happened to be the majority of officers, judged minority officers as less competent or unable to meet the demands of officership.

Although these issues are significant and challenging for Latinas, the results of this study suggest that the participants choose to tackle the challenges by adapting to the culture of the military, learning how to navigate and fit in. It seems that the participants engage in what Prividera and Howard (2012) identified as reframing the paradox of being a female and a soldier. They argued that to navigate a culture in which being a female and a soldier are by definition incompatible, the participants can avoid the paradox by embracing the qualities of one (being a soldier) while in uniform while rejecting the typically understood qualities of being a Latina and female (i.e., endorsing and engaging in behaviors typically identified as masculine). This choice was identified several times over the course of the interviews, especially when discussing issues such as cleanliness, personal space and not having expectations of respect from male soldiers. In fact, some of the participants discuss issues such as getting help from male soldiers or being offended by vulgar language as typical female behaviors that must be avoided to fit in. This was also identified by the comments of the participants stating that they were "different" from their families of origin, and indeed from what they considered *typica*l Latinas, such as endorsing values related to familism, specially regarding wanting to get married and having children. This practice seems to speak to the rejection of a part of the self to not cause problems and be one of them.This practice has been discussed at length by Gloria Anzaldúa (2001) in her discourses regarding a crisis of identity in minorities, particularly women of color as a result of inhabiting a multitude of worlds where they are not fully accepted. Though Anzaldúa (2001) refers mostly to

higher education, it seems that this same experience occurs in areas where women and minorities are also not always welcome, like the military. Just like Anzaldúa described, the women interviewed described their attempts at splitting from ethnic and gender identities to conform to what the organization asked of them. They changed their behaviors and expectations to be accepted, respected, and ultimately to do their job. This change of behaviors and expectations may allow them to be accepted in the *in-group,* creating an increased sense of self-esteem reported by all of the participants. This practice of rejecting a part of self is what Anzaldúa (2001) calls *Desconocimiento*, the wanting to reject the parts that are deemed unacceptable, either by the self or by the surrounding organizations and dominant cultures or by both. This is typically done after several experiences that teach the individual that their social group is unacceptable and less than (Tajfel, 1982). This practice is against what Anzaldúa described as living in *Borderland,* a concept utilized to describe the process to achieve decolonization and liberation (Orozco-Mendoza, 2008). Anzaldúa described living in Borderlands as being in a vague and undetermined place where *atravesados*, the unwanted, reside, negotiating between spaces where they are not wanted and where they inhabit nonetheless (Orozco-Mendoza, 2008). It is also a form of resistance to the domination by the majority in power as well as a rejection of the myth of inferiority not only because of race, but also because of gender (Orozco-Mendoza, 2008). This resistance comes in the form of embracing the uncomfortable space of not fitting in, of not fully belonging to avoid the pull to denounce their cultural heritage. Given the participant's desire and active participating to fit in, it seems they are not engaged in the process of being in *Borderlands* and it is likely that they are not even aware that this is an option, albeit a difficult one. Due to the evidence of *Desconocimiento* described by the participants' discussion of how they attempt to fit into the UN, it seems that these women are engaged in between the

97

Neplanta and *Coatlicue* state of the *Seven Stages of Conocimento* discussed by Anzaldúa. They are aware that they do not fully belong to the military culture due to their gender and their ethnicity, yet refuse to accept their differences and instead engage in *Desconocimientos,* rejecting their ethnic culture and denouncing *typical* Latinas. If these women were to engage and move forward in the *Stages of Conocimiento,* they would need to engage in exploration of their ethnic identity, move past their identity foreclosure and internalize a self-authored definition of what it means to be a Latina. This will spur them towards more fluid ideas of what identity is and how through the construction of their own identity, they can be of service within their job in the military as well as in the larger society. While they engage in the construction of their personal and ethnic identities, to move forward in the stages, they must ensure that they review the cultural narratives they are being told to believe, particularly regarding being women, and understand that these demands are social fabrications. As a result, they should be able to understand that they are not inferior, needing to emulate the superior white males that dominate the two spaces. This process may create significant conflicts within the spheres these women move in, but if they are able to maintain a neutral, non-defensive stance, they may be able to become Neplanteras and begin to bridge the gap between Latinas, women, the dominant culture and the Army.

Despite this state of Desconocimiento and rejection of being in the Borderland expressed by these women, they identified strong positive adjectives to describe themselves. They all saw themselves as confident and assertive women, the type that stands up for itself, even if it is difficult. Although this seems somewhat contradictory to their description of their giving up parts of themselves, a study by Mondragon (2011) also identified an increase in self-confidence in women who join the military, as well as a modification of self-perception, including an increase

in social value. This could be because once they feel accepted into the organization, they integrate a newfound sense of belonging to a social group that is often seen in higher regard than their native social group and even their gender.

Although it is an understandable choice, given the environment and cultures they have to navigate and the responsibilities they hold as officers, it is also an interesting thought to entertain that perhaps these women could choose to be what Anzaldúa (2001) termed as *Neplanteras.* Instead of "fitting in" being "one of them" in any of the context, these women have to navigate; perhaps they could use their movement between the cultures of their homes and their military positions and the dominant culture to create innovative perspectives within those domains (Anzaldúa, 2001). In fact, some participants identified having done so without awareness, as described by the pride their family experienced seeing them succeed in a role they were initially discouraged from pursuing. If these women, and all women who choose to pursue these discouraged roles because it does not fit the archetypal female role, adopt a Neplantera attitude as opposed to allowing themselves to be assimilated and lose a part of themselves, then perhaps other women following in their footsteps would not feel ashamed of being women and being Latinas, and will allow themselves to expect respect and demand it for the generations to follow.

Sexual Harassment

An unfortunate aspect of the military that was highlighted by two participants was contending with sexual harassment, which continues to be a problem in the Army. Although only two participants discussed their experiences with sexual harassment, the ramifications and impact of their experiences were significant and I would be remiss to ignore their accounts of their experience during their military service. For these women, their role as an officer took on a new dimension when it came to supporting and protecting their female soldiers. For example,

Anna understood her role as an officer as that of a protector and reported doing anything she could to ensure the safety of her female soldiers, including going against commanders and high ranking officers.

Another participant described how in her situation, an officer put her career in jeopardy because of unsolicited inappropriate correspondence. She was placed in the position to open the letter in front of her commands to prove that she was not engaging in adult entertainment. Although she was the recipient of a distasteful joke, she was seen with suspicion without the benefit of the doubt. When this was finally cleared, she was encouraged to report the sender. The participant did as told but in her words "I reported it, like they told me to but nothing was ever really done about it."

For this participant, her reporting this instance of sexual harassment had no consequences for the perpetrator. This lack of support from the organization might discourage her from reporting any further harassment or worse, abuse in the future. Although only two of the participants reported any experience of sexual harassment or disclosed how they have to help their lower ranking female soldiers to cope with the ramifications of sexual harassment, these situations likely increased the experience of stress for these participants in a situation that has already proved to be stressful by the nature of the organization. Furthermore, it seemed like an important finding to discuss, given that sexual harassment continues to be a problem in the Army, and the military at large.

Marianismo Questionnaire

The results of the marianismo questionnaire indicate that all the participants significantly align with the marianismo values related to being the Family Pillar. These findings from the questionnaire aligned with the accounts of all the participants about their sense of responsibility

100

towards their younger siblings and family members. They also identify wanting their families to be proud of them, feel responsible for moving their family forward and show them that they can be more than what society expects of them. This level of responsibility may prove problematic for these participants when they have to engage in behaviors and roles that oppose what their family culture expects. Similarly, the questionnaire indicated that most participants (3 out of 4) aligned with the marianismo value of being the spiritual pillar of their families, which indicates that the participants believe they are responsible for the spiritual growth of their families. There were no indications of this belief in the interviews; however, this could be due to a lack of focused questions regarding spiritual beliefs. It is important to acknowledge that these results may reflect the women's constant influence by their family of origin, as most of them live with their families when they are not serving with the Army. It may also be a reflection of how deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and dictates are within these participants that despite engaging in other cultures with differing mandates, they tend to default to their native culture's rules and values.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

As discussed in the literature review, very little research has been done in regards to the experience of Latinas who join the military. This study sought to understand the participants' lived experience, how they navigated the many worlds they must face with their particular cultural rules and expectations and how they made sense of these experiences in light of their gender identity and gender roles taught by their native culture. As more Latinas join the ranks of the U.S. Armed Forces, it is imperative that mental health providers do their best to understand these women's experience from their perspective. This study provides the perspective of four women who are currently officers in the U.S. Army as reservists, while also maintaining civilian jobs and living in their communities. This choice of participants allows for a detailed and rich

account of living in a multitude of cultures, and constantly having to shift between the military culture, their family culture and the dominant culture. The choice of utilizing a qualitative, semi-structure interview not only allowed the participants to reflect upon the target experience, but also allowed them to discuss other topics they felt affected their experience and added or changed the meaning of the experience for them. This flexibility allowed for a richness of data that cannot be obtained using quantitative methods.

Another strength of this study is that I, the researcher, am familiar with the overall military culture given my own current military service as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. This allowed me to be attuned to sensitive topics that may have come up during the interview such as concern regarding negative effects of participation and disclosure on their military career and to address them in a knowledgeable and appropriate manner. This allowed the participants to feel more comfortable discussing sensitive topics knowing that they were protected given the nature of the study. Furthermore, I am also familiar with the Latino culture, given that I am native of a Latin American country. This, along with being a woman and being in the military, allowed me to have a perspective that helped better understand the experiences of the participants. Despite these advantages of belonging to both cultural groups address in this study, I made efforts to remain neutral and to acknowledge the differences between the participants and me, such as the fact that all participants were Mexican American, while I am not, and that they all are serving in the U.S. Army, whereas I am not. These differences allowed me to keep in mind that I do not know what it is like to have their experience and allowed me to keep an attitude of curiosity and openness. In light of these similarities and differences, I made every effort to manage my subjectivity and enhance the trustworthiness of the results by journaling, checking in about the meaning of participants' comments during the interview, and consulting with my advisor.

In regard to limitations of the study, a limitation that was identified early in the process of this study is the difficulty of accessing this particular population due to the fear that any participation in research studies may negatively affect the members' military service. However, those members who did express interest were provided information and education regarding the nature of the study as well as the confidentiality statement and rules for this study. This allowed access to an appropriate number of participants who completed the interviews. Despite this appropriate number, a slightly higher number of participants would have been beneficial to gather even more detailed data. Along these same lines, the participant's military and civilian responsibilities, as well as geographic locations made it difficult to meet in person; therefore, half of the interviews were carried out through video chat. This may have affected the rapport built with the participants, which may have affected the information provided. Despite this drawback, the participants who utilized video chat to complete the interview answered all the questions presented and elaborated to the best of their abilities without being prompted, ensuring that the information gained was provided freely while they made sense of their experience. As such, the study met its goal of gathering detailed stories from the perspectives of the participants despite geographical locations. An additional possible drawback is that because of my own participation in the military, it may have influenced some of the results as the participants may have engaged in impression management or bicultural processes. In future studies, either a non-military interviewer or non-disclosure of military participation by the interviewer may enhance the comfort of the participants to be more frank regarding their experiences and beliefs. Lastly, a drawback from this type of study is that it cannot be considered generalizable data due to the small, specific sample size. Although this study provides important and useful data regarding the

experience of these four women in the Army, we cannot make any assumptions or conclusions regarding Latinas in all the branches of the military.

Implications for Future Research

The current study highlighted important experiences focused on the gender identities and gender roles of Mexican American women who decided to join the Army as reservists. The findings of this study can serve as stepping stone for further research looking to examine the experience of Latinas who make the commitment to join the U.S. Armed Forces. Due to the nature of the study, the participants were chosen because they met narrow criteria that would make them ideal for this type of study. It would be interesting to see this study replicated utilizing different sets of criteria for the participants, such as different nationalities, generations, and perhaps migratory history. Likewise, it would be interesting to see this study replicated using different branches of the armed forces, since, as discussed in the literature review, each branch has a significantly different culture. This raises the question of whether Latinas would have a very different experience in another branch of the military compared to the experience Latinas have in the Army. Furthermore, since this study looked at reservists, it would be interesting to see if the active duty soldiers have a different experience, and if so, in what ways do these experiences differ? Finally, although I believe a phenomenological research study provided the best possible data to begin the exploration of this topic, it would be interesting to broach the topic form different perspectives such as looking at the overall wellbeing of Latinas in the military, measuring life satisfaction and meaning making. It would also be useful to utilize some of the findings to create a quantitative measure of perceived gender discrimination and experience of stress in Latinas in the military to generalize findings.

Implication for Clinical Practice

The participants of this study provided detailed accounts of an experience that many Latinas are facing and will face as more women join the military ranks. As such, the information gained from this study is relevant for mental health providers who work with Latinas and the military. Although all the participants described an increased sense of self-esteem, it would be remiss to ignore the consistent accounts of gender discrimination, disrespect and challenge of authority because of gender, and a sense that they all had to "prove" they were not a stereotype of their culture. The participants described a sense of frustration and anger when discussing instances where they felt looked down upon due to their ethnicity and gender. This likely increased their experience of stress, which mental health providers should be acutely aware of. Furthermore, a concerning finding was that of the tendency of these women to significantly change their expectations regarding how the men in their company should treat them and who they have to become to fit into the group and be regarded with respect and perhaps fear. It would be important to educate all women, particularly those in the military, regarding the difference between sexist and respectful behavior, regardless of gender. It also is important to be aware that Latinas may tend to disown parts of themselves to fit in. This should be attended to and explored to avoid negative sequela from this fragmentation of the self. Although it is impossible to generalize the findings of these results due to the qualitative, phenomenological approach, it does provide further information and an insider look into the lives of such a particular group. The findings of this study can be utilized to inform the treatment of Latina soldiers and explore with each individual her own experience as a soldier.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand the experiences of Latinas who identified as Mexican American women, serving in the U.S. Army as reservists. The focus of the study was focused on how these women understood their gender identity and gender roles and whether these factors were affected by their military service. The literature review suggested that there was a significant gap regarding studies looking at women's experiences in the U.S. Military in general, and an even more significant gap when it came to focusing on the Latinas' experience. As such, this study sought to take steps in closing that gap by exploring through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis lens the experience of the four women who participated in this study.

The results of this study indicate that overall all, the participants experienced significant pressure during their military duties due to gender discrimination that negatively affected their sense of what it means to be a woman and were presented conflicting messages regarding what was expected of them, particularly related to gender roles. This is further complicated by experiences of racism, which leads them to look down upon their identity as Latinas, thus rejecting two essential parts of themselves. Furthermore, although they, for the most part, rejected many of the gender roles associated with marianismo, they further seemed pressured to reject anything that may be considered feminine to fit in with a masculine culture. These findings were aligned with previous research, and should provide some guidance to mental health providers who work with this population, as it would be beneficial to address the underlying stressors these women face and often are not able to articulate. Additionally, the findings of this study highlight what Anzaldúa termed living in Borderlands, where Latinas often live in this country coping with several cultures at the same time, and the dangers of living in

Desconocimiento, denying a part of the self that is perceived as unacceptable to the larger society while attempting to belong. This study provides an insight into the lives of these women. Through the reflective exercise carried out throughout this study, I have come to hope that with the assistance of mental health practitioners, scholars and those invested in furthering our military, Latinas serving in our military stop trying to fundamentally change themselves to fit in. Instead, my hope is for them to keep their Latinidad and become the voice and body of transformation in a culture that seems to struggle with change.

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TABLES

Table 1

Superordinate Themes and Themes per Recurrence

Superordinate Theme	Themes	Number of Participants Endorsing Themes
Family Influences	• Initial lack of family support due to marianismo gender roles	4
	• Mother as primary influence	3
	• Family pride	3
Self-Perception	• Different from family of origin	4
	• Perseverance	3
	• Self Efficacy	3
	• Role model	3
	• Confident and assertive	3
Life as a Female Army Officer	• Triggering of Stereotypes	4
	• Change to fit in	3
	• Be tough to survive	3
	• Code switching	3

Table 2

Marianismo Scale Questionnaire Results per Participant

	Family Pillar	Virtuous & Chaste	Subordinate to others	Silencing to maintain harmony	Spiritual pillar	Marianismo Scale Total
Ashley	3.8	2.6	1.6	1.67	3	2.46
Luisa	3	2.2	2	2	2	2.24
Angela	3.8	4	2.4	2	4	3.24
Anna	3.2	4	3.6	3	3.7	3.5

Note. M > 2.5 = More affinity to Marianismo Beliefs

APPENDIX A

Extended Review of the Literature

Extended Review of the literature

Authors-Year	Population-Sample	Research Objective	Relevant Methods & Analyses	Pertinent Findings & Limitations
Adler, Huffman, Bliese, & Castro (2005)	2114 Men; 1225 Women	Examine effects of stressors on psychological health of male and female soldiers returning from deployment	Primary psychological screening within 30 days prior to redeployment. Secondary screening interview was administrated following primary screening	* Deployment length was related to increases in depression and post-traumatic stress scores. This effect was found for males but not female soldiers. * Previous deployment experience was significantly related to lower depression and posttraumatic stress scores for both male and female soldiers. * There were no significant gender differences in the impact of deployment experience on well being. * The fact the relationship between stressor duration and psychological health was not found in women raises the possibility that there is a ceiling effect on distress scores for women, or, unlike the male soldier, female soldiers who were deployed over several months habituated to their situation.
Amaro, & Russo (1987)	N/A	Analysis of Hispanic women and psychosocial factors affecting their adherence to traditional gender roles, which in turn affect mental health services available for this population.	Review of literature	* Immigration has significant mental health implications. * Education is another important factor in mental health outcomes for Latinas, with higher education being a protective factor for depression. * Family composition has significant impact in mental health, particularly having children at home when income is low or having children during adolescence. * Latinas utilize mental health services at lower rates

				* Recognition of changes in the Hispanic woman roles and circumstance is important to deliver quality and sensitive mental health care.
Anzaldua (2001)	NA	NA	Review of Gloria Anzaldua Theories	* Anzaldua exposed dangers of group think by exposing the limitations of social groups labels. * Neplanteras are threshold individuals who move through different social groups but do not establish themselves in any one group exclusively * Neplanteras are intermediaries between conflicting cultures * Spiritual activism refers to the act to utilize self-reflection to bring social change.
Anzaldua & Keating (2002)	Latinos and minorities	NA	Anthology of essays	* Describe the steps of the Path of Conocimiento * Argues for a more in-depth and encompassing definition of identity * Encourages Latinas to utilize their borderland position to negotiate social growth
Arredondo (2002)	N/A	Presidential address discussing three archetypal images ruling what it means to be a Latin woman	Discussion through theoretical frameworks, psychohistorical approaches, cultural and historical icons, and themes evolving from literature and history	As long as Latin women continue to live in a "wild-zone," it is necessary to understand cultural icons that embody using psychohistorical approach to understand the context in which Latinas live.

Bellafaire (n.d.)	N/A	Historical account of Hispanic women in the U.S. military since WWII forward.	Historical account	* American Military started accepting women in early 20th century. * During WWII, Puerto Rican women were recruited for their bilingual abilities. * As decades pass and more women join the military, women are starting to establish their military traditions by passing on the desire to serve to their daughters.
Beltran (2004)	N/A	Analysis of the recent portrayal of Latinas as physically strong, intelligent and cunning in Hollywood.	Analysis of recent major Hollywood films with Latinas as one of the main protagonists.	* Rise of strong assertive Latina character in movies in formerly all white male "terrain" * Now physically active and assertive women * Newly made protagonists as opposed to supporting characters. * This new view of Latinas is based on the Pachuca-Chola stereotype * New physically commanding Latina "macha" stiff focuses on Latinas' body in a different way.
Biernat, Crandall, Young Kobrynowickz & Halpin, (1998)	100 students at Combined Arms and Service Staff School	Tested the shifting standard model (evidence of bias on objective measures) as it applies to sex and race based stereotyping of self and others	* Students rated self and others in rating questionnaire * Utilized ANOVA to analyze date for both self and others' rankings.	* High evidence of sex biased shifting standards in judgement of others. * Non-white women were judged less competent than non-white men * Leadership competence was biased by sex and ethnicity.
Bishop (1984)	44 enlisted male soldiers, 46 enlisted female soldiers	To test correlation between gender and role differences in illness behavior.	Interviews and participants completed diary forms for 30 days. These diaries were coded and analyzed using ANOVAS	* Occupational stress and group cohesion affects illness behavior more so than gender
Boryczka, & Disney (2015)	NA	Discussion on intersectionality in the 21st century	Overview of intersectionality, its origins and understanding of intersectionality in	* Intersectionality is very relevant in a time of global mobilization * Women are still specially oppressed

			modern times	despite forward movements. * Current Black Lives Matter attempts to bring into light current matters of intersectionality between race, poverty and gender
Brah & Phoenix (2004)	NA	Discussion of intersectionality between gender, social class and sexuality	Discussion and review of empirical studies	* Intersection of race gender and class is subjectively experienced * These intersections are social structures * Dynamics of power and privilege shape key experiences
Brown (2000)	N/A	Critical review of Social Identity Theory	Critical review of literature	* Focuses on discussion of in-group bias * Responses of lower ranking groups to their unequal status * Discusses most problematic issues of Social identity theory
M. T. Brown (2012)	305 Advertisement 1970-2003 for armed services	To examine the ideals of militarized femininity displayed in military recruitment advertisement.	Evaluation of visual and verbal elements of advertisement and their gendered implications.	* Women are included as tokens but are not associated with combat * Separation of women from war depictions reinforces gender divides. * Reasserts masculinity and warriorhood
Carbado, & Crenshaw (2013)	N/A	Review of development of intersectionality since its inception	Critical review of literature	* Intersectionality can identify commonalities between political groups. * Intersectionality may be adapted to all arenas, including law, psychology etc. * Intersectionality is global
Cárdenas, & Kerby (2012)	Latinos using 2010, 2011 and 2012 Census data	Examines the state of Latinos in regards to five key areas—work, education, health, veterans affairs, and political leadership	Overview of census data	* 24% increase in college enrollment from 2009-2010 * 213,965 Hispanics soldiers are currently serving in the U.S. armed forces. * 5.3% of 21.7 million veterans are Latino. * Between 2001 and 2005, 25% increase of Latinos enlistment in the Army

Castaneda (2008)	N/A	Analyses of Latinas' identities from a psychohistorical approach	Study of historical figures and comparison with current Latina identity constructs	Raises the importance of understanding the current concepts of identity in Latino women through the lens of historically relevant icons that manifest culturally bound ideals.
Castillo, Perez Castillo, & Ghoshe (2010)	370 Latina college students	Report the development and validation of the Marianismo Belief Scale	Exploratory Factor Analysis & confirmatory factor analysis	* Development of five subscales which comprise the Marianismo Belief Scale (MEB) * The MBS subscales have good validity with marianismo beliefs. * Subscale scores were positively correlated with cognitive enculturation, self-sacrifice, and interdependence. * Marianismo is multidimensional. * The five scales are Family pillar, Virtuous and Chaste, Subordinate to others, Silencing self to maintain harmony, Spiritual pillar.
Chavez, & Guido-DiBrito (1999)	NA	Discussion of Racial and Ethnic Identity Development	Review of racial and ethnic identity literature	* Individuals filter ethnic identity through negative treatment * Manifestations of racial identity are discussed as a social construction * Racial Identity Development focuses on racial experience * Ethnic identity development focuses on what is learned from culture.

Connell, & Messerschmidt (2005)	NA	Discussion and evaluation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity	Review of the origins of the hegemonic masculinity concept and evaluation of critics.	* Originated in 1982 to explain and critique the male sex role. * Explains the different types of masculinities. * Hegemonic masculinity are behaviors that allowmen to continue dominance over less politically powerful groups * In the military specific patterns of hegemonic masculinity became entrenched and are currently problematic
Crenshaw (1991)	NA	Discussion of different aspects of identity affecting the experience of black women	Overview of historical facts and development of intersectionality theory	* Women organized to be heard regarding routine violence against them. * Violence is not just about being women; it's also related to race. * There is a need for feminists to understand that oppression is not only due to being women but also because of race. * Intersectionality of race, gender and social status should be a focus of all social justice groups.
DeGroot (2001)	Military women	Exploration of currentposition of women in the military	Overview of historical facts regarding women in informal combat positions throughout the world.	* Due to the changing nature of modern military missions, women may be better suited for the military. * This may be particularly true for peacekeeping operations

Denner, & Dunbar (2004)	8 Mexican-American girls	Investigates how Mexican-American girls understand the meaning of being a girl and how they think about power in their relationships	Semi-structured interview and survey	* To be a girl means embracing female stereotypes but also embracing their power such as using their voice and critiquing traditional gender roles when they negatively affect their lives. * The girls recognized the constraints and benefits of being a girl and developed strategies to negotiate their environment. * The strategies used were speaking up among their peers and non-parental adults and changing "femininities" in reaction to contradictory expectations regarding their sexual and gender roles.
Dominant culture. (1998)	NA	Definition	NA	Definition of Dominant Culture by Dictionary of sociology
Dunivin (1994)	NA	Analysis of the changes and continuity within the U.S. Military	Use of theoretical concepts, i.e., Ideal types, models and paradigms.	* Military culture is typically known for its combat, masculine warrior paradigm. * Traditional model of military culture is characterized by conservative ideals. * Separatist values cause hostile interactions with those deemed as "others" emerge. * Currently there is hope for an evolving culture. * This is particularly important for the tolerance of "others"

Eagly, & Karau (2002)	N/A	Development of role congruity theory	Analysis of gender roles, typical degree of congruity between the female gender role and leader roles, and discussion of the two forms of prejudice engendered by gender roles and incongruity with leader roles	* Two forms of prejudice: 1. less favorable evaluation of women's potential for leadership. 2. less favorable evaluation of the actual leadership behavior of women. * Women fared less well in relation to roles given, particularly, masculine definitions. * A lessening of the prejudice would require change in gender roles or leader roles
Eikenberry & Kennedy (2013)	Military members	NA	Article discussing the current position of the military in the overall community and the effects of this separation	* Very few individuals are currently serving in the military * Overrepresentation of underprivileged * "Professional" soldiers create a type of "caste," which separates them from civilians * Argues pro-draft to bring the military back in contact with civilians
Fenner & DeYoung (2001)	Military women	Book on role of women in the military	Discussion and critical review of historical facts from two opposing views	* Women have proved that they are physically able to successfully do their assigned jobs. * Differences in physical standards are based on biology and should not be taken as evidence for lowering standards. * There is significant historical data to prove that women have emotional resilience to cope with stressors of combat.
Ferguson (2007)	NA	Critical review of intersectionality, psychosocial and societal factors	Discussion of intersections of social identity and how psychosocial factors influence integrations of multiple social identities	* Social identity is influenced by factors such as power, of the social identities embodied. * Integration of multiple social identities may be more reflective of a process of negotiation between identities and social context.

Foynes, Shipherd, & Harrington (2013)	1515 male and female marine recruits	Empirical examinations of Race Based Discrimination and Gender Based Discrimination in multiple comparison groups	Longitudinal study—Self report questionnaires (Workplace Discrimination Inventory)	* Race Based discrimination and Gender Based Discrimination have strong and consistent negative effects on mental health. * Although people of color are able to be resilient in the face of low level of RBD, higher levels become detrimental
Gade, Lakhani, & Kimmel (1991)	2566 One term Army Veterans	Research regarding the concept that military service can be a bridge to adult roles.	A life-course analysis of data from a 1985 survey	* Minorities and women rated military service more positively than did Whites and men * Age, marital status and education level at entry influenced the impact that military service had on veterans.
Girls incorporated (2006)	Latinas	Demographics for Latinas	Data gathered in 2006 regarding Latinas in the U.S.	* Largest Latino subgroups were Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American. * Of Latino families below the poverty level, 41% were headed by a female.
Gonzalez (2008)	Latinas	Fact Sheet	Hispanic women in 2007	* Six-in-ten Hispanic women were born in Mexico. * Hispanic women are less educated than non-Hispanic women. * Hispanic women are twice as likely to live in poverty. * Hispanic women are more likely than non-Hispanic women to be employed in blue-collar occupations
Groenewald (2004)	N/A	Provide demographics, employment and income characteristics of Hispanic women in the U.S.		Hispanic women are much younger than non-Hispanic women. Hispanic women are less educated than non-Hispanic women. Hispanic women who work full time earn less than non-Hispanic women who work full time.

Gushue, & Whitson (2006)	102 9th grade Latina and Black girls	To identify how career decision self efficacy mediated the effects of gender role attitudes and ethnic identity on the traditionality of the participants' career choice	2-path model analysis	* Ethnic identity and gender role attitudes play an important role in the career development of these girls. * Depending on how well a girl of color is able to integrate race, ethnicity and egalitarian gender roles, they may or may not be able to successfully negotiate tasks associated with career decisions.
Guzman, & Valdivia (2004)	Latinas	Discussion on location of Latinas in popular culture	Analysis of contemporary Latina public figures and their iconicity in the popular culture	* There is a tendency to racialize and genderize media representations of Latinas. * Female ethnic subjects are othered through categorization and marginalization in relation constructions of Whiteness and femininity. * Latinas' bodies are objectified and fetishized. * Latinas occupy a liminal space in U.S. popular culture.
Harper, & Thompson (2012)	N/A	Discussion of methodology in IPA	NA	* IPA has a hermeneutic epistemology. * Focus is in understanding how people relate to the world. * Analysis needs to be very close, line by line of interviews. * Themes must emphasize emergence and convergence. * Reflection upon the interviewer perception is also important.
Hogg, Terry, & White, (1995)	NA	To understand the similarities and differences of social identity theory and identity theory	Compares and contrasts identity theory and social identity theory	* Identity theory deals with structure and function of people's identity as related to the behavioral roles they play in society. * Focus is on individual behaviors. * Social identity deals with the structure and function of people's identity as related to

				people's memberships in groups. * Focus is on intergroup relations.
Hurtado, & Cervantez (2009)	NA	Discussion of in groups and out group perspectives of Latina feminist writers	NA	* Acculturation-Assimilation frameworks do not take into account complex multiple social identities. * Social comparison is another important factor to examine when understanding identity in Latinas. * Therapeutic approaches need to take into consideration all the different contexts Latinas navigate.
Jeffreys (2007)	Women in the military	Discussion of the dangers of having women in the military.	Review of historical data	* Women in the military faced "double jeopardy" by being in danger of rape from male soldiers. * Women may also be used as "messengers" in war by being raped and impregnated by enemy soldiers. * Feminists should be weary of supporting women in combat positions as these positions increase likelyhood of violence by fellow male soldiers.
Keating (2006)	NA	NA	Review of Gloria Anzaldua Theories	

Keating (2008)	NA	NA	Exploration of Spiritual Activism in contrast to modern academic tendencies	* Spiritual activism is spirituality for social change. * Academics are hesitant to engage in exploration of spiritual activism for fear of being rejected. * Encourage to learn from all traditions and beliefs to meet current needs.
Lilley (2013)	Latinos	NA	Article discussing growth of Latino populations in the U.S.	* 52 million Latinos in the U.S. in 2013. * Most of this growth is from births and not immigration. * Along with population growth, more Latinos are graduating high school and enrolling in colleges.
Lopes (2011)	Military members	NA	Critical analysis of militarized masculinities and its effects in peacekeeping missions.	* Militaries replace uncertain manliness with stoic, strong, and emotionless warriors. * There is a strong connection between the military and hegemonic masculinity. * Female soldiers in conjunction with training and education may create a less hyper-masculinized atmosphere in peacekeeping missions
Lutz (2008)	Whites Blacks and Latinos	Examines the impact of race, class, and immigration status on military service.	Study and compare data related to enlistment records. Use multivariate analysis to study the data	* By 2000, African American were overrepresented in the mlitary. * Those from a lower family income group are more likely to join the military. * Military service serves as a positive turning point in the lives of lower income service members.
Marcia (1966)	86 males	4 modes of reacting to the late adolescent identity crisis were described, measured, and validated.	semistructured interviews	* Identified and validated four ego statuses. * Four statuses were identified: Identity achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Identity diffusion.

Martinez, Torres, Wallace White, Medrano, Robledo, & Hernandez (2012)	63 Adult Latinas	To understand the challenges adult Latinas face during development of ethnic identity.	* Electronic survey focused on demographics and open ended questions. * Open and axial coding were used to analyze the data	* For Latinas in this study, marriage and motherhood trigger evaluations of ethnic identity. * Participants learned about both their own culture and other cultures. * Latinas transmit their culture to their children. * Latinas develop ethnic identity while negotiating relationships with partners and family.
Matthews, Ender, Laurence, & Rohall (2009)	218 West Point Cadets 509 ROTC Cadets	To examine attitudes of West Point cadets, ROTC cadets and non-military-affiliated students toward a variety of roles that women may serve in the military.	The Biannual Attitudes Survey of Students was administered	* Military cadets are less approving of women being assigned to military jobs than are civilian students. * The role of women in hand-to-hand combat had the lowest approval of all jobs.
McClam (2013)	Military Women	NA	News Article	* Discussion on the combat ban for women. * Step towards true equality and fairness. * Women are already serving in combat. It's time to recognize them.
Morrow (2005)	NA	Examines concepts of the trustworthiness, or credibility of qualitative research	Exploration of the paradigmatic underpinnings of various criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research	* Guidelines for beginning qualitative research. * Qualitative researchers must making their implicit assumptions and biases explicit. * Understanding how participants make meaning depends on rapport culture and context. * Dependability and triangulation are important for quality

National Women's Law Center. (2009)	High School Latinas	Addresses and explores why Latinas drop out of high school	Surveys, interviews, and focus groups	* Latinas are not confident in their abilities to reach goals. * Poverty, limited English, immigration issues and lack of parental involvement are factors for the high dropout rates. * Significant gender and ethnic stereotypes pose significant challenges for Latinas. * High rates of pregnancy due to lack of education.
Nash (2008)	NA	Challenge unexplored paradoxes of intersectionality, its use in academia and the use of black women as token subjects.	Discussion and critical review of intersectionality concept	* There are no methods to examine the multiple positions of subjects. * There is a gap between conceptions of intersectional methodology and practices of intersectional investigations. * Intersectionality's reliance on black women renders black women prototypical intersectional subjects. * Black women's experiences are used to demonstrate the shortcomings of conventional feminist and anti-racist work.
Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood (2013)	NA	NA	Discussion of purposeful sampling	* Purposive sampling selects individuals who are knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. * Participants must be willing and able to participate in the study. * Qualitative studies are meant to achieve depth of understanding.
Patten, & Motel (2012)	Latinos	Examines the Hispanic population of the United States by its 10 largest origin groups.	Review of census data	* The 10 largest Latino groups in the U.S. are: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, Cubans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Ecuadorians and Peruvians. * Mexican origin people have the lowest median

				age. * Mexicans are largely concentrated in western states.
Patten, & Parker (2010)	Latinas in active duty	Data sheet	Review of data regarding Latinas in active duty	* Only about half of active-duty women (53%) were white in 2011. * 13% were Latinas. * 46% of active duty women were married. * Women are more likely to serve in the Air Force.
Pérez (2006)	Latina youth in JROTC programs	Explores how Latino youth decides to join the U.S. military	Interviews with Latin girls enrolled in JROTC programs	* Limited economic opportunities encourage Latinas to join military groups. * They are also influenced by "gendered" understanding of honor. * Latinas are vulnerable due to their sense of familismo.
Phinney (1989)	91 Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, and White tenth-grade students	Assessment of stages of ethnic identity in adolescents	Interviews and questionnaires	* Identified three identity stages: Diffusion/foreclosure; moratorium, ethnic identity achieved. * Diffusion/foreclosure teens had not explored their ethnic identity. * Teens in Moratorium were in the process of exploring and reconnecting to their ethnicity. * Teens who were classified as ethnic identity achieved had explored and committed to an ethnic identity. * Ethnic Identity achieved students had higher scores on measure of ego identity and psychological adjustment.

Phinney (2006)	NA	Examines the exploration of ethnic andracial identity issues beyond adolescence among minority group members.	Review of the literature	* Emerging adulthood may be extended for minorities. * Ethnic group members must deal with identity issues in relation to their ethnic and racial heritage. * The process of attaining a secure identity is not completed duringadolescence. * The years beyond high school lead to a variety of experiences that can enhance exploration. * Identity can explored in post high school education and in the workforce.
Prividera, & Howard (2012)	193 students	Explore attitudes towards women's participation in the military	Discussion of how female soldiers affect the military warrior archetype	* Archetypes are used to measure the performance and worth of military personnel * Military archetypes have their own hierarchical system * By definition, a warrior is physically imposing, heterosexual, potent, strong, and most importantly, masculine. * This archetype creates the gap between the concept of woman and warrior. * Regulations about how women can serve continue to perpetuate archetypes.
Puga (2013)	NA	NA	News article discussing Colonel Zoppi's military career	* Describes racial and gender descrimination faced by Col Zoppi * Recounts her experiences in combat and winning the Bronze star. * Col Zoppi continues to motivate women to pursue leadership positions.

137

Quintana & Scull (2009)	Latinos	Provide descriptions of stages of Latino Identity development	Review of literature and development of theory regarding identity development	* Latino identity develops from ethnic self-labeling. * Latino ethnic identity are influenced by acculturation and enculturation processes * Children develop their identity in stages, starting from a physical perspective of ethnicity to a group perspective of ethnicity.
Quintana (1998)	Minority children	To review theoretical and empirical research on children's understanding of race and ethnicity.	Review of research on developmental ethnic cognition of children	* Children develop racial attitudes but don't know who they are directed towards. * Initially, children differentiate race based on appearance. * As children develop, they begin to take more nuanced qualities into consideration. * Children from a young age present with racial preferences often espoused by larger society. * Children develop different levels (3) of ethnic perspective taking ability.
Raffaelli, Ontai (2004)	Study 1: 22 Adult Latinas Study 2: 2116 Latino College students		in-depth interviews and self-report surveys	* Latino parents socialize their female children with traditional gender roles and expectations. * Male and female children of Latino parents report different experiences at home related to household activities, socialization and freedom to pursue social activities. * Female children report more restrictions than male children.

Ramos (2014)	Latino immigrant mothers	Publication reviewing Latino families childrearing techniques	Interviews with Latina immigrant mothers about how they support education in their children	* Latina mothers are engaged in the educational development of their children. * Through sacrificio (sacrifice) and apoyo (moral support), Latina mothers encourage their children to go above and beyond their own level of education.
Reid, Flowers, & Larkin (2005)	NA	Text book on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	NA	In depth description and discussion about IPA and how to carry out an IPA research project.
Robinson (2015)	NA	Discussion of a four-point approach to sampling in qualitative interview-based research.	NA	* In order to specify a sample universal inclusion and exclusion criteria need to be identified. * For Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis studies, homogenous samples work best. * Interview research that has an idiographic aim needs small size samples. * Researchers using IPA are given a guideline of 3–16 participants.
Sanchez (2013)	N/A	Discussing increasing numbers of Latinos in the military	Review of data	* Hispanics make up 11.4% of active duty members. * In 2011, 16.9% of recruits were Latinos. * Latinos of low income families are more likely to join. * Three main reasons why Latinos join: Lack of career opportunities, tradition or wanting to belong to a masculine group.

Segal, & Segal (2004)	Military members	Review of who makes up the military	Data gathered about the U.S. military	* Less than 1% of the population served in the military. * 15,000 to 20,000 officers are commissioned each year. * 40 % of officers are commissioned through ROTC. * 22 %are commissioned through OCS or OTS. * 11% are direct commissions.
Smith (2011)	NA	Discussion of recent research projects using IPA to identify what makes a good IPA study	Review of studies that useIPA to analyze qualitativedata	* A good IPA study has a clear focus. * Good interviewing is essential to obtain proper data. * For papers with 4-8 participants, at least half should be represented in the themes. * The analysis should be interpretative.
Smith, & Smith (2013)	Women in the U.S. Military	Data sheet	Provide data regarding number of women in the U.S. Military in 2013	* 200,000 women are active duty. * 69 of these women are admirals and generals. * 167,000 are enlisted, 36,000 are officers. * Enlisted women make up 2.7% of front line units. * Health care was the top field for officers, followed by administration and intelligence.
Stryker, & Burke (2000)	N/A	Discussion of strands of identity development theory	Review of literature and analysis of these theories	* Stryker et al. focus on the linkages of social structures. * Burke et al. focus on the internal process of self verification. * These two theories meet at behaviors that express identity within the context of individuals.
Syed, & Azmitia (2008)	191 ethnically diverse emerging adults	Explore understanding of ethnicity in emerging adults and the link between ethnic identity process with ethnic experience.	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and written narrative about a time at which participants became aware of their ethnicity.	* Asian Americans and Latinos were in higher statuses than Whites.Mixed-ethnicity group had a pattern that was more similar to that of the * White participants than that of the Asian

				American or Latino participants. * Adding ethnicity-related experiences to the definition of content encour- ages a developmentally situated understanding of content. * Asian American emerging adults told many more stories about social exclusion. * Latinos discussed hostile comments or racist behavior.
Tajfel (1982).	NA	Discussion of intergroup relations and social identity	Review of the literature	* Intergroup behavior is when an individual interacts with other individuals or a group in terms of their group identification. * Explicit intergroup conflicts create intergroup discrimination. * Intergroup conflict can be controlled by various methods of "crossing" the membership of groups. * There cannot be intergroup behavior without categorization into groups or social categorization.
Tiscareno-Sato. (2014)	Latinas in the military	Article discussingLatina's achievementsin the military	Review of service women's military record in various branches of the military	* Lt. Colonel Olga Custodio was the first Latina to complete U.S. Air Force military pilot training. * Lieutenant Jessica Davila was the first Latina Coast Guard helicopter pilot. * She was rejected 7 times
Valdeon (2013)	NA	Explores the use of Hispanic and Latino and Latin American in U.S. official documents	Review of official documents and literature review	* First used the term Hispanic in 1970. * the official counting of U.S. citizens did not include a specific label for Hispanics until 1980 * Latino was self chosen by members of the Latino community. * Despite it being a self chosen term, up to 2013, it was still not widely

				used.
Vazquez (2002)	NA	Discussion of factors influencing low academic achievement of Latinas in the U.S.	Review of literature and official data regarding Latina's academic performance	* Familial ties and roles affect how Latinas see themselves and what they are supposed to achieve. * Family expectations may lead children to leave school early to work to support the family. * Latinas also face significant discrimination and lack of educational opportunities. * Latinas tend to not take care of themselves as they tend to place other's needs above their own.
Vazquez-Nuttall,Romero-Garcia, & De Leon (1987)	N/A	Provide statistics related to Latinos, particularly Latina females in the U.S.	Compilation of census data and U.S department of education, national center for education statistics	Drastic Increase in Latino population over the past decade (from compilation). Female headed households are more likely to be under poverty level.
Withworth (2008)	Military members	Exploration of how PTSD is influenced by militarized masculinity	Review of historical data and literature	* In WWII, PTSD was treated as a male form of female hysteria. * Men were humiliated and feminized if reported symptoms. * At present, female soldiers experience PTSD mostly due to sexual harassment and sexual abuse. * The military continues to use feminine comments to humiliate recruits. * Women are still the "other" recruits should avoid being.
Xu & Storr (2012)	NA	Discusses the process to understand the role of the researchers as instrument qualitative studies	Description of acquiring ability to use qualitative study appropriately.	* Describes in detail how a Master level student would gain the skills to use self as instrument for qualitative research study.

Young, & Nauta (2013)	254 civilians; 62 military affiliated students	Examine four forms of sexism and their influence on attitudes towards women in the military	Survey data using analysis of covariance (ANCOVAS)	* Students affiliated with the military have more negative attitudes towards women in combat. * Military-affiliated students did not differ with respect to their attitudes toward women in the military. * Old fashioned, modern, hostile and benevolent sexism contributed to attitudes toward women in the military.
Zoppi Rodriguez, (2016)	NA	Article discussing Col Zoppi's adversities faced as a military woman	NA	* Col Zoppi joined the Army in 1985. * Faced sexism and harassment. * Despite negative feedback from fellow soldiers, Col Zoppi went onto speak 5 languages and get a Ph.D. * Col Zoppi is one of the 15 Latinas who hold the rank of Colonel in the Army.

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APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Participant: _____

Principal Investigator: _____Sandra V. Slater_____

Title of Project: An exploration of gender identity and gender roles within the context of Latina's military service.

1. I, _____, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Sandra Vargas Slater, M.A., a doctoral student in clinical psychology at the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology, under the direction of Carrie Castañeda-Sound, Ph.D. I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

2. The overall purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Latinas serving, or who have served in the military. It seeks to understand how Latinas experience their gender identity while in a military environment and whether their gender roles were affected in any way by their military service.

3. I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study because I identify myself as Latina **AND** I have served as a member of the United States Army.

4. I understand that if either one of the above conditions are not true, I cannot take part in this study. I understand that if have experienced major life traumatic events, I cannot take part of this study as appropriate, immediate mental health care in the event of recurrence of symptoms cannot be guaranteed.

5. My participation will involve a one-hour to one hour and thirty minutes interview, which will be conducted during a single meeting. I understand that the interview will take place in a private room at the Pepperdine Library, West Los Angeles campus, at my residence, or at a local library, whatever is more comfortable for me. If I am unable to attend in person, I understand that the interview will be conducted via the secured video-conference program VSee. I understand that if I cannot meet in person and do not want to use this secured video-conference program, I cannot participate in this study. I will be asked to answer questions regarding my experiences during my military service, the ways in which I cope with challenges, and personal information regarding interactions with my family. I will also complete a survey regarding beliefs related to gender roles. I understand that the answers to this survey will be matched and analyzed against the answers I provide during the interview.

6. I understand that my interview will be audiotaped using a digital audio recorder and transcribed by either the researcher or a professional transcriptionist who has agreed to provide a non-disclosure agreement and has ensured that all transcriptionist hired at this particular service have signed a strict confidentiality agreement. These audio recordings will be used for research purposes only. The recording will be downloaded to a computer file immediately after the

interview and secured using a digital password. Once downloaded, the interviews will be deleted from the device used for recording. I understand that each recording/transcript will be coded with a pseudonym intended to represent the participants and that only the primary researcher, Sandra Vargas Slater, M.A., will possess the encrypted document protected by digital password, which links the pseudonyms to the names of the participants. I understand that the document will be destroyed once the study is concluded.

7. I understand that if I agree to it, I may be contacted within 6 months after the initial interview to gain some additional information regarding my responses to questions, and/or to clarify the researcher's understanding of my responses.

8. I understand that there is no direct benefit from participation in this study; however, the benefits to the military community and/or psychological professions include: helping to identify specific challenges faced by Latinas in the military, which should be taken into consideration during psychological treatment; Helping identify strengths and positive coping mechanisms, which may be encouraged during the treatment of Latina soldiers, and promoting awareness of an understudied section of the military and Latino population.

9. The potential risks of participating in this study are that I may feel some emotional discomfort during or after the interview. For example, I may feel bored as the interview will take about 1 to 1.5 hours. I may feel sad, nervous, or angry when discussing experiences related to my role as a female soldier or as a civilian. To lessen any discomfort, I understand that I can discuss my feelings with the researcher, decide to not answer questions, take breaks at any time, and/or terminate the interview if it is still in process. I understand that I will not be penalized in any way, neither personally nor professionally, if I do not complete the interview. If I experience emotional discomfort any time after the conclusion of the interview, I can contact one of the referral mental health sources on the list the researcher will give me today either immediately with the assistance of the researcher or at a later time. I also understand that the researcher will assess me for risk of suicide or self-injury if I become distressed during the interview to ensure my safety. I understand that if I am found to be at high risk, the researcher will establish a safety plan, which may include contacting immediate responders and contacting research supervisor Dr. Carrie Castañeda-Sound.

10. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from, the study at any time without prejudice to my military status or current employment. I also have the right to refuse to answer any question. I also understand that there might be times that the investigator may find it necessary to end my study participation, such as upon discovery that I do not meet the criteria above.

11. I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses, an intent to harm him/herself or others.

12. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. Carrie Castañeda-Sound at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, Pepperdine University, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or at Thema.S.Bryant-Davis@Pepperdine.edu

13. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understood. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

Participant's Signature Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator Date

APPENDIX C

Semistructured Interview Schedule

Semistructured Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule: Latinas' experience of serving in the military and its possible effect on gender identity and gender roles.

" Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I would like to introduce this interview and provide you with information regarding your participation. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my doctoral degree in clinical psychology. The purpose of this study is to have a better understanding about Latina's experience in the military, particularly related to gender roles and gender identity. All the responses you provide today will be confidential, and I will ensure this confidentiality by assigning you a pseudonym that is in no way related to your actual identity and protecting all data collected by storing it in a locked computer using a password protected and encrypted file. This interview will be recorded using a digital recorded in order to ensure that I don't miss any important information from the answers you provide. The recording will also be kept downloaded to a secured locked computer in a password-protected file and will be deleted from the recorder. Once the study is completed, the recordings will be completely deleted from the computer. Your comfort is very important to me, therefore you are free to not answer questions you are not comfortable with. Also, please be assured that your responses, participation or decision to withdraw from this study will not have any bearing on your employment status. Lastly, please keep in mind participation in this study is completely voluntary."

A. Introduction

1. In order to get to know you better, please tell me about yourself. Could you tell me your age, marital status, what type of job do you do and how long have you been in the military?

B. Family Values

1. What were you taught about being a woman and your role as a woman by your parents, close family members and your community?

2. Do you agree with these teachings? How do you define your role as a woman and where did you learn these roles?

C. Military Service

1. Could you describe how your personal beliefs regarding your family role as a woman positively or negatively influenced your decision to pursue military service?

(If explanation needed: ,..such as being a source of strength to your family, or other endorsed beliefs from Marianismo scale)

2. Have your experiences as an enlisted member of the military been affected by your personal or family's views regarding appropriate interaction with men.

3. How does the experience or prospect of being deployed affect the view you have about your role in your family?

4. In what ways do the view about yourself regarding your role as a woman change once you go home after work?

D. Challenges of being in command

1. What was your experience like when you first enlisted regarding receiving orders from superiors? From women? From men?

2. Have you had any experiences being in command? If so, what was it like for you to command other women? What was/is it like for you to command men?

3. What would you say is the most challenging aspect of being a Latina in the military?

4. How do you cope with these difficulties?

5. Could you explain—is there a difference in the way you perceive yourself as a woman and your identity as a woman now compared to when you first enlisted?

6. Have you ever experience[d] difficulty expressing your opinions or speaking up about an injustice during your military service? If so, please explain what influence this challenge and how did you cope.

E. Modification of gender and role identity due to military service

1. Has being in the military changed the way you view your role as a woman at work?

2. Has being in the military changed the way you behave or see yourself as a woman in your social and family life?

3. How have your family and friends cope with these changes (if any)? What would your family identify as the biggest impact of your military service on your behavior?

4. How do you feel regarding these changes and the way people around you respond to them?

- (If no changes perceived) How do you feel about NOT having experienced changes due to military service? Were you expecting to change in any way? If so, what did you expect would change about yourself?

APPENDIX D

Marianismo Beliefs Scale

Marianismo Belief Scale

Instructions: The statements below represent some of the different expectations for Latinas. For each statement, please mark the answer that best describes

A Latina	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
1.) must be a source of strength for her family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.) is considered the main source of strength of her family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.) mother must keep the family unified.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.) should teach her children to be loyal to the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.) should do things that make her family happy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.) should (should have) remain(ed) a virgin until marriage.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.) should wait until after marriage to have children.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.) should be pure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.) should adopt the values taught by her religion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.) should be faithful to her partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.) should satisfy her partner's sexual needs without argument.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.) should not speak out against men.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.) should respect men's opinions even when she does not agree.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.) should avoid saying no to people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.) should do anything a male in the family asks her to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.) should not discuss birth control.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.) should not express her needs to her partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.) should feel guilty about telling people what she needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19.) should not talk about sex.	☐	☐	☐	☐
20.) should be forgiving in all aspects.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21.) should always be agreeable to men's decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
22.) should be the spiritual leader of the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23.) is responsible for taking family to religious services.	☐	☐	☐	☐
24.) is responsible for the spiritual growth of the family.	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX E

Mental Health Referrals

Mental Health Referrals

This is a list of mental health referrals compiled for Los Angeles County serving military populations. In the event the participant is not in Los Angeles County, I will compile a list of possible referrals for the participant's location.

Emergency/ Suicide Prevention

1-800-273-8255 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255 press 1 Military Crisis Line

Tri-Care Military Insurance Providers

* The following providers were chosen from a list of clinicians provided by United Health Care and recommended due to their commitment to the evaluation of quality and outcomes.

Wilshire Valley Therapy Center

Wilshire Valley Therapy Center

Veteran's Resources

DCoE Outreach Center: The center can be contacted 24/7 by phone at 866-966-1020, by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org, or you can also go to DCoE Outreach Center Live Chat.

The Soldier Project: To schedule an appointment, or speak with a representative call (877) 576-5343

* You will be asked to leave a message for an Intake Professional. You can expect to receive a call back within 24 hours.

APPENDIX F

Recruitment Flyer

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEW ON EXPERIENCE SERVING IN THE ARMY RESERVE AS A LATINA FEMALE

We are looking for volunteers to complete an interview regarding your experience as a Latina Female in the Army Reserves. As a participant in this interview, you would be asked to answer questions regarding your experience as a Latina female in a military environment.

If you are interested, please contact Sandra Slater, MA at ███████████████████████████████████

Thank you!

APPENDIX G

Institutional Review Board Approval Notice

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

May 18, 2015

Sandra Slater

███

Protocol #: P0215D05

Project Title: An Exploration of Gender Identity and Gender Roles Within the Context of Latina's Military Service

Dear Ms. Slater:

Thank you for submitting your application, *An Exploration of Gender Identity and Gender Roles Within the Context of Latina's Military Service*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Castaneda-Sound, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by

the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at gpsirb@peppderdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.

Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney

Dr. Carrie Castaneda-Sound, Faculty Advisor