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LATINO YOUTH AND MACHISMO

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ABSTRACT

Academic and mainstream discourses have discussed Latino youth machismo in overwhelmingly negative terms, defining it as misogynistic, reckless, and violent. Even the sociological studies that have conceptualized machismo as a byproduct of social marginalization posit it as inherently destructive. Some emerging American literature has sought to consider the positive aspects of Latino masculinity through explorations of familism and caballerismo, but these have been set in opposition to, as opposed to a part of, machismo. This study aims to address post-structuralist calls for a more positive exploration of machismo by considering the ways in which Latino youth in Toronto conceive of their masculinities in relation to familism and social integration. Data emerging from focus group discussions suggest that these youth rely on machismo to assist in their integration into the Canadian labour market, their survival in the streets of their communities, and that there is a gendered basis to their adherence to familism.

Key words: familism, machismo, latino youth, post-structuralism

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Dedication

For Norangie. Without your love and guidance none of this would have been even remotely possible. Thank you for keeping my feet firmly on the ground. You mean everything to me.

Author's Declaration

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Introduction

Unlike in the United States, Latinos are part of a relatively small and new group within the Canadian mosaic. Having only begun to arrive in significant numbers during the late 1970's, Latino groups in Canada are not nearly as visible or powerful as they are south of the border: no Latino national sub-group has come to dominate in a city in the same way that Cubans have in Miami or Mexicans have in Los Angeles. Also, they are distributed in Canada's major urban centres with no significant spatial concentration, and have yet to become a viable political or economic force (Veronis 2007: 460). Just as significantly, and in part a consequence of the aforementioned, Latinos in Canada have only recently begun to engage in academic and public discussions of what it means to be a Latino in Canada. Yet, when considering Toronto specifically, it becomes clear that as the population continues to grow Latinos are seeking to become more visible within the local spatial and discursive landscape (Veronis 2007). Attempts at establishing a Latino neighbourhood, a stronger ethnic economy, and a community centre are some of the ways in which the community is currently seeking increased visibility.

The 2001 Census indicates that there are over 520,000 Hispanics in Canada, making Latinos one of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in the country. Additionally, it highlights that the changing demographic structure of the community has resulted in there being more Latino youth, especially second-generation, in urban centres than ever before. Despite this, academic interest has to a large extent excluded them from contemporary discourses that grapple with issues of multiculturalism and ethnocultural pluralism. This is especially true of second generation Latino youth and their interaction with urban institutions such as the educational and legal systems, which have only begun to be explored. This gap in the literature emerges as particularly significant when one considers the academic potential for addressing relevant themes

of multiculturalism and urban ethnic pluralism through Latino-Canadian case studies. For instance, it has been suggested that the very concept of Latin American ethnicity implies multiple identities (Wenger 1998: 158), for it necessitates an identification with linguistic and regional groups in spite of national, ethnic, religious, racial, and class based differences. Consequently, Latino-Canadians are one of those groups, like Caribbeans and Asians, whose heterogeneity speaks to the disconnect between multiculturalism's supposed acceptance of difference and its homogenizing tendencies. Latinos thus become an opportunity to investigate the interaction between immigrant communities, intra-ethnic heterogeneity, and multiculturalism in a complex and significant way.

Additionally, the vast amount of American literature that speaks to Latino issues raises particular questions that allow for a more meaningful exploration of Latino communities in Canada, as it provides certain starting points while at the same time allowing for comparative approaches that could potentially address the significance of varying institutional contexts in the two countries. In this sense, the study of Latino male youths is made particularly relevant by a contemporary social context that increasingly vilifies marginalized masculinities. Both social and academic discourses in Canada and the United States on racialized male youth have overwhelmingly portrayed them and their conceptualizations of masculinity as violent, misogynistic, and destructive. By beginning to consider the constructive or integrative potential of machismo among Latino youth in Canada, a more complex, honest, and accurate discussion of the interplay between masculinity and marginalization is possible.

The aim of this study is to begin to integrate the experiences of Latino youth in Canada to a broader literature that has uncovered causes for concern among various marginalized ethnic-minority communities in both Canada and the United States. Specifically, the relationship

between male youth violence and socioeconomic marginalization in Canada has been largely absent from Latino experiences in both the academic and public discourse realms. The American literature has framed this relationship in terms of a disconnect between mainstream understandings of hegemonic masculinity (set in opposition to protest masculinity) and the disenfranchisement of particular groups of men from achieving those ideals, a consequence of discrimination and socioeconomic marginalization. Working with these notions, I hope to complicate understandings of Latino masculinities as being defined through discourses of *machismo*, tie them to notions of 'protest masculinity' and consider *familism* as an avenue through which its constructive elements can begin to be explored. Throughout, by drawing on the familism literature, I seek to complicate understandings of machismo by addressing the ways in which its current conceptualization fails to allow for the possibility that gender-based understandings among Latino male youth may be beneficial to the individual, the family, and the community.

In many ways, this paper is a response to post-structuralist calls for the complication of the masculinities literature, which has become essentialist in its dealings with youth generally, and marginalized youth specifically. I seek to help develop this realm of inquiry by considering the origins of the social construction of Latino machismo within mainstream-discourse as 'all that is wrong in a man' (Adams 2006: 9), and analyzing the various ways in which Latino youth rely on gendered conceptualizations of manhood to positive ends.

Part 1 – Latino Canadians

In this section my aim is to provide a very brief description of some of the more pertinent issues related to Latinos in Canada that have been identified within the emerging literature. I

begin by considering the debate around the use of the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino*, touch on some of the diversity of Latino populations in Toronto, discuss the difficulties in trying to develop an accurate profile of the community, and, to conclude, discuss the lack of a strong institutionally complete community.

In North America the terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* are often used to refer to the same group of people, those who come or whose ancestors came from a Latin American country. In the United States, significant public discourses regarding the appropriateness of each term have been ongoing since the 1970s and have become so politically loaded that the use of one over the other has come to connote certain ideological affiliations within the American political landscape - conservative politicians tend to use *Hispanic*, while liberals are more likely to use *Latino* (Alcoff 2005: 396). The differences that the terms draw upon are thus meaningful and refer specifically to the various ways in which the communities and the individuals that comprise them conceive of themselves within the United States.

It is useful to note that those who prefer *Hispanic* do so because of its greater descriptive and explanatory value, and also because it connotes a certain historical and cultural tie without essentializing a diverse population (Gracia 2000). Others have argued that *Latino* is the more useful term in that it centralizes the marginalization and colonial condition experienced by Latin American populations in the U.S. and as such is more meaningful in creating political, economic, and social solidarity (Alcoff 2005: 405). The same debates have not as of yet materialized in the Canadian context and until they do there is no way of knowing what term, if any, is best suited to the Canadian experience. I have opted to use Latino in this work because my experiences growing up as one in Toronto suggest to me that it is used more commonly by both Latin Americans and the mainstream population. I am also inclined to believe that as we become more

visible in Toronto the political and social implications of the term Latino could be more useful in attempts to address the marginalization faced by Latin Americans in the city and country. For instance, the 2001 Census indicates that the average annual income for Latin Americans was $24,197, significantly less than the national average of $29,769. Within Toronto, it has been found that Latin American couples had an average annual income of about $35,400, just over half of what European couples averaged. Studies have also found that when considering housing and health, as well as educational attainment (Murdie and Texeira 2003), Latinos have continuously been among the most disadvantaged and underachieving ethnic groups in Toronto.

Challenges of Developing a Latino-Canadian Profile

There are various difficulties in attempting to develop an accurate profile of Latin American communities through the available census data, some of which have been raised in the academic discourse and many of which emerged in my own primary research. The most significant issue revolves around the ethnic origin categorization of the census itself, as there is substantial room for confusion on the part of respondents filling out the data. The wording of the 2001 Census asked: “To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?”. As some of the literature has rightly pointed out, among Latin Americans a myriad of answers ranging from Spanish to Chilean, to Caribbean, to North American, to black etc., are possible depending on the interpretation of the question (Veronis 2006: 3). Mexican immigrants and their offspring, for instance, can consider themselves as originating from a North American country, some may reject nation-state identity and respond based on their indigenous ancestry, or others may look back various generations and appeal to their European roots in responding. Similarly, respondents from Latin American countries such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico

or parts of Venezuela and Colombia, consider themselves Caribbean and often respond accordingly.

The confusion has affected demographic research on Latinos for quite some time, and it continues to do so. The 2001 Census uses 25 ethnic categories and subcategories to determine origin, and researchers on Latin American communities have had significant difficulty in determining how many Latin American respondents may have identified ethnically as something else as a result of confusion or interpretations of the Census origin question. North American, Spanish, and Caribbean are the particularly significant categories to which Latin American respondents may easily be mis-categorized. Unfortunately, these issues are rendered even more problematic when one attempts to develop a historical perspective as the question asked up until the 1981 census, "To what ethnic or cultural group did you or you ancestors (on the male side) belong on coming to this continent", was even more likely to impel Latin Americans to respond as 'Spanish' or 'European' and thus lead to under-representation of the community at large. This is especially true because in some Latin American countries North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean are considered to be part of the same continent (Baeza 2007).

Statistics Canada, on the recommendation of the Canadian Hispanic Congress, developed the 'Hispanic' category in a revision of the 2001 Census but has not committed to incorporating it in the future (Schugurensky and Ginieniewicz 2007: 17). It is also for this reason that the 2001 Census is still, at the writing of this paper, the best source for which to estimate the number of Latinos in Canada and its urban centres. This use of the term Hispanic includes all ethnic origins corresponding to a country with Spanish as its official language, anyone who declares Spanish as their mother tongue, or who was born in a Spanish speaking country (ibid.). This categorization is much more inclusive than the original census categories,

but does allow for the possibility of Spanish speaking immigrants from non Latin American countries to be included, such as those from Sahrawi, Equatorial Guinea, certain Oceanic Islands, and of course Spain. Additionally, it also excludes significant immigrant populations from Latin American countries where Spanish is not the official language, such as Brazil. These issues are not irrelevant. They develop significance when one considers that the size of each community "determines the amount of state funding it receives as per Canada's official policy of multiculturalism," which is important not only for community initiatives but also for the provision of social services - especially language specific ones such as settlement programs for newcomers (Veronis 2006: 3). Beyond the philosophical and methodological questions that these differentiations ask of the Census, there are significant practical differences in the numbers these two particular categories derive. For instance, if one remains true to the original 2001 Census categorizations then it can be said that there are approximately 244,430 people of Latin, Central, and South American origin in Canada, and about 76,860 in the Toronto CMA. On the other hand, if one considers the *Hispanic* category, then the number skyrockets to approximately 520,000 in Canada and 150,000 in the Toronto CMA. The latter numbers are generally considered to be more accurate than the former, but the problems that arise in attempting to develop a profile of Latin Americans in Toronto are nonetheless significant.

The demographic structure of the Latino community in Toronto is one that is very diverse and in which no particular national group, despite the larger number of Chileans, Peruvians, and Salvadorans, dominating either the economic or cultural scene (Veronis 2006: 7). This can be in large part attributed to the diversity that exists among Latin Americans in Toronto, as over 20 nationalities and 25 different ethnic origins constitute Hispanics in the Toronto CMA (see Table 1). The largest groups by place of birth in the Toronto CMA, according to the 2001 Census, are

Ecuadorians (9,175), El Salvadorans (9,075), and Chileans (7,130). As for self identification based on ethnic origin, the largest group is Latin/South/Central American (76,860), Spanish (65,000) and Chilean (9,175) (see Table 1). The purpose of Table 1 is meant to demonstrate the diversity that constitutes the community in the Toronto CMA.

It can be said that it is the particular diversity in national origin of Latinos in Toronto that has contributed to the inability to create a spatially visible and economically significant community. Studies have found, for instance, that Chileans are much more likely to participate in political, religious, artistic, and sports organizations that are Chilean-focused, as underdeveloped and financially strapped as they may be, than in broader Latin American organizations (Da 2002: 10). Another significant issue that hinders the ability of the community to develop institutional completeness[1] is the constant movement and relocation of Latin Americans within the city (perhaps an indication of upward mobility). It is common for groups to emerge and then disappear shortly after once its members relocate. Luisa Veronis (2006) indicates that the Latin American experience in Toronto points to a new-transnationalism that, "cuts across national differences and bridges, space as well as time, but [only temporarily] (10). When Latin Americans have been active in the establishment of significant institutions, such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), they have done so not as a community but as particular individuals working within other communities or individually. Today, Latin American community leaders are often relegated to informal political activities of advocacy through non-profit organizations that do not speak exclusively to Latin Americans (ibid: 38). Since cultural, ethnic, and national differences are vast, it is expected that the service

[1] Institutional completeness was first introduced by Breton (1964) to refer not only to the extensiveness of particular organization structures but also to the pervasiveness in their ability to cover varying aspects of social life. Generally, institutional completeness is conceptualized as the social networks, support mechanisms, and cultural, religious, social services that a community needs (Roberts and Rodney 1990: 4). An institutionally complete community is one that is able to provide these services to its members.

sector can be the point of unity for Latin American immigrants, as they often face the same hurdles and share a common language. Currently it is unknown how this general lack of community integration and resource allocation affects second-generation Latino youth in the city of Toronto. Unfortunately, the literature that is emerging does seem to suggest that Latino youth and their families are having significant difficulties within the realm of education, legal institutions, housing, and the labour market (James and Burnaby 2003; Murdie and Texeira 2003; Bernhard et al. 2004; Bernhard et al. 1997; Drenver 1996).

Part 2 – Latino Masculinities

Marginalized Masculinities as Protest

Despite having roots in 'second wave' feminist critiques of biologically based understandings of gender differences, a significant body of literature on men and masculinities failed to emerge until the 1990's. Academic and grassroots discourse defined the feminist movement of the 1970's and 1980's as 'bourgeois women's work', resulting in the marginalization of racialized women and of men from discussions of gender and performativity (hooks 1984). In identifying men as the agents of their oppression (ibid: 527), second wave radical feminists denied heterogeneity in men's gendered experiences, especially as they related to issues of class and race. This positioned men as equal benefactors in sexist patriarchal systems of oppression. Some prior ethnographic work had attempted to address notions of class and race among male youth in pre-WWII scholarship (Messerschmidt 1993: 6-10) but it was only within the context of 1990's socialist feminism that significant attention began to be paid to gendered conceptualizations of hegemonic and protest masculinities with regards to economically marginalized communities. To a large extent the expansion of the scholarship

emerged from studies of gay masculinities, but by the early 1990s interest in youth masculinity and violence had become a central pieces of the masculinities literature (Kimmel and Messner 2001: xiv).

While questions of how the social construction of masculinity is tied to crime were not asked until the late 1980s, studies that sought to consider the high gender ratio of violent crime were conducted as early as 1911 (Lombroso 1911 in Messerschmidt 1993: 5). Until the 1950's, academic debates revolved around whether criminal activity, especially among youth, was best attributable to biological or cultural explanations (ibid: 16). In the 1960's and 1970's social constructionist and socialization models were used to argue that girls committed fewer crimes than boys because they risked greater sanctions and were under more surveillance (ibid: 20, 24). These studies, even through social constructionist frameworks, were thus not interested in analyzing differences in gendered constructs as accounting for higher crime rates in boys, but rather the lower degree social monitoring and surveillance that presumably allowed them to transgress more freely than girls.

Messerschmidt (1993) was among the first to build on the relatively scarce literature that asked why girls engaged in less crime than boys. Moving away from arguments that emphasized the role of social disapproval in regulating the behaviour of girls, he proposed an analysis that considered male gender norms, in and of themselves, as legitimating violence and domination. Significantly, in many ways borrowing from the work of *strain theorists*, he considered how disenfranchisement and poverty among racial minorities constitutes an environment in which outlets for masculine identity formation are minimized and reduced to violent street gangs:

> "Because [marginalized] youth have no access to paid labour and their parents are unable to subsidize their youth culture needs, the youth gang in lower-working class, racial-minority communities takes on a new and

> significant meaning in as much as it is here where resources are available with which to sustain a masculine identity" (102).

Like Messerschmidt, the majority of studies that have engaged with male youth through a gendered lens, especially in consideration of racialized and marginalized communities, continue to do so with reference to violence.

The work of Connell (1995) and Kimmel (1996) added substance to arguments such as Messerschmidt's through their positioning of masculinity within particular socio-historical contexts. Arguing that masculinity as a personal practice can be understood only within the context of societal institutions and history (Connell 1995: 602), they proposed that societies had multiple masculinities that, hierarchically, legitimated power relations and disenfranchised particular men from mainstream manhood. This was usually accomplished through racial discrimination and economic marginalization. From scholarship of this sort, conceptualizations of 'protest' and 'hegemonic' masculinities have become a primary means through which discussions of gender and youth are often framed. In this dyadic formulation, it is suggested that outlets for expressing masculinity vary from those that are socially acceptable and desired (hegemonic), such as having commercial consumption power, to those that are denounced and criminalized (protest), including various types of reckless and violent behaviour (Walker 2006). As certain communities and individuals become disenfranchised through poverty and discrimination, they often engage in the type of masculinity construction that emphasizes recklessness and violence as a sort of 'protest' of their marginalization (Broude 1990: 103). 'Protest masculinity' has thus come to signify a particular type of behaviour among males that is by definition characterized as aggressive and destructive, with juvenile delinquency being interpreted as the prime instance of masculine protest (ibid: 103). The conceptual links between masculinity and violence are most often explained through a series of 'status-envy' theories that

continue to draw on the particular relationship between a lack of commercial consumption power and male youth violence in ethnic minority neighbourhoods (ibid: 103).

Drawing from these ideas, academic and media outlets have covered the 'problem of youth masculinity' in detail over the past two decades. They respond to, and perpetuate, a growing concern over a series of violent events that have gained public notoriety throughout North America over the years, including the increased presence of youth street gangs in urban centres, race related violence in rural communities, and school shootings. While most scholarship continues to point to social marginalization as the key contributor to male youth violence, some critical media productions, including the documentary *Tough Guise* (Jhally 1999), have pointed the finger at the prevalence of violence in the commercial public realm (movies, music, magazines etc.). The 'problem with masculinity' is a global one, as the World Health Organization statistics indicate that the leading cause of death for men 15-24 worldwide are accidents and homicides, "both directly related to how boys and men are socialized" (Barker 2005: 6). In countries such as Brazil and South Africa there is a demographic trend that will result in there being millions of more black women than black men by the year 2050, principally as a result of male on male violence (ibid: 6). As these statistics indicate, these issues are as much racialized as they are gendered given that it is most often ethnic and racialized minority male youth that suffer the most serious consequences from intra-ethnic violence. The masculinity problem has made its way into both media headlines and academic journals, but whether expressed explicitly or implicitly, the problem of 'minority masculinities' predominates the discussion in both the American and Canadian literature.

For instance, comparative studies that have dealt with issues of violence against women rightly point out that said violence occurs at all levels of society and among all groups (Totten

2003: 1). Like Messerschmidt (1993), scholars focusing on youth violence in Canada suggest that while masculinity is malleable within any given society, for minority male youth violence against women is among the most easily accessible resources with which masculinity can be constructed (Totten 2003: 2). Girlfriend abuse among economically marginalized youth in Canada has been found to be especially prevalent among racial minorities, and positively related to a belief in patriarchal power structures (ibid.). As one Latino respondent indicated, a "[poor] man can get by without [wealth] if he is physically tough and can control his family" (12). At the same time, it was also found that the ideal man is one that has a "good job, a nice car, a nice home …" (ibid.). Through such findings presented in Totten's (2003) work, it is clear that a framework of 'protest masculinity' within the marginalized Canadian youth context is worth considering.

Few Canadian studies on marginalization and crime have specifically addressed issues of masculinity constructs. Yet, there is a body of work that suggests black youth often frame their behaviour in terms of 'protest' (see Manzo and Bailey 2005; Codjoe 2001). Without engaging with conceptualizations of masculinity, Manzo and Bailey (2005) nonetheless provide substantial evidence that black Canadian youth conceive of themselves in terms consistent with culturally derived stereotypes and use these stereotypes to undertake 'deviant' behaviour, including criminal activity. The authors argue that black male youth sometimes behave in 'deviant' ways in order to create a distance between themselves and the mainstream white society, thus pointing to the interplay between identity formation and protest in a particular Canadian context. Codjoe's work (2001) also found that black students in Canada face significant 'racialized barriers' that result in them positioning themselves, and being positioned by others, in opposition to non-black students. The same phenomenon has been found to occur with Latino youth within

the Canadian educational system (see Berhard et al. 1997, 1998, 2004, 2005). As with Mexican youth in the United States, for instance, the processes with which Latinos in Canada react to systemic and institutional discrimination within the school system are often through violence and delinquency (Edwards and Romero, 2008). Unfortunately, the literature on their particular experiences is both scarce and non-gendered in analysis, and as such more research on marginalized Latino youth in Canada is needed.

While studies dealing with Latino youth in Canada are not widely available, Phillipe Bourgeois' (1995) ethnographic work on Puerto Rican drug dealers in East Harlem is among the best examples of contemporary scholarship on masculinity and violence within a Latino-American community. He pays particular attention to issues of social dislocation, marginalization, and the construct of manhood through violence against women. His accounts of how experiences of 'running trains' (gang rapings) among adolescents, and the ways in which being physically and emotionally capable of performing a gang rape speaks to achieving manhood in these particular street gangs, echoes the arguments posited by scholars such as Messerscmhidt (1993). Because of the poverty and discrimination faced by these Puerto Rican youth in New York, Bourgeois, is thus able to relate their experiences of masculinity construction to issues of poverty through notions of protest masculinity. In this case, the young men used violence (especially against female teenagers) to protest both their disadvantaged position vis-a-vis other males and the greater success of Puerto Rican women in accessing mainstream economic avenues through higher educational attainment and better paying jobs. At the same time, their experiences also speak to understandings of 'hegemonic masculinity' in the sense that the participants responded positively to the mainstream ideal, the middle-class American dream. Bourgeois suggests that to these youth, the possibility of achieving a middle-

class lifestyle without having to resort to violence and drug dealing was, though distant, what they strived for. In many cases they would stop drug dealing to enter low paying wage work, only to find themselves unable to keep those positions as a result of discrimination and lack of work-related skills. For the purpose of understanding masculinity construction among Latino youth, studies such as these are useful insofar as they point to the relationship between marginalization and violence.

Yet, the conceptualizations of 'hegemonic' and 'protest' masculinities that emerged from earlier works have only recently begun to address their relationship to cultural pluralism by, significantly, bringing questions of race and ethnicity into what had previously been a primarily class-based analysis (Petersen 2003). In multicultural societies such as the United States and Canada this incorporation is long overdue, as the intersection of race and class has by now been well studied at both the structural and micro-sociological levels. The experiences of Latino youth in relation to identity construction through tropes of masculinity is particularly lacking in Canadian scholarship that relates specifically to understandings of hegemonic and protest masculinities. This is a major gap in the literature given that such endeavors can be beneficial to immigration and settlement policies because marginalized communities, and especially the male youth within them, are often stigmatized by mainstream stereotypical understandings of their of masculinity. I am referring specifically to processes such as the racialization of crime and the barriers faced by these youth in employment, housing, and educational institutions (see James and Burnaby 2003).

At the same time, there is an emerging body of post-structural and post-colonial literature that is beginning to question the analytical usefulness of previous conceptualizations of 'hegemonic masculinity'. It has been suggested that 'hegemonic masculinity' is a "myth

perpetuated by scholars through their … failure to acknowledge the history of, and particular significations attached to, the term *masculininty*" (Petersen 2003: 58). Echoing Connell's argument that conceptualizing masculinity exclusively through violence has made any form of masculinity environmentally destructive (in Messerschmidt 1993: 46), this emerging literature seeks to consider the positive elements of youth masculinity. More specifically, there has been a call for the consideration of the *integrative potential* of protest masculinity for immigrant and marginalized communities, not just its potential for violence (Walker 2006). These articulations come from works such as Yasser Payne's (2006) *"A Gangster and a Gentleman": How Street Life–Oriented U.S.-Born African Men Negotiate Issues of Survival in Relation to Their Masculinity*, where he considers how conceptualizations of being a 'man' support personal, family, and community well being in a national economy that has historically been closed to black males.

Some scholars on Latinos in the United States have also argued that a more positive interpretation of Latino masculinities is needed (Casas et al., 1994; Mirande´, 1997; Neff et al., 1991), but most scholarship continues to function within a framework that seeks to uncover its many negative aspects. For this reason, post-structuralist calls for new scholarship that engages with masculinity more broadly, including a revision of past works in order to draw out the ways that masculine conceptions can be constructive, is necessary within Latino studies as well. When dealing specifically with transnational Latino families in urban centers, academic conceptualizations of *familism* may be a useful starting point. Firstly, however, it is necessary to consider the ways Latino masculinities have been discussed academically and the role of machismo in those conceptualizations.

Conceptualizing the Social Construction of Machismo and Familism

The social construction of Hispanic masculinity is intricately tied to understandings of machismo, both within Hispanic communities and mainstream discourse. In this brief literature review I seek to focus specifically on Latin American communities in Canada and the United States, exploring the social construction of Hispanic masculinity as threatening and of machismo as destructive, especially when considering youth.

Despite being a popular term in both academic discussion and broader society, machismo has defied clear definitional description. Loosely, it refers to a standard of behaviour exhibited by men in Latino cultures, but the implications of its use among both Hispanic and English speaking circles have generally been exclusively negative (Arciniega et al. 2008). Academically, machismo had often been used in describing the chauvinistic, sexist, and reckless behaviours of Latino youth in much the same way as notions of hyper-masculinity have been used in describing those of other marginalized groups (Arciniega et al. 2008: 1). Having first appeared in Latin American literature in the mid-twentieth century, the term has been used by Latina feminists and scholars to criticize the patriarchal structure of gendered relations in Hispanic communities and beyond, often being evoked as a descriptor of a particular Latin American brand of patriarchy (Ramirez 1999: 7). Some studies have suggested that according to white mainstream discourses machismo represents “all that is wrong in a man” (Adams 2006: 9) and has been used in this rhetoric (as well as some Hispanic discourses) to explain why Latino male youth experience difficulties in educational institutions and have high rates of criminality (Caravantes 2006). These discourses argue that Latino masculinity (machismo) is defined by violence, recklessness, and misogyny, the expressions of which contribute to a lack of interest in education and behavioural problems in schools for Latino males, which then result in criminal activity outside of educational institutions (ibid).

Recent studies that have, in different ways, taken up issues that speak to the social construction of young Hispanic masculinity demonstrate the ways in which these mainstream understandings of machismo are reproduced and often internalized by Latinos in Canada and the United States. Drawing comparisons between urban Canadian centres such as Toronto and cities in the so-called 'new South' is relevant given the increased Latino presence in both during the past ten years, and the increased media attention to issues of youth violence and gang culture among ethnic minority males. Lisa Paulin's discourse analysis of the Latino Rights movement in the new U.S. South (2007) found that in addition to issues of illegal Mexican migration and xenophobia being pervasive among the print media analyzed, the representation of Latino male youth gangs had received increased attention and vilification, and was framed as an 'ongoing news story' despite little evidence to suggest increased gang activity in the area (61). In fact, most of the newspapers discussed responded to increased concerns regarding immigration and security by covering issues of male youth Hispanic gangs more than any other subject dealing with Latin Americans. They also featured issues related to these gangs more often on the front page than those tied more closely to border security (ibid). Gang coverage in this particular study, despite its prevalence, was also found to be the least relevant to the actual stories being discussed (91). For instance, when covering school fights or crimes involving Latino male youth the articles would often ask whether the individuals were gang members without necessarily having information needed to justify asking the question or beginning to address a possible answer (92). News media such as those covered by Paulin perpetuate the stereotype of male Latino youth as disproportionately violent and criminal, often attributing these behaviours to the Latino culture (ibid. 109), thus implicitly referring to masculinity and machismo as explanatory tools for understanding the Latino problem in the New South.

American literature also acknowledges the social construction of Latino masculinity as particularly problematic because its use is part of a homogenizing process that denies the reality of immense cultural heterogeneity among Hispanics (Wester 2008: 304). In this way, popular perceptions of Latino youth as expressed in the media, movies, television programs, art, music, and other sources of popular culture are discriminatory and racist not only for perpetually representing Latino youth in violent ways, but also for framing them as 'all the same' (ibid. 305). When white mainstream discourses take up tropes of machismo among Latino youth, there is always the risk that it will be misused because it relies on "dated and racist sociological research, and is inaccurately ascribed to the entire culture" (ibid. 305). The problematic of conceiving of Latino masculinity in this way is made all the more evident when one considers that Latino youth and men who are considered to not typify the chauvinism, violence, sexism, and recklessness that have come do define machismo are discussed in terms such as "he transcended Latino machismo" or "embraced American attitudes and behaviours" (ibid. 306). Not only do these formulations construct mainstream American gendered ideologies as non-problematic, but in defining the 'enlightened Latino' as having abandoned traditionally ethnic gendered ideologies these discourses also necessarily construct Hispanic masculinity as exclusively problematic.

In Canada, no discourse analyses or other social scientific studies have taken up the social construction of Latino masculinity in a meaningful way. There are, however, certain studies and representations that one can draw on to suggest that the construction of Latino masculinity in Canada mirrors that of the United States in many ways. In 1999 the Toronto Police Association posted posters throughout TTC subway stations, in support of the Progressive Conservative provincial electoral campaign, that depicted a group of weapon wielding young men that were clearly identifiable as Latinos with the message "help fight crime by electing

candidates who are prepared to take on the drug pushers, the pimps and rapists …" (LACAR 2003). The individuals depicted in the poster, who were in reality members of an East Los Angeles Latino gang, perpetuated the stereotype that Latino male youth should be feared. Interestingly, the Latinos were chosen specifically, as opposed to Black or other ethnic gangs, so as to not alienate segments of the electorate that were deemed important (LACAR 2003).

Studies that have dealt with the experiences of Latino youth in Toronto schools have also found this stereotype to be particularly pervasive, as teachers, principals, and other students often conceive of Latino boys and teenagers as non-academic and violent (Bernhard et al. 2004; Bernhard et al. 1997; Drenver 1996). Latino male students, along with their black counterparts, have been found to be the most impacted by 'zero-tolerance'[2] policies in Ontario, with studies indicating that direct discrimination and stereotyping of minority male students is to a large extent responsible for the overrepresentation of Latinos and Blacks among those who have been suspended or expelled as a result of these policies (Bernhard et al. 2004). A recent paper that analyzed gang membership in Montreal discovered that Latino gang members are more likely than all others to conceptualize their membership in gangs as being in line with societal expectations of them and with their ethnicity (De laco 2006). This manifests the pervasiveness of conceptualizing Latino masculinity as violent and criminal, both from the perspective of the mainstream and from that of Latino youth themselves. More research is needed to address this particular finding, and the social construction of Latinos in Canada generally, in a more complex way. Yet, based on what Canadian data is available, and drawing on data from the United States (especially from the new South, where Latino populations have only recently begun to settle in

[2] The 'zero-tolerance' policy in Ontario, known officially as the Safe Schools Act was passed in 2000 in response to increasing media attention to violence in schools. It has been accused of being reactionary and overly tough on children who are required to serve a 21 day suspension for such offenses as threatening to inflict bodily harm, swearing at a teacher, or vandalism. Immigrant and minority children are especially disadvantaged as their parents often lack the necessary language skills and familiarity with the school system to properly challenge disciplinary actions taken against their children (Bernhard et al., 2004).

large numbers), it becomes clear that Latino masculinity has been constructed in a way that positions it as violent, misogynistic, reckless, and generally destructive.

Yet, machismo, like all social constructions, should be understood within particular historical and social contexts that come to define it in a multiplicity of ways. For Latinos, gendered constructs of what it means to be a man (machismo) are not defined through the violence and misogyny that characterizes mainstream understandings of Latino masculinity. As has been pointed out by scholars such as Arciniega et al., (2008), even understandings of machismo in Latin American culture are not exclusively negative as they do involve issues of honour, responsibility, perseverance and courage, related to both individual and group interaction. For instance, the Latino male's understanding of his masculinity, contrary to stereotypes, has been found to be informed by considerable child care responsibilities, respect for women's autonomy, and a non-violent demeanour (Gutmann 1996). In this way, machismo comes to signify both positive and negative understanding of Latino male identity within the immigrant context. Similar to how Yasser Payne's (2006) has illustrated the ways in which economically marginalized urban Black males develop a sense of manhood that, while violent at times, emphasizes responsibility to one's family and community even among gang members, the constructive elements of machismo should be read into broader discussions of Latino diasporic and immigrant communities in Canada and the United States. The aim, as Payne has noted, is not to deny the patriarchal understandings that may inform this emphasis on responsibility, but to incorporate a more complex understanding of masculinity into discussions of machismo and so-called hyper masculinity. Unfortunately, the scholarship that has recognized this has, perhaps as a result of the widespread destructive connotations that the word entails, opted to re-label the positive dimensions of machismo through terms such as *caballerismo* (gentlemanship) or

familism (Arciniega et al. 2008). As opposed to deconstructing conceptualizations of machismo as purely negative, such studies have further essentialized the term by stripping it of, instead of highlighting, its potentially constructive elements (Ingoldsby 1991). In many ways this is related to, and parallels, the reluctance of scholarship to consider the constructive potential of protest and marginal youth masculinities. I propose that the literature on attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of *familism* among diasporic Latino communities in the United States offers some ground for addressing these oversights, which can then be considered in the Canadian context.

Having briefly outlined the ways in which Latino masculinities have been constructed socially I suggest that instead of harboring on marginality, males, and violence (as much of the literature does) a more complete gendered analyses of marginalization can be achieved by considering the ways in which tropes of manhood can be related to, for instance, behaviours that assist in the settling of diasporic families. Though the familism literature is indeed scarce generally, especially in Canada, I believe that that academic discourses of familism provide a promising avenue through which this can be done, and the constructive potential of machismo read into the body of work on marginalized youth.

The growing body of North American literature concerned with the dynamics of immigration and transnationalism suggest that particular ethnic communities, especially Latinos, are more likely than the mainstream society to emphasize the well-being of the family over the needs and desires of its individual members (Alvarez 2005: 4). Academic discourse has conceptualized this collectivist orientation as part of a culture of reciprocity and concern known as *familism* (Valenzuela 1999: 720). Yet, while much scholarship has dealt with issues of gendered relationships and identity (re)formation among adult immigrants, fewer studies have considered the gendered experiences of their children within the immigrant familial context.

Those that have often spoken of gendered dimensions of familism with regards to how girls conceptualize their contributions to the immigrant household in relation to Latina gendered ideologies and expectations, but the contributions of boys and male teens to settlement initiatives have been devoid of gendered analysis. Valenzuela (1999), Alvarez (2005), and Cammarota (2000), for instance, have all argued that Latina girls and adolescents tend to conceive of their domestic labour as part of a gendered dynamic that governs Hispanic families, and take part in caregiving with particular ideological affinity towards their mothers. Yet, while they document the participation of Latino boys and young men in the settlement necessities of their households, both within the private (caregiving, domestic work etc.) and public (wage labour, advocacy etc.) spheres, they fail to relate said participation in relation to their gendered understandings of machismo/caballerismo. This is especially significant when one considers that these studies tend to find only minimal differences in the ways in which young Latinas and Latinos contribute to their households.

For instance, when considering the role of children in assisting the settlement of their immigrant families within the public realm, Valenzuela identified four main institutional settings at which this took place: schools, labour markets and legal and political institutions, health service institutions, and with financial resource and complex transactions (1999: 729). He found no indication of gender roles dictating filial participation in any of these activities, but did suggest that boys and girls do so in adherence to very different gendered expectations of them - in this case, boys conceive of themselves as having more responsibility to help the family in the public realm than their sisters precisely because of their gender (ibid: 728). Unfortunately, Valenzuela's analysis is more concerned with the gendered perceptions of young Latinas in relation to familism, and this realm of inquiry is left unexplored. Cammarota's research on the

financial contributions of Hispanic adolescents to their families also found no indication that boys were less likely than girls to work outside the home in order to bring money into it (2000: 1-2). In fact, these studies highlight the ways in which Latino boys and youth conceptualize their participation in these kind of activities through discourses of familism: a responsibility to contribute to the household, being there for the emotional and material needs of family members, and working together to successfully integrate into American society. When one considers these dialogues in relation to what have been identified as the positive elements of machismo, conceptualized by some as caballerismo (Arciniega et al. 2008) and even as familism generally (Ingoldsby 1991), then the relationship between the gendered constructs of Latino masculinities and their household contributions (both economic and not) become clearer. This is especially true of studies that consider the experiences of Latino youth that grow up in single mother households, whereby tropes of responsibility and taking care of one's family, are commonly used to conceptualize boys' early entrance into the wage labour force (Cammarota 2000).

Unfortunately, studies on immigrant family integration that lend themselves to masculinity analyses are few and far between, as they generally take gender neutral approaches or fail to consider the role of children in settlement processes. Once again, it becomes clear that there is a need to incorporate understandings of masculinity to scholarship on marginal communities and immigrant families. In Canada the opportunity to expand on this literature is made all the more plausible and significant given the increased number of Latinos who now dwell within its major cities. The aim of such studies should not be to essentialize masculinity and machismo in either a positive or negative way. I hope to have shown that they can be conceived in both senses despite the fact that they are generally viewed as negative and destructive. I wish to promote discussion by complicating the use of the term and considering its

integrative potential for minority youth. The familism discourses that have been used in the American literature to discuss the integration of Latino and other immigrant groups into the increasingly neoliberal settlement climate are useful because they speak to both the social capital and cultural capital that they rely on. Reading masculinity into them and incorporating a gendered analyses that takes the experiences of males into account is necessary for the development of a more comprehensive examination of the settlement process. This is crucial as it becomes increasingly clear that marginalized immigrant male youth experience particular difficulties and discrimination in the educational and legal systems, and in housing markets. As I suggested earlier, the academic potential in studying Latino communities in Canada and the United States from a comparative framework is particularly interesting given the ability of such work to draw out the intricacies of the institutional differences that exist in both settings, and especially in multiculturalism policy.

Part 3 – Methodology, Findings, and Discussion

This study uses data attained from two focus group discussions. It is felt that focus groups are the most adequate data collection method for this project because they allow for data to emerge from open ended discussions that may not otherwise emerge in interviews or other research methods (Morgan 1996). In particular, focus groups have been used in sociology to great success in the development of research in areas where the literature is especially scarce (ibid.). In addition, in-depth interviews work better because of time constraints and are useful in the development of research questions and avenues of inquiry where a 'saturation point' can be reached in which the data emerging from the interviews becomes repetitive (ibid.). This point could take dozens of interviews, making interviews impractical given the constraints for this

project. At the same time the other major method that has been used to study issues of machismo among Latinos in the United States, survey research, is also impractical because it requires a much more defined research plan that does not allow for new questions to emerge. Nonetheless, the focus group guide and questions were to a large degree formulated from the themes identified in the existing American survey research (refer to Appendix A).

Participants were recruited through an advertisement that was posted at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples and an email that was circulated to the list serve of the Organization of Latin American Students. Snowball sampling, useful in identifying people with particular characteristics (Patton 1990), was used to gather participants for the research. It is not necessary to have a representative sample of the male Latino-Canadian youth population, given the exploratory nature of this project.

The discussions consisted of two focus groups, one with six participants and the other with five, that lasted just over an hour in length. The participants were all self-identified Latino males between the ages of 19-23. All were raised and schooled in Canada, with six of the participants having arrived as immigrants to Toronto prior to turning 5 years old, and the other five having been born in the Canada to immigrant parents. Of the eleven participants two had some post-secondary education, at least four did not complete high school but one of them is currently enrolled as a mature student at a local university[3]. The participants originate from a variety of Central and South American countries and self identify as Latino, though phenotypically the group was quite diverse in terms of 'racial markers' such as skin tone and hair type; all of the participants claimed a mestizo identity (mixed European and indigenous

[3] This particular participant did not complete enough high school credits to finish grade 9 prior to dropping out. Last year, after two years of preparation, he successfully completed a program at a local university that admits a small number of students who did not complete high school into undergraduate studies. Currently he is a full time student.

ancestry), there were no afro-Latino participants, and two of the participants were phenotypically 'white' to the extent that they discussed their skin colour as in some ways being at odds with popular conceptions of their ethnicity. Additionally, the participants all claim to have come from low income families, and nine of the eleven were raised in single mother households.

The aim of the focus groups undertaken for this study was to consider the ways in which academic discourses of machismo could be complicated by considering the role of youth masculinity in relation to behavioural and attitudinal familism. Additionally, the extent to which these understandings, both in the literature and general discourse, could be extrapolated from the American to the Canadian context needed to be explored. The findings are presented in three sections: first, I discuss the ways in which participants demonstrate a strong adherence to the attitudes associated with Latino familism, and the ways they experience familism in Toronto. I then discuss how the participants conceive of their masculinity and of machismo, which they consider important aspects of their experience of familism and caballerismo. I conclude by briefly addressing the context of Canadian multiculturalism as it is understood by participants in relation to their masculinity, suggesting what I consider to be a potentially important difference between their experiences and those of many Latinos in the United States.

On Latino Familism in Toronto

Unlike in the United States, where quantitative studies in various disciplines have demonstrated that Latino-Americans adhere to understandings of familism to a much greater extent than other groups, in Canada it is unknown whether notions of familism play an important role in the lives of Latinos. To the participants in this study, however, it certainly does. Four themes related to attitudinal familism are explored in the American literature: the importance of

familial support, of familial interconnectedness, familial honour, and of sacrifice for the family. Participants in both focus groups demonstrated strong support for these ideals and related their acceptance of them as essential to their conceptualization of what it means to be a Latino man. For instance, when considering the difficulties associated with being a racialized minority male in Toronto, especially with regards to discrimination and racism, the participants often spoke of their families as the only people whom they could depend on for help and the only ones they would accept assistance from. While many of the avenues through which the participants constructed their masculinity involved their group of friends (i.e. through drinking, gambling, fighting, etc.) they indicate that the relationships they had with their family members, especially their mothers, were the most important in their lives. For instance, a few of the respondents claimed that if their girlfriends were not liked by their mothers then they would terminate the relationship out of respect and also to avoid problems down the road. In terms of attitudes, the respondents were in general agreement that all external relationships came after that of the ones they have with their family members, especially those with their mother. Among the most telling lines of conversation that illustrate this point came from Pedro[4] who stated that,

> One of the first things I talk to any girl about is my mother. I tell them that when my mom is older she is going to live with us and she has to be okay with that otherwise that's it, it's over. Simple like that.

Respondents from both focus groups believe, like Pedro, that they will have continuing financial and emotional responsibilities to their mothers as they get older, and claim that they will prioritize the well being of their mother over whatever relationship may emerge. Even those respondents who believe that their ageing parents would be better off with their sibling, usually a sister, still consider that they will have financial responsibilities towards their mother in the future. The terms used in discussing these concepts were to some degree gendered as they spoke

[4] All names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

directly to their conceptualizations of what it means to be 'a good son'. Javier for instance said that while,

> [his] sister could probably take care of [his] mom better with all the cooking and cleaning and all that, for [him] it's probably more about money because [he's] a guy. It's one of those things you just have to do … you can't not take care of your mom and still be all like 'I'm a man'. What kinda man does that?

As was mentioned prior, many studies on Latino families in the United States also find these types of attitudes among youth, but they don't consider the extent to which gender influences the type of responsibilities that male youth expect to take on once they are in a position to do so. In particular, continuing and long-term economic contributions to their families and to particular family members are their primary ways in which these youth conceive of their familial responsibilities. To them it is natural that these responsibilities fall on them because as men they feel that of the most useful things they have to offer, and while other types of responsibilities (such as care-giving and emotional care) are significant to them, the economic is still the most important contribution because it is what a 'good son does'.

Family honour is also particularly important to the participants in this study. As with Latinos in the United States, many of them spoke of the importance of not allowing their family to be disrespected. One of the main reasons for which some considered being physically tough an important aspect of their masculinity is precisely the ability to be able to 'defend' your family name. As indicated by Orlando it is important to,

> not back down when somebody challenges you because if you do then everyone is going to know you're a punk and people are going to think that your whole family is like that. Or if somebody is saying shit about somebody in your family you have to be able to stop it...

As the American literature indicates, one of the best indications about Latino youth's adherence to familism is their willingness to sacrifice for their family, that is to put the needs and desires of the group over his own. Most of the discussions that related to familism that took place in these focus groups were indicative of these attitudes. But the most telling examples of concrete behaviours that relate to a belief in familism came when discussing the various ways in which the participants engage in such sacrifice. There was a general agreement that Latino youth "would grow up faster" than the mainstream population, meaning that they take more responsibility at a younger age. One respondent, for instance, claimed that a primary factor in him deciding to drop out of high school was to find full time employment that would allow his mother to make ends meet. Another participant suggested that he also moved back in with his mother in order assist her financially and also to help her emotionally as she was suffering with some mental health issues. Stories such as these were surprisingly common in the participants of both focus groups. Even those whose parents were not in a position where they required these types of attention still participated in the family economy, usually since childhood, as indicated by this exchange:

> Andres: "it's true we just start growing faster and working earlier. To make money."
>
> Leo: "I didn't have to but I still did cuz you know she's my mom, I didn't come home and watch cartoons and all that shit. Most of the time was like 'I'm going to go clean some banks'.
>
> Andres: "It [is] like that for a lot of people".

On Machismo in Toronto

The available literature on Latino youth indicates that much of their masculinity can be conceptualized through understandings of machismo. While some studies have indicated that

there are positive elements to Latino conceptualizations of masculinity - generally labeled caballerismo or even familism - the misogyny, recklessness, and violence associated with machismo remains a central focus. It would appear that these notions can in fact be extrapolated to the Canadian context, as the youth in this study generally indicated that machismo played an important role in their lives, that they were in fact machistas, and that many took pride in it. To begin with, it is important to note that their understanding of machismo is generally in line with what the American literature indicates. Reckless behaviours such as over drinking, drug use, excessive gambling, criminal activity, and violence were all important aspects of what constituted machismo for the participants. The participants indicated that all of these activities, especially in relation to competition, was what machismo was all about. One participant explained,

> its all about competition. Being able to drink someone under the table. Being able to bet with someone. Beating someone down. Its competition. Otherwise it wouldn't be fun.

Attitudes regarding gendered roles were also significant as most participants agreed that a machista, by definition, is someone who is able and willing to control their wives and families. Significantly, this ability to control others applied not only to those with whom a machista has a personal relationship with, but everyone else as well. As one participant claimed,

> machismo is about being able to control yourself and everyone else. At home it's your wife [that you control] but on the streets it's anybody. Its about being the top dog, the alpha dog. You can control anyone. That's machismo.

To some participants the notion of being in control was based on a certain appreciation for pride. For them a machista is defined primarily by someone with excessive pride, and who through that pride is always willing to protect themselves and their family.

Also in line with the available literature, machismo to these youth was distinguished from caballerismo primarily in the way the two understandings speak to their relationship with women. The participants not only demonstrated an understanding of machismo that coincided with what the literature has outlined in terms of their relationships with women, but many of the participants claimed to relate to their girlfriends in these particular ways. Telling their girlfriends what to do, defining who she can go out with, what friends she can have relationships with, and controlling them in these sorts of ways seemed to be indicative of many of their relationships. A few of the participants indicated that they did not feel the need to seek this sort of control with their girlfriends, yet they also indicated that they think of themselves as having more power in the relationships as a result of their ability to be physically tough. As has been suggested above, girlfriend abuse among minority male youth in Canada has been identified as a significant problem. Only a few of the participants explicitly indicated that they have or do use physical violence against their partners, but many of them expressed a willingness to 'be physically tough' with them should they have to be. One of the situations in which physical violence was deemed appropriate has to do with situations in which their girlfriends failed to perform gender specific expectations placed on them, such as cleaning, cooking, and running a household. Antonio, a self proclaimed ultra-machista, said that he

> [doesn't] want [his] woman to work. I'm the man I'll put bread on the table, she's the one that does the cleaning and cooking and shit … If I come home and shit ain't done then there's going to be problems [making a striking motion with his hand].

This willingness to engage in violence within his family extended to his young son as well:

> yo, if I see my son crying I smack him up for real. Why you crying? I tell him that if he cries I'll smack him. He knows. Guys don't cry, that's pussy shit.

The American literature also indicates that drug use and excessive drinking are among the significant behaviours associated with machismo, especially when they are understood and conceptualized in cultural terms. All the participants in the two focus groups claimed that drinking and illicit drug use were activities that speak to the process of growing up as a Latino in Canada, and establishing themselves as men. Smoking marijuana and drinking excessively was something that to many of the participants seemed necessary, especially during their teenage years, in gaining the respect of other Latino males. Oscar:

> I started drinking because my Latino [friends] were always drinking and smoking. When I {hung out] with my white friends we wouldn't drink, but with my Latino friends it was all we did. And that's how I got into it, you couldn't go [hang out] and be the only one not drinking … you'd look stupid … now I drink everyday (laughs).

This particular response is telling because Oscar only began to associate himself with other Latinos when he was a young teenager. Additionally, he has a particular health condition that makes drinking, excessively or not, especially dangerous to his health. For this reason he drank for the first time at the age of 14. Most of the other respondents claimed to have had their first drink at ages as early as seven or nine, and begun drinking regularly early on in their high school lives. Usually, the participants indicated, their first drinks were provided to them by a family member such as an uncle or an older cousin and as such drinking seemed to them the type of activity that could gain them access, if temporary, to adulthood and manhood:

> Usually it's not even your brother, it's like your uncle that slips you your first drink … and you feel big, like a man. Because it's something you're not supposed to do, and you always see your dad drinking, your dad's friends, your uncles. So when you drink you feel like you're big too. Then you get to high school and you start getting [alcohol] from other places and you [have become] big like that."

Thus far in this discussion I have indicated that the conceptualization of machismo for the participants in this study mirrors that found in the American literature that deals with Latino youth. In particular, being controlling, physically tough, and abusive with female partners is, for the participants, a defining element of machismo. Having particular understandings of gendered roles and responsibilities, characterized by a worldview in which men work outside of the home while women work within it, is also characteristic of machismo both among this sample and in the literature. Excessive drinking, drug use, and other types of reckless behaviour are also important to the ways in which these youth conceptualize machismo. Additionally, not only do the majority of participants understand machismo in the same way indicated in the literature, they also subscribe to its notions and engage in its practices to a large degree. More research is clearly needed, but among low income Latino youth in Toronto it would appear that these activities and attitudes inform their lives in much the same way they do Latino populations in the American literature.

While much of the data emerging from this research mirrors what has come out in the existing literature, there are certain points of departure that are worth noting. Scholarship that has sought to consider the positive or integrative aspects of machismo and Latino youth masculinity have primarily done so by distinguishing between machismo and caballerismo or familism. The participants in this study also recognize the difference in much the same way as the literature: caballerismo refers to the positive aspects of Latino manhood, primarily speaking to responsibility, morality, respect, and compassion. Yet, the participants in this study consider that the separation of machismo from caballerismo is artificial. Participants in both focus groups reject the dyadic interpretation that the literature has established for the concepts:

> No, it's not like its one or the other. We're all caballeros and we're all machistas. Maybe you can't be both at the same time, but we have both in us. And you

> choose [depending on the situation] if you're going to be a machista or if you're going to be a caballero.

The two interact with one another in ways that the literature has not done a good job of accounting for. This is perhaps most pertinent to situations regarding responsibility and work wherein some participants indicated that while a caballero generally takes better care of his family in economic terms and is less wasteful with money, the ideology through which they take on such responsibilities is derived from their machismo; it was suggested that working hard and being a good provider is related to a philosophy in which power over the family is prioritized, and achieved through the taking on of these kinds of responsibilities.

Unlike what the literature has established, participants in this research indicate that there are positive elements to machismo in and of itself, certain positive characteristics that have less to do with caballerismo than other works would indicate. To this extent the participants spoke of machismo as a part of a behavioural repertoire, a tool of sorts, that could be relied upon for a variety of situations. For instance, some participants spoke of the stubborn pride and competitiveness inherent in machista ideology as being conducive to positive work related experiences and employment mobility. Consider the following exchange:

> Pedro: "Think about a job site. I work construction; you (looking at another participant) look like you do too. The guy that's going to get ahead in a job is the guy that works hard. The dude that is lazy or doesn't have the [drive] is not going to get anywhere."
>
> Saul: "Yeah, and that comes from machismo. Its competitive, its thinking your better than the next man and trying to be better than the next man."
>
> Andres: "Its like this. If you're a man you have to be the best man. And at work that mentality is important."

Pedro, Saul, and Andres conceive of the desire to work hard and strive towards success within the job market as originating not solely from a sense of familial responsibility, indicative of caballerismo, but also from the competitiveness inherent in machismo.

This notion of machismo being a positive characteristic from the perspective of these youth also has much to do with their surroundings. They indicate that part of growing up and socializing in low income communities is being periodically challenged by other youth and men. The ability to engage in violence, a characteristic that both the literature and the participants understand as integral to machismo, can go a long way to ensuring their safety and that of their families and friends. As Javier put it,

> Anything can happen. Someone might challenge you or step up to you and you have to react. You gotta be able to let them know that they can't fuck with you. And you do that with machismo, with the way you walk. Otherwise they will [fuck with you]. You could end up getting [robbed] or beat up or stabbed.

In this way, machismo has thus become a useful characteristic that can be relied upon in such situations. A similar type of understanding also emerged during a conversation about the stresses of being an immigrant in the Canadian context. Some participants suggested that as machistas they are able to handle situations that others may not be willing to, such as forcing others within their families to do what the participants feel is right for them. According to them, this may include forcing a younger sibling to respect their mother, physically intimidating them into doing their homework, and taking care of the household should the parent(s) no longer be able to. In one account, a participant related a time in which he felt that he had the right to tell his mother what to do, take her money, and organize the expenses of the household because she was suffering from mental health issues. He suggested that perhaps someone who did not consider themselves a machista would not have been able to do that.

The extent to which these youth conceive of machismo as a positive attribute is interesting and somewhat distinct from what the literature presents. While machismo and caballerismo are often posited as opposites in a dyadic conceptualization of masculinity, this research suggests that they interact in a more complicated way than such would suggest. Some of the participants suggested that machismo be understood as a power that could be used for both positive and negative ends. "So that's it. We can say that machismo is like a super power and if you use it right you're a caballero. A machista is someone that abuses that power. Even though sometimes you have to be a machista to do good."

The focus group discussions for this research took directions that were not foreseen in the literature, and could represent important avenues of inquiry that speak directly to the differing American and Canadian multicultural contexts. Specifically, it appears that while the American literature acknowledges different types of machismo and familism among varying diasporic communities, Latino youth themselves consider their adherence to these perspectives on the family as something deriving from their culture. The participants in this study were not convinced that there is anything uniquely Latino in the behaviours and attitudes corresponding to machismo, even while acknowledging that many of the Latino men they know are in fact machistas. Some of the participants were insistent that the negative dimensions of machismo had nothing to do with their ethnicity but rather with their socioeconomic realities. Andres argued that:

> But that's not just Latinos though. The drinking, the drugs, violence, gangs. I mean there are black guys that are just like this, what we're talking about. Some of my Russian boys (friends) drink as much as we do. Some white dudes are just as hard. It isn't because we are Latino, its because of the neighbourhoods we grew up in.

Others agreed,

> I think he's right. All of us here, it looks like all of us here come from low income or single mother families. That has a lot to do with the way we are when it comes to [machismo].

Many participants in both focus groups felt that the fact that they were from low income families and that most came from single parent households, were just as important in the development of their masculinity as their ethnicity. To a large extent this could have something to do with the Canadian multicultural experience. As has been discussed prior, one of the major ways in which Latino migration in Canada differs from the United States is that there is no significant concentration of Latinos anywhere in the country. In Toronto, Latinos are often found in low income areas, but even then it is rare to find them in comparatively large numbers within particular schools or neighbourhoods. Immigrant and racialized communities are overrepresented in low income areas of Toronto, without any particular group dominating in terms of numbers. This is very often the opposite of the Latino American experience, where Latinos (especially those from low income families) are concentrated in particular cities or areas. As such, the Latino youth spoken to in this study indicate a fairly extensive understanding of the migratory and settlement experiences of other groups, such as Russians, black Caribbeans, Africans, and South East Asians. Because of this understanding, developed through friendships and interactions with youth from other communities, the participants were prepared to draw connections between their experiences and those of others. Some concluded that,

> [while] machismo can be seen as a Latino thing, the truth is that it's everywhere [and found] in a lot of different groups. Maybe for us [machismo] is just a little extra because of the culture.

Because of these understandings, it remains unclear whether Latinos in Canada conceive of their machismo as derived from particular Latin American cultures or from their experiences in Canada. Part of what makes addressing this question difficult is that in addition to Latinos in

Toronto living within more diverse urban spaces than those in many U.S. cities, Latino culture in Canada does not have the same presence as it does in America. Some conceptions that in American discourses may be understood as forming part of Latino culture and ethnicity may not necessarily be as popular or widely understood in Canada, and as such they may be less significant for Latino youth in discussing their masculinity. For instance, the American literature notes the significance of religion and religiosity in the development of both machismo and familism in many parts of the country. Tropes of Mexican Marianismo and other gendered interpretations of Catholic discourses are well known as being part originators of the machista phenomenon in parts of the United States. None of the participants in this study, however, considered either their machismo or familism to be based on religious discourses or practices and do not consider religion to be a main factor in their development of their masculinities.

Conclusion

Unlike in the United States studies on youth masculinities and marginalization in Canada have been largely absent of the Latino experience, which is in part due to the fact that Latin American immigration into Canada remains a relatively small and new phenomenon (Veronis 2007). As has been suggested, this gap in the literature emerges as particularly significant when one considers the academic potential for addressing themes of ethnocultural pluralism and multiculturalism through Canadian Latino case studies. The process of developing this literature is facilitated by the existing American scholarship on Latino youth as it speaks to issues that, judging from what studies do exist, seem to have some similarities with the Canadian context. In particular, the social marginalization of Latino youth in both countries and the connections that

have been drawn between social exclusion and masculinity allow for comparative studies that could potentially address these issues in a more complex, honest, and accurate way.

The Canadian studies that do exist, in line with the American scholarship, have outlined the experiences of Latinos in Canada by indicating that they face particular barriers in various social realms, including serious difficulties in labour market integration, educational attainment, and the securing of adequate housing (James and Burnaby 2003; Murdie and Texeira 2003; Bernhard et al. 2004; Bernhard et al. 1997; Drenver 1996). They also suggest that Latino male youth have high incidence of the criminality, violent behaviour, recklessness, and misogynistic attitudes that have come to define machismo (Totten 2003). The sociological literature has conceptualized machismo, and other forms of 'hyper masculinity', as in part deriving from various types of social marginalization. It has been argued that society allows for a multiplicity of hierarchically arranged masculinities in which hegemonic manhood, defined largely through material consumption power, is denied to men from economically marginalized communities (Messerschmidt 1993). In protest of their marginalization, these men and youth often over compensate their manhood by behaving in particularly aggressive, violent, and reckless ways. This understanding of marginalization and masculinity is often posited as an explanatory tool through which Latino machismo is discussed. On the other hand, Latino scholarship has suggested that machismo is a cultural construct that can be traced to Spanish colonialism and the development of Latin America (Ramirez 1997). Regardless, all perspectives discuss machismo as an exclusively destructive force within Latino communities and among Latino youth, often arguing that it is something that needs to be overcome before upward mobility and social integration become possible.

Post structuralist and Latino scholars have recently begun to call for a more complex understanding of machismo that considers the ways in which hyper-masculinity can be positive for social integration (Petersen 2003). Unfortunately, most of this scholarship has approached the question by positing a binary in which machismo is the 'bad' and familism or caballerismo is the 'good'. They do not allow for the possibility that machismo in and of itself may have positive outcomes for Latino youth, or that machista ideologies may inform attitudes and behaviours that constitute familism or caballerismo. This is a significant oversight, as secondary analysis of the familism literature clearly indicates that there is considerable room for gendered analyses of the participation of boys/men within the family, which could be read into the works, and tropes of machismo unearthed therein. It is with this goal in mind, considering the extent to which machismo and familism are intertwined, that this study took shape.

Through data emerging from focus group discussions I have argued that machismo may have some positive outcomes for Latino youth in Toronto. These include a particular character and potential for violence that youth can rely upon to protect themselves and their families from being victimized. Machismo has also been found in this study to be positively related with a work ethic that the youth claim helps them to get ahead in the labour market and allows for some upward mobility. The competitiveness and aggression characteristic of machismo is what they believe inspires them to work hard for themselves and their families. In this way machismo is described almost as a tool that can be used to positive ends by youth under particular circumstances. At the same time, it has also been found that notions of familism are themselves intricately tied to understandings of machismo and of what it means to be a good man. The willingness to work towards the integration and security of their families emerges not solely from a sense of filial duty, as some familism scholarship suggests, but from a particular gendered

conception of manhood that is defined through the assistance provided to family members. For these reasons, it has been argued that machismo is not an exclusively destructive ideology and that more research is needed in order to fully comprehend the complex ways in which the positive and negative aspects of this ideology play out within the diasporic context.

The findings of this study are by no means conclusive, as the small sample size, and the use of focus groups and of open-ended questions, do not allow for any generalizations to be made. This is especially true when one considers that there is no existing literature in Canada through which it could be suggested that machismo does indeed play an important role in the lives and outlooks of Latino youth in cities such as Toronto. This study is useful, however, insofar as it attempts to discover particular paths of inquiry that can lead to more fruitful future research. More scholarship is needed to determine the extent to which tropes of machismo are significant to Latino Canadian populations, especially from a more diverse sample that takes socioeconomic status, race, country of origin, and religion into account in their analyses. It is also necessary to begin to question the theoretical separation of machismo and familism in the literature through studies that seek to, in a more conclusive way, address the ways in which they do and do not go together. At the same time, one of the potentially most fruitful themes that emerged in this research has to do with the context of Canadian multiculturalism. There is some indication in this study that an understandings of machismo as something that is culturally specific may not be prevalent amongst Latino youth in Canada, that instead many may conceive of their masculinities as grounded more on their working class experiences than on their ethnicity. The extent to which this is true, and the ways in which this speaks to the specificities of Canadian multiculturalism need to be explored.

From a practical perspective this study does allow for certain realities to be expressed and as such contribute to the growing documentation of Latino experiences within Canada. For the youth in this study it is clear that their social marginalization is in large part a result of direct and systemic discrimination within schools, the criminal justice system, and the streets. These youth continuously seek to improve their lives and look for opportunities to get ahead, but their experiences are indicative of blocked mobility. Speaking to what was discussed, it is necessary to provide community services to Latino youth that are adequately funded. This requires, firstly, an acknowledgment that Latinos do exist in significant numbers in Canada and the development of appropriate Census questions that will help scholars and policy makers determine the size, characteristics, and needs of the community. This study also indicates that social programs that do exist need to make some effort to integrate the masculinities of these youth into their services. Instead of denouncing it altogether a public discussion on the qualities of machismo that is honest and fair, that highlights the positive and the negative, could go a long way to integrating these youth into the broader community. It is also necessary that such discussions be facilitated by an audience that includes Latinos and Latinas.

This gendered discourse in the public realm, even if limited to the community itself, is necessary because many of the problems that Latino males encounter have to do with their relationship with women. As with what has been found in some American studies (Bourgeois 1995) these youth are to a large extent threatened by Latinas, who seem to do better in both labour and education. Because they are threatened by women these youth seek to exert some power in relation to them through certain qualities indicative of machismo (girlfriend abuse, being excessively controlling and dominating etc.), and in doing so limit themselves and their partners in the process. Creating a circumstance in which the success of Latinas does not

translate into the perceived failure of Latinos is important to the development of the community, and can be accomplished through a less stigmatized understanding of Latino masculinity. Discussions on gendered relationships that are culturally specific and that can deal with these issues beginning at a young age, through school and community groups, can go a long way to the integration of Latino youth into the broader community. This can only begin once a more complete and complex understanding of machismo and masculinity within the Canadian context is achieved.

Table 1. – Latin Americans in Toronto CMA by Country of Birth

Place of Birth	Toronto CMA
Argentina	5600
Belize	185
Bolivia	630
Chile	7130
Colombia	6275
Costa Rica	565
Cuba	1815
Dominican Republic	1500
Ecuador	9175
El Salvador	9075
Guatemala	3530
Honduras	615
Mexico	4370
Nicaragua	2855
Panama	1080
Paraguay	145
Peru	6190
Puerto Rico	65
Uruguay	3620
Venezuela	2460
Total	66880

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

Appendix A- Focus Group Guide

What is machismo?

- How do you think machismo plays out among Latino youth in Toronto?

- What do Latinos think of machismo?

- What do you think other non-Latinos think of machismo

- Does 'machismo' encompass all aspects of Latino masculinity?

- Is there a difference between 'machismo' and 'macho'.

- Is there a difference between 'machismo' and 'caballerismo'?

The Integrative Potential of Machismo

- Is machismo always bad or can it also be good? Why? How?

- Can you think of any examples where being machista, or macho has had good consequences...like for schooling, employment, family relations etc. ?

- What are some of the expectations that your parents or family members have of you that might be related to masculinity?

- What are some of the positive activities that Latino youth engage in that are reflective of their masculinity?

- What are some of the negative activities that Latino youth engage in that are reflective of their masculinity?

Familism Questions (Developed from the Steidel and Contreras *familism scale* (2003)

- What standards, if any, do your parent(s) hold you to in regards to your interaction with them and your siblings?

- What expectations, related to family relations, do your parents have of you or your siblings? How are these related to your gender?

- What was/is your relationship like with your siblings, your extended family? How is this related to your gender or age?

- How do you perceive your relationship with your family to be in the future? How is this related to your gender or age?

- Do you have any expectations of your family that influence how you understand your future? How is this related to your gender or age?

- Does your family have any expectations of you that you feel might limit your future possibility in any ways? How is this related to your gender or age?

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