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CHILD SEXPLOITATION:  
A STUDY OF MACHISMO AND THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF  
CHILDREN IN LATIN AMERICA

By  
Courtney Cone

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
May 2018

Approved by

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## Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore how the inextricable relationship between machismo and poverty connects to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America through predatory behaviors in order to provide insight to anti-trafficking campaigns. The overt Latin American culture of machismo contributes to the discrimination of women and children, enhancing their inherent dependency on men for economic survival. The inevitable pattern of dependency on patriarchal figures out of vulnerability to societal constructions is evident in economic, political and social structures. The pervasiveness of dependency is seen through patterns of violence against women, patterns of child abuse, and patterns of commercial sexual exploitation of children in three Latin American countries: Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia. Machismo and poverty are so inextricably connected in their contribution to the commercial sexual exploitation of children that they cannot be overlooked when determining responses and designing schemes for anti-trafficking campaigns.

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## INTRODUCTION

Patriarchal societies, societies in which men are assumed to be superior, have long discriminated against the vulnerable. Defining patriarchy as the “manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general,” Gerda Lerner (1986) establishes the unique vulnerability of women and children (p. 239). Asserting that males assumed control over female bodies through familial institutionalization for their benefit, Lerner illustrates the societal institution of patriarchy through the family. Transcending into other societal institutions, the male-determined family unit represents the origin of vulnerability for women and children and the origin of dominance for men. Male hierarchal advantage over women creates female dependency on the dominant male, magnifying women’s inherent vulnerability through gender norms.

Martha Fineman, through her theory of universal vulnerability, claims that humans are inherently dependent on others, because of the literal embodiment of vulnerability to biologically based catastrophes, like epidemics (2010, p. 9). According to Fineman, vulnerability is universal to human beings, however dependency is episodic and contingent on other factors (2017, p. 134). Human infancy, bouts of sickness and disease, and old age are all episodic forms of dependency. Fineman illustrates two forms of dependency: inevitable dependency and derivative dependency. Inevitable dependency asserts that “human dependency is inevitable” (Fineman, 2017, p. 134). Inevitably, human infants depend on caretakers for survival. From this perspective, Fineman states that the second form of dependency, derivative dependency, arises. Derivative dependency is the natural dependency of the caretaker, the one who assumes responsibility of the inevitable dependent person, on the availability of resources (Fineman, 2017, p. 139; Fineman, 2000, p.

20). In the familial institution, women are given the role of caretakers and men are given the role of breadwinners. Therefore, construction of familial hierarchy places women in the position of the derivative dependents on men, enhancing female inherent vulnerability.

Through increasing the vulnerability of women, men attempted to discount the “human condition as one of universal and continuous vulnerability,” and regard it as one of gendered vulnerability, masking male inherent vulnerability to maintain control (Fineman, 2017, p. 134). Gender differences, like social hierarchy, are socially constructed not inherent. Fineman terms the patriarchal constructs of distinct male and female social roles a “gendered life” (1990, p. 37, 42). Patriarchy is established and accepted as a pervasive social institution. Delegation of tasks is regulated by the established patriarchal institution, which genders labor and social roles, creating new and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities of women.

The gendered life construct has social, physical and material consequences arising from the inherent dependency it creates. All humans are dependent on societal structures and institutions provision of means and resources for survival due to Fineman’s concept of inherent vulnerability (2017, p. 146). Ergo, patriarchal structures exacerbate women’s vulnerability and create women’s dependence through structural and institutional inequality involving sexual stereotyping, socio-economic disempowerment, and limited social mobility, which exacerbates the vulnerability of dependent children in the same environment (Aoláin, 2011, p. 5). Male dominance in economic and political arenas disadvantages women, contributing to societal poverty and exacerbating potential victimization, as seen through Western history. When unchecked, this pattern of dominance continues, even when those in positions of power are women.

Historically, Western societies maintain control of women through strictly limiting women's freedoms using religious, moral and ethical codes of conduct as well as fear. Establishing women's purpose as merely reproductive, men labeled women as property, dehumanizing the being from which human life comes. Today, Western societies control women and children through subtle tacit manifestations of patriarchy. Nonconforming women to male desires are stereotyped as "bitches" and written off by male and fellow female counterparts (Millett, 1968). Moderation of socially acceptable female sexuality is conducted throughout media outlets and within public and private sectors, which dictate what it means to be a woman in society (Patel p.404-405). Sexualization of girls in advertisements is normalized, resulting in gender stereotyped images, some sexually abusive, that contribute to gender inequality overall (APA, 2007). Yet, more overt manifestations of gender inequality still exist. In the United States, no laws mandate equal pay for equal work between women and men and no criminal penalties exist for sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank Group, 2018). This illustrates that manifestations of patriarchy are engendered in Western societies, reaffirming male social dominance and the dependent, submissive role of women and children.

Therefore, in societies of overt patriarchy, the inevitable pattern of dependency on patriarchal figures out of vulnerability to societal constructions pervades. In the developing world, there is a mirror image of dependency triggered by the assumption of the need to dominate and control the use of vulnerable bodies, which is dependent upon existing patriarchal structural schema. Many developing nations, as Western nations before them, prey on the vulnerabilities and dependencies of women and children for production and survival. As one of the most dynamic economic regions in the world, Latin America falls victim to male perpetration. In Latin America, the prevalence of male dominance is seen in society through



political representation, economic regulation, income disparity, and education. Patriarchy in Latin America, however, takes on another name: *machismo*.

*Machismo* is a Spanish term, consisting of the root word, ‘macho,’ meaning ‘male,’ and the suffix ‘-ismo,’ meaning ‘-ism.’ *Machismo* is the noun of which machista is the adjective, creating a machista culture or a culture of *machismo*. Though no uniform definition of *machismo* exists,<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of this study *machismo* is defined as the “socially constructed, learned, and reinforced set of [negative]<sup>2</sup> behaviors comprising the theme of male gender roles in Latino society,” emphasizing male superiority and female subversion, hyper-masculinity and aggressive tendencies (De La Cencela, 1986, p. 291).<sup>3</sup> Inextricably connected, machismo coerces the susceptibility of women and children to poverty in Latin America, driving high numbers of potential individuals as prey for predators.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reports that “Latin America has the most unequal income distribution in the world,” with a high number of those living in poverty being women and children, indigenous peoples and afro-descendants (ECLAC, 2011; CEPAL, 2013). According to the Latin American and Caribbean regional summary of the Global Gender Gap (2017), the region has an average remaining gender gap of 29.8%. Economic disparity in income manifests itself through poverty, especially the poverty of women and children. Women in Latin America are 1.15 times more likely to live poverty than men, and children under 15 are 1.7 times more likely to live in poverty, especially in female, single-parent households (ECLAC, 2009). Poverty leads to the lack of sufficient “access to

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<sup>1</sup> It must be understood that, like other terms, such as feminism and individualism, the meaning of *machismo* historically evolves and is contextually understood.

<sup>2</sup> There are negative and positive characteristics of *machismo*, which will be defined in Chapter I.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the majority of research on machismo has not incorporated sexual identity or sexual orientation, remaining consistent with a heteronormative perspective. For research including sexual identity and/or sexual orientation see Estrada, Rigali-Oiler, Arciniega, and Tracey (2011).

education, health care and other forms of social protection” which contribute to a recidivistic pattern of vulnerable women and children (ECPAT, 2014). Extreme poverty in Latin America contributes to the inadequacy of services to help victims of sexual exploitation, sustaining the cyclical pattern of susceptible victims to sex trafficking due to vulnerability (ECPAT, 2014). In 2008, out of the “approximately 108 million children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19,” who lived in the Caribbean or Latin America, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimated that “nearly 81 million (about 45 percent of this population group) live in poverty.” This excessive number of impoverished children cultivates extreme vulnerability, making them likely prey to sexual exploitation in the machista society.

The permeating machista culture of Latin America contributes to the high poverty rates, magnifying the number of prey available to predators, especially of children to sex trafficking. Evidence of the machista culture can be seen through violence against women and child abuse.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, poverty significantly contributes to the overall reinforcement of machista culture by systematically lessening the value of women and children in relation to men.<sup>5</sup> Dependency, as a manifestation of the relationship between poverty and machismo, can help assess why sex trafficking is so prevalent in Latin America. Moreover, data on sex trafficking within Latin America demonstrates the extreme psychological and physical dangers of the predatory manipulation of dependence. Subsequently, machismo as a cultural institution should not be

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<sup>4</sup> See: Aloáin, 2011; Barker, et. al, 2011; Bott, et. al, 2012; CICIG/UNICEF, 2016; ECPAT, 2014; Ellsberg, Heise, & Shrader, 1999; Hillis, et. al, 2016; Hunnicutt, 2009; Kasturirangan, et. al, 2004; Pereda, et. al, 2009; Rivera-Rivera, et. al, 2007; Saadeh & Caballero, 2013; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; World Economic Forum, 2017; World Bank Group, 2018; WHO, 2012; Zhang, et. al, 2012

<sup>5</sup> See: Bassuk, et. al, 2006; Brown & Moran, 1997; ECLAC/UNICEF, 2003; ENDS, 2010; Goodman, et. al, 2009; IPEC, 2006; Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2015; Nopo, 2012; Sutherland, et. al, 2001; World Economic Forum, 2017; World Bank Group, 2018

overlooked as a contributing factor to sex trafficking and should be heavily considered in decision making for anti-trafficking programs, especially programs concerning the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is modern-day slavery and constitutes the worst form of child labor. In 1996, the First World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children convened, stating that:

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a fundamental violation of children's rights. It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery. (p. 1)

Though stated over twenty years ago in an effort to combat child sexual exploitation, the sexual exploitation of children (SEC)<sup>6</sup> remains a pervasive issue and “contemporary form of slavery” affecting immeasurable numbers<sup>7</sup> of children per year. Determined vulnerable, leading world governments have since taken initiative to protect children's inherent human rights. The First World Congress statement on the commercial sexual exploitation of children includes any form of child sex trafficking, including, but not limited to: child prostitution, child pornography production, child marriage, child sex tourism and child sexual entertainment (APSAC, 2013; IOM & NRC, 2013). These violations of the rights of the child through exploitation have remained prevalent throughout the international community, and, accordingly, have remained an issue of concern for governing entities. When discussing the commercial sexual exploitation of

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<sup>6</sup> Agencies differentiate between CSEC and SEC through interpreting ‘commercial’ as “the act of buying and selling with the aim of making money” (Hecht SP1, 2016). However, over time, the emphasis on the term ‘commercial’ has diminished. Consequently, the terms Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and child sex trafficking are used interchangeably in the international data collection of victims and in this study.

<sup>7</sup> Due to insufficiency of data, there is no accurate number of sexually exploited children, but estimates range from hundreds of thousands to millions per year.

children, “no international legally binding definition exists;” therefore, for the purpose of this study, the definition of the commercial sexual exploitation of children will be interpreted within the definition of a child, set forth by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Likewise, in 2000, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* by the United Nations defined human trafficking as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purposes of exploitation. (Article 3)

The United Nations broad definition of human trafficking, as defined in the Protocol, provides room to interpret the definition of human trafficking to include child trafficking, and, more specifically, sexual exploitation of children. Sexual exploiters of children commonly utilize their advantageous role over children, abusing their “power” or manipulating the child’s “position of vulnerability” to coerce children, defining their role as a perpetrator of human trafficking (UN, 2000). For sexual exploitation of children, or child sex trafficking, to occur, the child does not have to move locations, due to the definition of human trafficking including the “harboring or receipt of persons,” as well as the physical trafficking of persons. Ergo, as part of the definition of human trafficking, victims do not have to be moved across borders to be considered victims of any form of human trafficking (Wurtele, Miller-Perrin, 2017). Through delineating the definition of “trafficking” as exploitation not movement, the United Nations parallels the definitions of child sex trafficking and human trafficking, allowing for its incorporation into anti-trafficking efforts in Latin America.

The pervasiveness of the commercial sexual exploitation of children is seen through three Latin American countries: Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia. Gender pay gaps, poverty and absence of legal structures that protect women and children contribute to high levels of dependency within Latin America. Civil wars, gang violence and unrest contribute to the economic instability and heavier male control of economic currency. Without male income, many families are left destitute and inadequate state institutions fail to help them survive. Extreme vulnerability, as a result of inadequate income, leaves women and children easy prey for predators, especially sexual predators. Violence against women proves common. Only recently, Latin American countries have implemented laws protecting women from intimate partner violence, which are still not fully implemented in the poorest, most rural areas. Likewise, child sex abuse is common as children are feminized for male control when extreme poverty creates extreme dependence on male household income. The prevalence of violence and sexual abuse within the home mirrors the actuation of like activities in the public sphere, making the largest predatory behavior in Latin America the sex trafficking market and the largest contributors children. Because of economic and social vulnerability as a result of systematic machismo constructs, children are most dependent and most likely to become victims. Evidence of child sex victims in Latin America coincides with the high rates of overall sex trafficking and connection of machista culture and poverty.

This thesis attempts to explore how the inextricable relationship between machismo and poverty connects to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America through predatory behaviors. It first depicts the influence of machismo on the reality of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the way the commercial sexual exploitation of children operates. It addresses how machismo exacerbates dependence of vulnerable populations through

poverty, rendering them prey to victimization by sex traffickers due to their dependence. It illustrates that patterns of poverty, patterns of violence against women, and patterns of child sex abuse increase child vulnerability and potential victimization through commercial sexual exploitation. It uses data to show machismo as an inextricable link to connecting poverty to trafficking victims. While doing so, it postulates that though machismo and economic dependency are intertwined, it proves difficult to separate machismo as a cause of sex trafficking in Latin America. This data asserts that the evidence of machismo is determinable and should not be ignored in anti-trafficking efforts in Latin American countries. In so doing, it acknowledges the ongoing efforts of anti-sex trafficking organizations and hopes to aid in the approach to ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children through identifying the sociocultural construction of machismo as a repressive obstacle.

## CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to fulfill the maternal labor requirement and scarcity of viable human offspring, Gerda Lerner (1986) asserts that men assumed control over women's bodies through institutionalization and sexual subordination via: economic dependency on the male figurehead, award of privileges to dependent, conforming women of upper classes, and the artificial creation of division between male-determined respectable and non-respectable women (p.9).

Compounding on Lerner's argument, Colin Farrelly addresses patriarchy in relation to G. A. Cohen's functionalist interpretation of Karl Marx's theory of historical materialism, claiming six theses believed to connect the history and development of patriarchal societies, centered around the control of women's bodies (Farrelly, 2011). Farrelly argues that acquisition of human's basic material needs (T1)<sup>8</sup> for survival, requires labor (T2) and confrontation with environmental scarcity (T3). To survive in scarcity, humans form classes (T4) to "produce the means for meeting their material needs," which establishes the basis for gendered division of labor (p. 7).

Due to finite productive capacities, societies must continually reproduce (T5) to meet their basic material needs, because of their inherent vulnerability (T6) to individual "morbidity and mortality" (p. 11). Therefore, patriarchy, at least historically, evolved to mandate and regulate the labor power of societies-- women's reproductive rights-- for survival (Farrelly, 2011, p. 12). Consequently, the historical, systemic gender division of labor created women's dependency on the male figurehead for access to basic material needs for survival, magnifying women's inherent vulnerability. Thus granting what Kate Millett (1968) calls, "the birthright control of one group by another- the male to rule and the female to be ruled."

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<sup>8</sup> 'T1' refers to Farrelly's first of six theses on the connection between patriarchy and historical materialism, where 'T1' denotes Thesis 1, 'T2' denotes Thesis 2, and so on.

Women, as subservient, are dependent on men for survival and succumb-- willingly or forced-- to male desire, specifically male sexual desire. Male oppression rests on its ability to sexually dominate women, as well as other forms of gender domination. Millett asserts that male oppression depends on physical power, force, rape, threatened and actual assault, and as a final resource, attack (1968). As Farrelly illustrated, women's societal role is reproduction and care of the reproduced offspring to forward the material production of society. Women continue to be hollowed tools used for the creation of more men and more material needs. The fear of male power in the form of personal, sexual or economic dismissal, divorce or violence, serves as a threat and deterrent to women challenging the status quo and keeps women subservient as child bearers (Millett, 1968). As Margaret Walker illustrates, "coercion of women and violence against women are normative to a greater or lesser extent in many contemporary societies" (2009).

To reach understanding of normalization of violence in women's lives, the unequal relationships and distribution of vulnerability must first be studied. Originally, men dominated women in society for the production of material needs, increasing the dependency of women on men for survival because of men's possession of material needs. However, women represent one category of vulnerable beings that patriarchal society dominates. The success of women's dependence leads to male dominance over children, disabled humans, and animals, because like women, each is dependent on patriarchal institutions for survival.

Until children are deemed useful by society, they are effeminized and treated as tools or sexual objects. Historically, the vulnerability of children was masked in the traditional family model, which supposedly accounted for and protected the dependence of children (Fineman, 2004, p. 10). Yet, due to the undesirability of the impious woman during the era of the Italian Renaissance, boys were castrated to prevent the deepening of their voices, so they could sing



soprano in the Papal Choir. (Millett, 1968; Jenkins, 1998). State desire quickly out ruled children's protection, exposing their vulnerability. Likewise, disabled bodies are disadvantaged in the patriarchal society and often discriminated against due to their extreme vulnerability and dependency on others for survival (Satz, 2008, p. 527). Unlike that of infants, disabled persons are permanently dependent on caregivers for survival and are at a much greater risk for sexual exploitation. A case study of female sexually exploited youth showed that those with mental disabilities faced "disproportionately high risk" of victimization, especially by known persons deemed responsible for their well-being (Reid, 2018, p. 120). Likening of mentally disabled persons to sexual beings mirrors the sexualization of women. Children and disabled persons show clear dependence on those in authority for survival and protection, their over vulnerability makes them easy prey for victimization.

Similar to the feminization of children, females are reduced to sexualized, docile bunnies, as in the schema of Playboy, illustrating the lesser value of women and animals within patriarchal hierarchy. Hence, animals like women and children, are dependent on societal constructs. For example, pet dogs are inherently dependent on their human owners for survival, like infants are inherently dependent on their caregivers for survival. Yet, unlike infants, nonhuman pets, such as dogs, are permanently dependent on humans for survival (Satz, 2009, p. 79). When animals are beneficial to humans, they receive legal protection, however when animal interests do not align with that of humans, their voided their legal protection, as in the case of animal testing, hunting for sport, or selling animal skins and furs (Satz, 2009, p. 67). When women, children, and animal's dependency aligns with the patriarchal agenda, they are provided for, however, when their vulnerabilities are needed for societal advancement, they are exploited.

As another institution conceived from patriarchy, state governance allows and provides for male control and the acceptance of dependence of women and children on the state-determined, or male-determined, dominant figure. Thus, the law and legal institutions create the definitions and arrangements of various entities, individuals and collectives, defining “who counts and how [it] take[s] account of them,” accounting more heavily for male vulnerabilities than those of other vulnerable populations (Matambanadzo, 2012, p. 45). When the law is primarily governed, determined, and executed by men, the law reflects male dominated theories, practices, and ideals disadvantaging women and children and creating more dependence and vulnerability.

The familial institution is expected to model and transmit the normality of the traditional family in social behavior, especially to the children (Fineman, 1995, p. 2187). Hence, the familial institution is given the primary responsibility of dependency within state legality (Fineman, 2000, p. 13). Consequently, seen as the pinnacle of societal formation, the family is the “most gendered institution...riddled with inequalities” (Fineman, 2017, p. 136). As a social construct, the family has the potential to negatively impact women and children in the interest of dependence on the patriarch. Privatization of the family and dependency within the family has permitted and reinforced subservient roles of certain family members to others (Fineman, 2004, p. 6-7). The traditional family model places the male at the head of the familial institution, as the economic provider and disciplinarian for the dependent wife and children, who owe him obedience and respect, while the wife is the subservient nurturer and caretaker (Fineman, 2004, p. 1; Fineman, 1995, p. 2182). As the economic provider, the male head makes the financial decisions in addition to determining the roles of women and children’s bodies, as seen in Lerner’s argument. Men possess legal “‘rights’ over children,” conferring power through their

“discipline and control,” which frames the perverse inequality in society (Fineman, 1995, p. 2207). Male domination, especially economic, constraints women and children more dependent on men for provision and more vulnerable to economic change.

Consequently, if not already impoverished, women and children always live with the risk of falling into poor circumstances by nature of their dependence on the decisions of patriarchal figures. Historically, women were not allowed to own property, but were considered property. It was not until the late 19th century, in 1887 when women began to truly gain freedom from the disadvantages of coverture (Zaher, 2002). In circumstances where the family is not impoverished but one parent needs to sacrifice a career for child or elderly care, because of the likelihood that the woman is the lesser earner due to inequality in the workforce, the male assumes the patriarchal role of provider and the woman of caregiver (Fineman, 1995, p. 2209-2210). This provides women with lesser future economic opportunities. As a result, in general, single-parent families are poorer than two-parent families, especially single mother families (Brown, 1997; Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Economic disparity between men and women is illustrated through the gender wage gap, the difference in wages earned by men and women. On account of the World Economic Forum initiatives and the annual Global Gender Gap report, the gender wage gap is beginning to decrease in participating countries (2017). However, the disparity between earnings of men and women still persists owing to the degree of human vulnerability and dependency hinging on the quality and quantity of available and accessible resources, provided by societal institutions (Fineman, 2010, p 10). For impoverished families with or without male dominant figures, the dependence of women and children on masculine authority augments vulnerability. Women, without power, must rely on patriarchal figures for economic

survival, yet without power or financial protection, the likelihood of poverty and victimization increases.

The acknowledgement of patriarchal constructs as beneficial governs the acceptance of normative dependency, in which the actions of dominant people are not questioned by the institution of the state. The accepted subservience of dependent people permeates societal development. Males subordinate their equals, women, which justified the historical subordination of others, as in “the peculiar institution of the South” (Calhoun, 1837). As Learner claims, “the oppression of women antedates slavery and makes it possible,” hence its continuous existence (p. 77). Circumstantially, actions of dominant people are not questioned by subservient people in positions of power. Even in the workforce, when women rise to the top of their field, oftentimes they reject the disadvantages of their female associates due to the ingrained social normality of women’s acceptable roles (Fineman, 2010, p. 16). Rather than pushing for paid maternal leave, the mother cannot be the successful businesswoman and still take time off to support her children; she must choose one path or the other. The incessant pattern of acceptance of dependency sustains the existence of vulnerability and further creation of dependency, firmly establishing women and children’s vulnerability to predators.

Patriarchy renders dependent persons subject to predators when the institution of the state or protectors of dependent people fail or when institutions or protectors become unwilling to protect the dependent persons. Societal institutions, created by the patriarchal culture, maintain inequality between men and women and children, fostering an unprotected environment for the most vulnerable, leaving them open to predators (Fineman, 2010, p. 2). In American society, for example, there is no guarantee of basic social materials, such as food, healthcare or housing. Instead, governmental institutions justify and sustain the “grossly unequal distributions of

wealth, power, and opportunity,” and the few existing protections do not extend to everyone (Fineman, 2010, p. 3-4). Likewise, children are not granted the same rights of personhood as adults in the United States due to minor status, which denies them access to certain rights and privileges and protects them from certain liabilities and duties (Matambanadzo, 2012, p. 52). The unequal establishment of adults and children provides an avenue for the palpable mistreatment of children by those pledged to protect them.

Historically, the law has failed to protect dependents. In a study by the United States Department of Justice, from 1995-1996, 54% of women reported that they were first raped when they were 12-17 years old (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Until the 1974 establishment of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, there was no legal protection for the victimization of children, regardless of gender (Myers, 2008). In a meta-analysis of child sexual abuse, 7.5% of American men reported victimization of sexual abuse while 25.3% of women reported being a victim of child sexual abuse (Pereda, et. al, 2009). The majority reported that they knew their abuser. Attributed to the historical implications of women’s societal roles, the percentage of female victims of child sexual abuse almost quadrupled the percentage of males. This illustrates that children are easily susceptible to predators, especially those to whom they are dependent and most vulnerable.

Similarly, the history of rape law and culture in the United States clearly depicts the severe negative influence of patriarchy and the failure of the state within societal norms. In the colonial period, men demonstrated dominance over women through regulating the purity of a woman’s virtue until marriage to ensure the legitimacy of their offspring (Donat & D’Emilio, 1992). However, if and when a woman was raped, if she could not prove her resistance to the perpetrator, she could be punished for the assault and ostracized as a ‘wayward’ woman (Donat

& D'Emilio, 1992). The law provided no protection for women as much as it provided the means for male dominance. In the 19th century, women were stigmatized and blamed for their victimhood, labeled as “fallen” (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992). In the early 20th century, Caucasian rapists were labeled as mentally ill individuals and sent to mental facilities, denouncing the severity of violence against women. However, if the accused were African American, the issue was no longer a question of mental state and the perpetrator, whether truly guilty or not, was sentenced to the penal system (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992). Patriarchal hierarchy in sexual assault likened the white male to mental illness and anyone inferior as societal criminals, including blaming female victims for the perpetrators actions. In 1974, Michigan established the first comprehensive rape reform legislation in the country, accounting for the perpetrators actions and not the victims alone (Tchen, 1983). Yet, relentlessly, male and female rape victims suffer as perpetrators go unpunished for various reasons. Women and children, likewise, suffer other victimization at the hands of predators from the constructions of a patriarchal society, though the current day manifestations are more tacit.

Like the United States, Latin America also experiences the inevitable pattern of dependency on patriarchal figures. Economic disparity and political misrepresentation, coupled with the Latino patriarchal society, sustains the cycle of poverty for women and children in Latin America. The assumed male need to dominate and control vulnerable bodies preys on this dependence and vulnerability of women and children due to the culture of machismo. Exacerbated by the high poverty rates, machista culture reinforces itself in recurrent patterns of victimization. In more economically developed countries, such as Mexico, the machista culture still exists as a factor of poverty in both urban slums and rural areas. Developing countries, such as those of Central America, like Guatemala, prove prime areas for violation of dependency due

to economic underdevelopment and extreme poverty. South American developing countries with middle income, such as Colombia, also experience the influence of machismo on the pervasiveness of poverty and exploitation, specifically in the transport of victims from rural to urban areas. The prevalence of poverty throughout Latin America coincides with the rampant machista culture influencing the victimization of dependent women and children through violence and abuse. Vulnerability of the poorest populations renders them most susceptible to machismo cultural norms and most susceptible to sexual exploitation.

### *Definition and History of Machismo*

As a culturally constructed term, no universally accepted definition of *machismo* exists. Tied to contextual meaning, *machismo* takes different forms. Historically, the significance of *machismo* also varies as the origin of the term is debated. However, the common belief of *machismo* equates it to Latin American patriarchy and histories illustrate this conception.

The Mexican dictionary, *Santamaria* (1959), defined *machismo* as being “*vulgarismo grosero*,” or a crude, vulgar term. The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, 21st edition, defines *machismo* as a “actitud de prepotencia de los varones respecto de las mujeres” or a man’s arrogant attitude towards women, and alternately defines it as a form of sexism, “un forma de sexismo,” characterized by male prevalence. Likewise, the Fifth Edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines *machismo* as, “a strong or exaggerated sense of traditional masculinity placing great value on physical courage, virility, domination of women, and aggressiveness.” According to the *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Society* (2008), the “principal characteristics” of *machismo* consist of “exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-

female relationships,” likening sexual aggression to sex trafficking (p. 863). These entities define *machismo* as a synonym for patriarchy and sexism, by use of another word.

Additionally, the prevalence and expression of *machismo*, like patriarchy, depends on the social and cultural context of the respective community, as Perilla (1999) defines *machismo* as cultural set of expectations for men. Researchers also define *machismo* by the situational performance of masculinity (E.g. Mahalingam, 2007; Salam, 2009). Highlighting that different sociocultural factors contribute to the degree of expression of *machismo* within a community, the *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* (2008) acknowledges that both negative and positive connotations of *machismo* exist in context (p. 271-272). Similarly, Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey (2008) assert that in Mexican and Mexican American communities view *machismo* as a cultural construct, being “both positive and negative” within different frameworks (p. 20). Illustrating a higher negative connotation, Torres (1998) found that “in general, Latino men have been socialized to perceive themselves as dominant over women, with rights and privileges that can be asserted legitimately by force,” attributing socialization with potential aggressive behavior.

Yet, in order to fully understand the unclear definition of *machismo*, the positive connotations and aspects of the machista role must be defined. Ceballos (2013) defined the positive characteristics of *machismo* as “a sense of responsibility” and a duty for men to “carry their family honor throughout generations.” Merindé (1988) found that 35% of men described *machismo* as a positive construct, 12% described it as a neutral construct and 52% described it as a negative construct. A study by Pardo, Weisfeld, Hill, and Slatcher (2013) on the relationship between *machismo* and marital satisfaction found that husbands reported higher *machismo* scores than wives, but also higher positive *machismo* beliefs than their wives. Pardo, et. al.



(2013) concluded that husbands higher machismo scores reflect their “endorsement of gender role expectations,” and their belief that *machismo* has more positive characteristics than negative. However, due to the negative perception of *machismo* in mainstream society, Ceballos argues that the positive aspects of *machismo* are rarely discussed, which generalizes the negative aspects to Latino men. Though correlated with positive characteristics as well as negative, Ceballos claims that the positive image of *machismo* is easily destroyed when men seeking respect are not granted respect and react aggressively, leading to cyclical patterns of physical and sexual abuse and exploitation within the Latino machista society.

Some scholars believe that the concept of *machismo* can be traced to the Spanish conquest of native populations during colonization, while others believe the concept and term originated through the 20th century Anglophone perception of the root cause of problems in the Latin American culture. Whatever the true origin, scholars often agree that both colonization and American stereotypization contribute to the common perception of machismo, that of a patriarchal society.

Arriving in the New World, the Spaniards documented their conquests of the native indigenous tribes. Spanish conquistadors seized power, destroyed the native culture and established themselves as rulers over the newfound territory and dominant over the indigenous people (Perilla, 1999). Conquest and dominance of the New World manifested itself through the sexual conquest of native women (Mörner, 1967). *Mestizaje*, the forced blending of Spanish and Native Americans through the abuse of power by the Spanish, characterized by social dominance, created *mestizo* children, a child of a Spaniard and Native American (Perilla, 1999). Perilla argues that mestizo boys, insecure of their mixed heritage, developed their security in society by exerting their dominance over girls in the family system, creating the machista

behavior. Compounding on this behavior and the Spanish conquistadors belief in social dominance, indigenous women were seen possessions, leading to violations of their bodies. Ergo, in Latin Mediterranean societies, which were dominated by men, there were three legal types of authority women were subjected to: patria potestas, or paternal power, manus, or subordination to a husband's legal power, or tutela, guardianship by a male figure (Ortiz & Davis, 2009, p. 339). The expectation that women needed to submit to male relatives perpetuated the rise of a male-oriented and patriarchal society. The blending of European masculine ideologies and indigenous masculine ideologies began the sociocultural machista ideology, involving sexual conquest.

Cowan (2017) traces the origin of *machismo* to English, “as an ethnicized construction of hypermasculinity, forged and maintained at the nexus of social science, popular culture, racism, and empire.” He argues, in addition to the findings of Gutmann (2000), that the appearance of *machismo* as a global epithet, in particular to Mexicans, is a result of Anglophone academics and popular media in the United States. Beginning in the late 1940s, public health officials and social scientists studying Latin America “pathologized machismo as the source of problems” within the region, concepting *machismo* as a threat to the United States (Cowan, 2017, p. 608). While surveying primarily Mexican, Mexican American and Puerto Rican Latin Americans about reproduction and family, social scientists sought an explanation for their findings. According to Cowan, they partially leaned on writers, like Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz, two originators of the mythological characterization of male hypermasculinity. Due to their assumed machismo, Latin Americans were incapable of solving their own problems, which exacerbated American “anxieties about overpopulation, poverty, communist subversion, and increased immigration,” leading to a surge in social science research on Puerto Rico and Mexico, two close, presumably

problematic countries (Cowan, 2017, p. 615). The repetition of the term, *machismo*, by social scientists and scholars, who had visited Latin America, began the popular media's usage of machismo "to register anxieties about the politics of race, immigration, youth, and radicalism," and, likewise, revalidated the stigmatization of overt Latin American masculinity (Cowan, 2017, p. 608).

Hinging on radicalism, machismo became a framework for discussing potential communism in Latin America (Cowan, 2017, p. 608). Using *machismo* as a frame to validate their beliefs and findings, American scholars created a mainstream movement of stereotypization of Latin American men as hyper-masculine accounting for the effects of hyper masculine aggressiveness on sexual exploitation. The stereotypization likewise incorporated gender inequity due to perceived overt Latino masculinity. Beginning in the 1940s, Academicians used *machismo* as the focal point for gender studies within Latin America (Cowan, 2017, p. 607). As the study of the effects of machismo on gender constructs in Latin America grew, so did the definitions of machismo within academia (Cowan, 2017, p. 607). In the cold war era of the 1970s, *machismo* was a term associated with problematic Latin American gender norms that posed a threat for the Western hemisphere (Cowan, 2017, p. 608). From that 1970s forward, machismo became associated with the gendered immigrant masculinity that would likely destabilize and dysfunctionalize the United States (Cowan, 2017, p. 608). Socially constructed and manipulated to fit the American agenda, machismo became integrated in society as a termed construct of Latin American patriarchy.

Though not the only factor, gender inequality as a factor of patriarchy, in light of historical human patterns, cannot be discounted even in the case of society where women earn substantially more than expected because of the evidence of inherent human dependence and

demographic social construction of women's dependence on men. Therefore, gender inequality can be contributed to the pervasive economic inequality of Latin America. Machismo, as an explanation of Latin American patriarchy, provides the basis for gender discrimination in the workforce of Latin America, effectively lowering the opportunities and financial income of women, repeating the cyclical pattern of intergenerational poverty and providing means for victimization through sexual exploitation. Prevalence of machismo contributes to overall female poverty and high levels of intergenerational poverty within Latin America. Pervasiveness of gender inequality exacerbates poverty rates in Latin America.

### *Poverty in Latin America*

According to the World Bank National Accounts Data, from 2010 to 2016, Latin America experienced a decline in average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita growth. In 2016, the reported total GDP of Latin America was slightly over 5.3 trillion dollars, with the highest being Brazil at almost 1.8 trillion dollars and the lowest being Belize at slightly above 1.74 billion dollars. However, Brazil and Mexico accounted for 53.45% of the total GDP of Latin America, highlighting the extreme economic disparity between countries (World Bank Group). Contributing to the continuance of economic inequity, within Latin America, saving rates are very low. In terms of GDP, the region saved 17.5% of GDP in the between 1980 and 2014, which was 10-15% less than the most emerging countries of Asia (ECLAC, 2014; OECD, 2017). Many of these savings were not formally intermediated, primarily affecting low-income households and further dividing the monetary gap between the poor and wealthy, creating more poverty for some and wealth for others.

In Bolivia in 2014, there was a 16.9% poverty gap measured on the national poverty level, with a 30.5% rural poverty gap and a 10.5% urban poverty gap (World Bank Group). The stark contrast between urban and rural poverty highlights another level of economic disparity based on geographical location, with rural areas having higher rates of poverty within Latin America. Likewise, the report of income shared by the highest 10% ranged from 29.7% in Uruguay to 40.0% in Colombia while the income shared by the lowest 10% ranged from 1.0% in Honduras to 2.3% in El Salvador (World Bank Group). Countries with lower percentages of income shared by the highest 10% and higher percentages of income shared by the lowest 10% tended to have higher GDP per capita growth and lower rates of national poverty.

Economic disparity contributes to Latin America's large unequal distribution of wealth, which negatively influences the vulnerability of impoverished persons. Between 2004 and 2012, one in five Latin Americans lived in chronic poverty, the highest rate being 50% in Guatemala, and the lowest being in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay with chronic poverty levels around 10% (CEPAL, 2013). A study on Child Poverty in Mesoamerica by the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) yielded that 4.4 million children live in poverty, while 5.7 million children live in extreme poverty, with the occurrence of child poverty being highest in Central America and the Andean Region of South America (2003). Poverty creates an opportunity for vulnerability and easy 'products,' being children, to sell. As stated by Wurtele and Miller-Perrin, "as long as there is a demand for sexual exploitation of children, traffickers will supply children" (2017). The existence of an "unrelenting demand for cheap labor" of sex trafficking victims, especially children, has supported the growth of the commercial sex industry (Hughes, 2004; Rafferty, 2007; Wennerholm, 2002; Yen, 2008). Child trafficking, of any form, and commercial

sexual exploitation, of any demographic, would not exist without the global demand for inexpensive victims or the eagerness to buy this illegal service. As “the role of male demand for commercial sexual services” persists, the global demand for child victims grows, especially for young girls (Rafferty, 2013).

The recidivistic pattern of poverty remains uninterrupted because of the inequitable labor market. Eighty percent of people in Latin America have moved from rural areas to urban cities where there is a higher potential for work; the majority of which live in urban slums (CEPAL, 2013). Of the economically active Latin American population, 71.9% work in the un or semi-skilled, informal sector, yet only generate 10.6% of the overall gross domestic production (GDP). Contrastingly, the skilled, formal sector generates 66.9% of the GDP yet only employs 8.1% of the economically active population (UNHSP, 2012). In 2014, the demand for labor in Latin America decreased, causing an increase in unemployment, especially of the poor (ECPAT). The extrapolation of “low financial yield, negligible earnings and insecure conditions” contributes to the inequality of income distribution, consequently contributing to the preservation of poverty (ECLAC, 2011).

Based on the 2012 World Economic Forum Report, in Latin American and the Caribbean, opportunities for women and economic participation ranked fourth out of the nine world regions (Tyson, Hausmann & Zahidi, 2012). Approximately 71% of Latin American women actively participate in the labor market (Ñopo, 2012). Yet, almost all women, irrespective of level of education achieved, work in the informal labor sector, earning lower wages than their male counterparts (ECPAT 2014 p.5). The breadth of the informal labor sector also contributes to economic inequality. Informal labor consists of unskilled labor that provides little opportunity for learning skills and advancing in the labor market. Because of little provision

of opportunity, informal work excludes workers from basic social protection, contributing to poverty due to instability that results in a higher probability of job loss. Of those working in the informal labor sector, the majority have a socioeconomic status of “extremely poor” live in rural areas, have only achieved primary education, identify as an ethnic or racial minority, and are age 15-19 (OECD, 2017). In terms of gender, women are more likely than men to work in the informal labor sector and earn, on average, less than males working in the informal labor sector (ECPAT, 2014). This correlates with the statistic that women are 1.15 times more likely to live poverty than men, due to their lower wages and lower level of social protection from formal work (ECLAC, 2009).

Like women, youth ages 15-19 are most likely to be employed in the informal labor sector (OECD, 2017). Many of these youths live in rural areas and do not complete primary education or advance past the primary educational level, while three fourths of all informal workers have not completed secondary education, in comparison to one fourth of formal workers (OECD, 2017). Children in poverty are the most at risk for informal labor employment, heightening their risk for sex trafficking due to increased vulnerability. Likewise, lack of education contributes to increased labor in the informal sector, which supports the cyclical pattern of poverty, especially for women and children, within Latin America. Many times, the impoverished Latin American communities are also ethnic or racial minorities facing socioeconomic barriers, which augment the likelihood of becoming a victim of sex trafficking. In Mexico, Central American countries, such as Guatemala and Nicaragua and South American countries, such as Chile, Colombia and Peru, indigenous, migrant and Afro-descendant children are most vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual exploitation (ECPAT, 2014, p. 10).

High political gender inequality is associated with lower female enrollment in secondary education, fewer women supervising or working in businesses and a higher gender wage gap (World Bank, 2015). Currently, there is no country in Latin America that has reached complete gender parity or political gender parity, according to the Global Gender Gap reported by the World Economic Forum. Though countries are making efforts towards gender equality, women are still unequal to men, which connects to legal frameworks.

Laws in Latin America reflect the perception of male dominance in society. Every Latin American country has laws distinguishing between the abilities of men and women within different sectors, including the home, workforce or political arena. In Belize, married women cannot apply for a passport in the same way that married men can, women must have the approval of their husband (World Bank, 2015). In Argentina, men and women are not legally allowed to hold some of the same jobs. Women are not allowed to produce or manipulate explosives, flammable or corrosive materials, work in distilling or selling alcohol or fermented liquids, unload ships, containers or other cargo, among other things (World Bank, 2015). In Belize, Chile, and Uruguay, among other Latin American countries, nondiscrimination laws relating to women's access to credit do not exist, meaning women can be discriminated against based on sex or marital status (World Bank, 2015). In Ecuador, women are not legally guaranteed an equivalent position after maternity leave, nor does the law mandate nondiscrimination practices in the workforce (World Bank, 2015). Economic disparity in Latin America, therefore, can be explained through legal frameworks in which the law does not protect against the discrimination of women or mandate gender equality due to machista domination of society.



### *Machismo and Poverty*

Indivisible as contributors to sexual exploitation, poverty and machismo cannot be ignored as significant contributors to the overwhelming problem of child sex trafficking in Latin America. The patriarchal machista society creates systemic inequality between men and women, adversely affecting children, largely in poor communities. This inequality manifests itself through economic and political participation as well as socially accepted gender roles. Poverty creates further dependence of women and children on men as the financial caretaker of the home, making women and children susceptible to the male head of house and males within the community in general. Economic subservience to men translates to cultural subservience to men, consistently strengthening male dominance.

Both poverty and machismo enhance the vulnerability of children. Studies show that child sex traffickers target the vulnerability of potential victims, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic background or family, creating both male and female child victims of sexual exploitation (McClain & Garrity, 2011). Regardless of geographical location or identity, children are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, sociocultural factors increase this vulnerability, causing more rampant victimization. ECPAT International (2014) concluded in their Regional CSEC Report of Latin America that the following factors increase the vulnerability of children and likelihood of them becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation: poverty, supply and demand, existence of gangs, violence, and pervasiveness of sexual abuse, of which the latter two directly stem from a machista culture.

Poverty, especially chronic poverty within the home, heightens the changes of intergenerational poverty, which substantially influences child well-being including health, academic achievement, emotion and behavior and teenage pregnancy (Pascoe, et. al, 2016). In

situations of extreme poverty, “families sell their children out of desperation” for survival—to pay for necessities, such as food and health care (Rafferty, 2013). The acceptance of dependence of children without societal contribution validates the selling of children for profit, especially in the circumstance of survival. The compounding effects of a society rooted in the ideal of male dominance and uprooted by poverty present the perfect recipe for victims. False promises of a sustainable income and better jobs lure victims into sex trafficking, maintaining a sustainable, lucrative business out of sex trafficking from the rampant economic poverty (Rafferty, 2013). Correspondingly, many poor Latin American countries play a role in international sex trafficking of victims from impoverished countries to developed nations (Rafferty, 2013). Comparably, Latin America is increasingly becoming a destination for Child Sex Tourism by many Caucasian, Western men (ECPAT, 2008). Economically advantageous male predators from Western societies exploit the economically poor in Latin America, namely women and children. By example, Western influence reinforces the patriarchal culture of machismo.

In Latin America, the extreme variance in income presents those who can provide sex and those who can pay for it. The machista culture presents those who can engage in sex acts and those who can monetarily benefit. The law and lack of law presents those who have power and those who do not. Each results in the victimization of dependent people through sex trafficking. As one the most economically diverse region in the world, Latin America provides a breeding ground for the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The extreme inequality generates cyclical patterns of intergenerational poverty, normalizing victimhood and oppressive machismo. These results of poverty escalate the vulnerability of women and children within the public and private spheres. Likewise, the rampancy of male domination in political, economic, familial, and legal realms augments the dependency of women and children on patriarchal power for survival.

The convergence of poverty and machismo provide a prime setting for the purchase and sexual exploitation of child bodies because of dependency.

### *Patterns of Dependency*

Dependency, as previously stated, is measured by the inextricable relationship between machismo and poverty. Prevalence of machista culture causes economic disparity between men and women, heightening the likelihood of impoverished women and children. Higher income potential for men, the gender pay gap, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment in the workplace all contribute to the rampant dependency of women and children on men for economic stability. When impoverished, dependency is heightened and vulnerability to male control worsens, providing avenues of victimization of vulnerable women and children within the home. Normalization of victimization within the home normalizes victimization within the community, creating a culture of exploited dependence.

Dependency is a product of sociocultural norms and traditions that perpetuate gender-based social inequalities, stereotypic attitudes, discrimination toward children and women, reinforce women's subordinate status in society, heighten the vulnerability of children, and pose a challenge to achieving gender equality (Rafferty, 2013a, 2013b; UNIFEM, 2011; WHO, 2009c). This perpetuation of machismo persists in homes where women remain in the subservient role to fathers, husbands or brothers, reinforcing male dominance and fostering physically and sexually abusive environments. As Kupper and Zick (2011) found, a gender gap exists between male and female roles in the family and occupational setting, "where women are expected to be submissive and soft-hearted and men are expected to be dominant, assertive and competitive," in accord with the antiquated views of Latino familial and societal systems

(Perilla, 1999, p. 114). In this society, women are to acquiesce to male needs, including sexual desires, making gender inequality and gender-based discrimination major historical and sociocultural factors that contribute to the devaluation and dependence of women and children (Wurtele & Miller-Perrin, 2017). The sex trafficking market functions on the existence of machismo within the home in combination with the inequitable economic market, which inevitably divides men and women on income, occupation, and economic potential, thus reinforcing gender discrimination and limiting the advancement of women above poverty lines to their dependence on men. Gender discrimination, in the form of *machismo*, “exacerbate[s] the potential” for the sexual exploitation of children through the acceptance of violence and abuse towards children within society (ECPAT, 2014, p. 8).

Effectively making children prey, poverty and machismo intensify the potential victimization of children in sexual exploitation. Evidence of the relationship of machismo on sex trafficking is seen through country patterns of poverty, data on violence against women, and data on the sexual abuse of children. The male-dominated culture leads to inequity in all sectors of society, prompting mass poverty among populations of women and children. Machista culture combined with poverty aggravates the potential for child sex trafficking through the heightened vulnerability of other community members, as seen through the data on violence against women. Intimate partner violence against women likewise mirrors the pervasiveness of child sex abuse within the home. High patterns of violence against women tend to mirror high numbers of child sex abuse. These two factors are predictors for the existence of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Violence against women as a measure of child sex trafficking suggests the deeply ingrained machista culture and the stress of poverty on the family. At the 1989 United Nations

Convention of the Rights of the Child, the UN defined violence as: “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Article 19). Using the phrase, “gender-based” violence, the United Nations Declaration of 1993 and the Convention of Belém do Pará, acknowledged that, in comparison to men, women’s subservient economic and social roles influence the “risk factors, consequences, and community responses to violence against women” (UN, 2006; Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 1999). Gender inequality in relationships and economic dependence on intimate partners may heighten women’s vulnerability to violence, including sexual violence (Bott et. al. 2012). In some cases, violence against women is used as a way of reinforcing gender inequality, as well as a manifestation of the inequality itself, as in colonial times when Spaniards would rape indigenous women to humiliate them in an effort to control them (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 1999; Jewkes, 2002; Hardin, 2002, p. 6). Subsequently, reinforcement of gender stereotypes and norms contribute to the prevalence of violence, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation of women and children. Establishment of heteronormativity and hypermasculinity lead to “hyper sexuality or excessive sexual preoccupation,” which can lead to sexual violence, including the sexual violence of children (Seto, 2015).

Instance of violence against women in the home increases the likelihood of child abuse within the home. In the Central American region, where rates of violence within the home are highest, estimates show that “more than 6 million children suffer abuse and more than 80,000 die each year as result” (Knaul and Ramírez, 2005). These same estimates show that women and children are the most common victims of abuse within the home. Sexual abuse is most prevalent among young girls, however research shows that abuse of boys is underreported (Krug, 2002). Research has found that cultures that impose and enforce feminine gender stereotypes contribute

to violence and the sexual exploitation of children (UNHRC, 2015). A study by Hillis, Amobi and Kress (2016) found that violence experienced by children age 2-17 exceeded 30%. Per the definition of violence by the 2002 World Report on Violence and Health, the sexual abuse of children constitutes violence because it results in complete harm to a child's well-being.

Negative childhood experiences that include physical and sexual abuse are common among sexually exploited girls, and studies show that for both genders, parental exposure to violence increases the likelihood of children's risk of parental violence (Flowers, 2001; Krug, 2002). The recidivistic pattern of child sexual abuse and violence proceeds from instances of violence against women and pervasive poverty leading to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

There are many forms of sexual exploitation of children in Latin America, including sex tourism, child prostitution, pornography, child marriage and trafficking with the intent of commercial sexual exploitation (Zhang, 2012). Sex tourism, including Child Sex Tourism (CST) has escalated in the past few years, with countries seeing an increase in tourism intended for sex. Rocio Rodriguez, the founder of the non-profit organization *Alianza por tus Derechos* in Costa Rica, said in an interview with ECPAT International that the increase in CST paralleled the eco-tourism boost, due to the countries depiction as a popular tourist destination. "Young girls" are commonly seen with foreign men in bars and on the beaches in the more popular tourist destinations, including San José, Guanacaste, Puntarenas and Limon. This economic boost for poor areas presents the facade of an opportunity for young women to make money for themselves and their families, when in reality they are exploited by predators (ECPAT Interview with Rodriguez). Dependence on a dominant figure for survival traps children in a vicious cycle of sex trafficking, unable to escape both physically and mentally.

Data availability on sex trafficking in Latin America varies. Published data of reported victims also varies. Many times, due to dependency, victims do not realize they are victims, especially if their trafficker is a relative. Also, due to institutional policies of criminalization for illegal sex and advanced trafficking networks, victims are hesitant to reveal their victimhood or information about trafficking in general (Langberg, 2005, p. 133). Similarly, different methods of reporting have different wording, evoking different responses, specifically in organizational surveys (Langberg, 2005; Zhang, 2012). No universal data collection on sex trafficking in Latin America exists, proving accurate data collection and summation difficult in determining manifestations of dependency.

## CHAPTER II: MANIFESTATIONS OF DEPENDENCY

Because Latin America has one of the largest gaps of income distribution in the world, manifestations of dependency in Latin America differs from country to country. To understand the expression of the influence of the machismo culture on dependency in Latin America, gender disparity must be quantified at a national level, focusing on men and women's roles in politics, economics and household labor. Poverty must also be quantified at a national level, focusing on the discrepancy between rates of poverty based on gender, age, geographic location, and type of labor. The relationship between machismo and gender disparity affects the level of poverty, influencing the rates of violence against women and sexual abuse of children within the community. High prevalence of violence against women correlates with high prevalence of child sex abuse, which determines the pervasiveness of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and sex trafficking in general within each country.

### *Manifestations of Dependency in Mexico*

According to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report of 2017, Mexico's score of gender parity is 0.692.<sup>9</sup> The proportion of one female to 1,000 males in Mexico is 0.99, meaning men only slightly outnumber women, yet the political landscape does not reflect this finding. Mexico ranks 34th out of 144 countries for political empowerment, with 42.6% of women holding parliament positions (World Economic Forum, 2017). However, this percentage significantly drops as women only hold 15.8% of ministerial positions, and lesser percentages of local governmental roles (World Economic Forum, 2017). Understandably then, Mexican law does not promote equal pay between men and women and nondiscrimination laws against

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<sup>9</sup> A score of 0 equates imparity and a score of 1 indicates parity. Scores are measured by a variety of factors. The entire report can be found here: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf)



women do not exist within the business sector. Men significantly outnumber women in managerial, ownership and board positions of businesses and on average earn more than women in the same positions (World Economic Forum, 2017). Males dominate in the economic sphere as a result of the historical patriarchal culture. Men also more than double the income of women, yet women reportedly work longer days than men, including unpaid domestic labor (World Economic Forum, 2017). Barker, et. al. (2011) found that in regard to division of household labor, men report being more satisfied than women and 54% of men believe their household labor participation is greater or equal to that of their female partner yet less than half of women believe the same. In relation, men are more likely to participate in domestic duties if their father participated in domestic household work than if their father did not, suggesting the strong influence of societal norms on male participation in traditionally female roles (Barker, et. al, 2011). Gendered division of familial labor translates to gendered division of public labor of which men dominate. Data from the Global Gender Gap Report (2017) shows the disparity between men and women in political, economic and household sectors, with higher percentages of men in positions of power than women, creating a dependency dynamic between the genders within Mexican society.

Higher percentages of men in positions of economic and political power structures attribute to the lower socioeconomic status of women and children increasing their dependency and exacerbating the potential for victimization. The World Bank Group (2018) reports that in Mexico, 36% of women make up of the workforce. Yet, the majority of women work in informal sectors, which are unstable and do not provide job security (World Economic Forum, 2017). Men's average earnings, \$23,913, almost double that of women's, \$11,861 (World Economic Forum, 2017). Women's lesser earnings illustrate their higher dependence on men for

economic security. Women hold 5.2% of positions on the boards of publicly traded companies, accounting for the higher average income of men (World Economic Forum, 2017). Likewise, the lack of parental care legislation and company parental care requirements reside on the dominance of men in political and business sectors (World Economic Forum, 2017). Because of discrimination in societal institutions, out of the 24 million Mexicans that live in extreme poverty, women and children are most likely to live in extreme poverty (IPEC, 2006, p.27).

Though Mexican law calls for the nondiscrimination of women in the workforce, it does not mandate equal pay for equal work between men and women, which can partially account for the economic disparity present (World Economic Forum, 2017). Another reason for economic inequality, Mexican law does not require that women have paid leave of up to 14 weeks concerning childbirth (World Bank Group, 2015). Therefore, women risk losing their jobs if they leave to take care of children and likewise are not remunerated for their leave, causing a discrepancy in income. Also, Mexican law does not protect women from workplace harassment (World Bank, 2015). Women can become victims of sexual harassment and violence at work, especially when they depend on the financial institution for survival. Lack of legal frameworks increase the victimization of women in sexual exploitation due to their dependency from poverty.

A study on male and female perceptions of gender equality by Barker, et. al. (2011) indicated that 88% of Mexican men felt economic stress and that economic stress increased the likelihood of violence against women. In agreement with machismo, men must economically provide for the family. In instances where men feel societal pressure and economic stress, their inherent vulnerability shows and men tend towards victimizing those dependent on them and vulnerable to them (Barker, et. al, 2011). Men assert their masculinity and hide their vulnerability through sexual conquest, evolving to assertion through both consensual and non-

consensual conquests, the easier of the two being consensual. However if and when their intimate female partner denies sexual advances, violence, which leads to abuse, most often occurs. Though Mexican law prohibits statutory and marital rape, its implementation of both laws is extremely limited (World Bank Group, 2015). Reports indicate that women most often experience physical violence from an intimate male partner, meaning female victims of violence know their perpetrator in the majority of cases (Barker, et. al, 2011). In many cases, violence against women includes sexual abuse.

In a study by Sonia Frías (2017) on the effects of intimate partner violence on reproductive health, the results showed that in Monterrey, Mexico, 52% of females age 15 or older, who had been physically abused, had also been sexually assaulted by their intimate male partner. In the same study, 27% of those surveyed 15 and older in Guadalajara reported experiencing physical assault by their intimate male partner, with 15% of adult women experiencing “attempted or completed forced sex” by an intimate male partner in the past year and 23% experiencing “attempted or completed forced sex” in in their lifetime (Frías, 2017). In Durango, Mexico, 42% of the 384 females surveyed reported that in they have been victimized by “attempted or completed forced sex” by an intimate male partner in their lifetime (Frías, 2017). In Monterrey, Mexico 50% of abused women claim that their children have regularly witnessed violence towards them from their male partner (Frías, 2017). Men surveyed between 2009 and 2010, in the study, *Evolving Men: initial results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*, of people age 18-59, conducted in 6 countries around the world, found that in self-reporting experience of physical violence or sexual violence from an intimate partner, women reported a higher percentage than men who self-reported using physical or sexual violence against an intimate partner. The study showed that in Mexico, 17.5% of men

reported being the perpetrator of physical violence against their intimate female partner, while 31% of women reported being victims of physical violence from their intimate male partner during their lifetime (Frías, 2017). The regularity of violence towards women in the home normalizes the action, creating negative intergenerational effects. Ergo, exposure to violence in childhood increases the likelihood of experiencing violence later in life. Especially in rural communities, where traditional gender roles and a heightened sense of masculinity is common, communities are more likely to accept violence against women and children, (Frías, 2017). Rural areas generally believe that women deserve the abuse they receive and believe non family members should not intervene on the woman's behalf, which coincides with intrinsic beliefs of gender roles (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 114). The measure 'father beat mother' constitutes the most consistent risk factor for future intimate partner violence against women (Frías, 2017). A study of Mexican public school students 11-24 years old yielded that interfamilial violence contributes to dating violence victimization of both males and females (Rivera-Rivera, et. al, 2007). Consequently, research shows that there is a perpetual strong relationship between intimate partner violence and any form of child abuse.

Men also assert their masculinity through controlling children, both systematically and sexually, which increases with extreme poverty. The adoption of a sexualized perception of children by some men relieves their moral conscience of any problems with selling or purchasing sex, becoming perpetrators of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (Patel, 2014, p. 405). As the International Labor Organization reports, the high demand for CSEC stems from male perpetrators. Fifty-nine percent of Mexican men report that they think female minors engaging in sex work are 'employed' of their own choosing, and almost a fifth of the same men have engaged in sexual acts with a minor (ILO, 2008). The cultural acceptance of chauvinism

denounces the value of children, making them easy victims for exploitation by males. Violence against children is rationalized and accepted in Mexican culture. The risk of child abuse in households is greater when there are both male and female children, rather than single gendered children, suggesting a higher need for male dominance in the home and the threat of dominance from the presence of other males (Bott, et. al, 2012). The UNICEF Report on the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Mexico (2010) stated that girls, 61.4%, are more likely to be affected by physical violence than boys, 46.0%. Likewise, girls comprise the majority of sexual abuse victims. Estimates show that sexual abuse in Mexico effects up to 1 million children annually (Imbusch, et. al, 2011, p. 100). Boys and girls in 4th and 5th grade reported that almost 20% of girls had experienced attempted sexual abuse by one of their peers (Rivera-Rivera, 2007). By age 19, the majority of young women report experience of sexual intercourse, with 5.1% categorizing the experience as forced by a male partner (Marston, 2005, p. 71). However, if nonconsensual, girls are reluctant to categorize their first sexual intercourse as ‘forced’ (Marston, 2005, p. 74). Instead, they phrase the experience based on their relationship to their partner, even if in their testimony they explicitly say words such as, “I don’t want to” (Marston, 2005, p. 74). This illustrates the powerlessness of children and the ingrained social acceptance of male dominance, even when coerced into sexual acts.

The systemic construct of male power places girls at the greatest risk for commercial sexual exploitation, especially by men. Men capitalize on the emotional and physical vulnerability of girls, often falsely luring them into relationships to more easily sexually abuse and coerce them into work, putting young women and girls more at risk of rape than older women (WHO, 2012, p. 3, 7). Of the estimated 16,000 sexually exploited children in Mexico, The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) (2006) indicates the

majority are girls. The IPEC also reported that the main victims of CSEC in Mexico are female children living on city streets, due to their extreme vulnerability. Forced into prostitution and pornography, girls are repeatedly demeaned by their perpetrators, who are reported as primarily male. Considered normal, male sexual drives are easily fulfilled through exploitation of vulnerable, powerless female children, including minority and migrant children (ECPAT, 2014, p. 10). Considered deviant behaviors in home countries, child sex tourism (CST) drives part of the CSEC labor market in Mexico's tourist destinations and border with the United States (ECPAT, 2014, p. 14-15). The cultural acceptance of male sexual conquests helps facilitate the existence of CST, furthering the exploitation of girls. Besides being female, the other factors attributed to machismo that increase the likelihood of victimization are a history of sexual abuse and family violence, as illustrated above (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 62). As previously stated, the inequality between men and women causes violence and abuse, and often leads to the dysfunction of broken and abusive homes.

In Mexico, economic inequality causes higher poverty rates among women and children, increasing their dependence on men. Increased dependence results in magnified vulnerability, exploited through violence against women and sexual abuse of children within the home. Normative violence and abuse of the vulnerable in the home translates to normative instances outside the home, equating to sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In 2016, Mexican authorities reported conviction of 228 traffickers involved in 127 federal and state cases of human trafficking, the majority being sex trafficking (TIP, 2017). Of human trafficking victims identified in 2016, 95.5% were victims of sex trafficking, at 707 victims (TIP, 2017). However, there was a significant decrease in the number of identified victims from 2015. The National Citizen Observatory conducted a study collecting human trafficking statistics in

Mexico from January 2010 to July 2013. Of the 31 Mexican states studied, only 16 reported any victims of human trafficking, with a total of 846 victims, 80% being female, 50% being minors and 87.7% being victims of sex trafficking (Estadísticas en México, 2014). Of the 16 states reporting human trafficking, the majority of the states fall below the poverty level, associating high victimization of sex trafficking with impoverished women and children (Estadísticas en México, 2014). Mexican poverty through inequality promotes violence against women and children, as a result of the machista culture in which men preside.

### *Manifestations of Dependency in Guatemala*

In comparison to countries around the world, the World Bank Group (2018) classifies Guatemala as a “lower middle income country.” According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2017), Guatemala is in the bottom fourth of 144 countries in terms of gender parity, having a gender parity score of 0.667. Though the ratio of men to women is almost equal (0.97), in positions of political power, 12.7% of women hold a place in parliament and 18.8% of women hold ministerial positions (World Economic Forum, 2017). Men significantly outnumber women in political representation, though the population of men just slightly outnumbers the population of women. Similarly, men still maintain the majority of public positions within the business sector (World Economic Forum, 2017). Contributing to the continuation of male dominated politics and economics, no laws require equal pay for equal work between men and women (World Bank Group, 2018). Likewise, no Guatemalan law prohibits gender discrimination in the workforce as women are restricted to working in certain vocations that are not considered “hazardous, arduous or morally inappropriate” (World Bank Group, 2018). There is no mandated paid parental leave for women of up to 14 weeks (World Bank Group, 2018). Also, no quotas

exist to equate the number of men and women in political positions, corporate boards, or local government positions leading to fewer social developments for women, which upholds the patriarchal culture and heightens the likelihood of poverty for women and children (World Bank Group, 2018). The combined average income of Guatemalan men and women is less than the average income of a Mexican man. Attributed to the poorer Guatemalan economy, the average Mexican woman earns more than the average Guatemalan man (World Economic Forum, 2017). Due to poverty, educational attainment in Guatemala is also lower than that of Mexico, especially for women.

Guatemalan men consistently receive more education than Guatemalan women, with 85.5% of males age 25-54 having finished primary education and 76.1% of females age 25-54 finishing primary education (World Economic Forum, 2017). Similarly, men outnumber the women with completed tertiary education and therefore Guatemalan men have a higher literacy rate than Guatemalan women (World Economic Forum, 2017). In the rural, impoverished geographical areas, 12.8% of children are not enrolled in primary education, leaving them more economically vulnerable than their urban peers (World Economic Forum, 2017). Likewise, the national level of secondary education enrollment is only 47.1%, which continues to contribute to the high national poverty level (World Economic Forum, 2017). The Global Gender Gap Report (2017) estimates that 55.3% of female and 49.2% of male youths are not enrolled in school. Lack of education contributes to high national poverty rates in Guatemala. The high percentage of girls not enrolled in educational institutes contributes to lesser female income and higher female poverty rates. Higher educational attainment generally leads to higher income, influencing women's dependence on men for survival, consequently giving men absolute power in many Guatemalan homes, systematically coercing women and children to obey (Saadeh & Caballero,



2013). Influenced by greater male income in the home in congruence with traditional gender roles, married women are only granted partial parental rights including partial rights to land and property ownership, lessening women's economic holdings and increasing poverty (World Bank Group, 2018). The increase in poverty exacerbates the potential for exploitation of children because of increased dependency on the patriarchal figure.

Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Between 2004 and 2012, one in five Latin Americans lived in chronic poverty, the highest rate being 50% in Guatemala where the insufficient labor market and poor economy contribute to high rates of poverty (Bott, et. al, 2012). Women comprise 34% of the labor force in Guatemala but the majority of women work in the informal labor sector (World Bank Group, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2017). The instability of the informal labor sector contributes to women's lesser income. The average male salary, \$10,592, almost doubles the average woman's salary, \$5,385, making men the higher income earners and lessening the economic potential for female household income (World Economic Forum, 2017). The extreme gap in income distribution reflects the lack of legal frameworks to economically protect women. Inexistence of laws that protect women from discrimination and harassment combined with no paid maternity leave and equal pay heighten the chances of women in poverty (World Bank Group, 2018). Therefore, as low income earners with minimal representation, women are dependent on men in positions of power for economic stability. Men in positions of power, therefore have the ability to exploit and control women and children for economic gain.

The machista culture of Guatemala influences the inequity present in Guatemala, increasing the potential for exploitation. Machismo places more value on men in its unequal distribution of societal roles, deferring to male violence against the most vulnerable--women and

children. Due to lesser education and an environment deeply ingrained in machista culture, a study by Barker, et. al. (2011) revealed that more rural women tend to support the concept of traditional gender roles than urban women. Of women living in rural areas, 74.4% believe that wives should obey their husbands, even in disagreement, while only 52.7% of urban women believed the same (Barker, et. al, 2011). Though the urban women report a lower percentage, the majority of both groups reports that wives should obey their husbands, which proves consistent with the socially accepted framework of male dominance (Barker, et. al, 2011). Due to this commonly held belief, violence against women in general is more prevalent in poor areas where the income gap is large, creating more dependence on and giving more power to the male figure in the household (Barker, et. al, 2011). Men often abuse their societal power and control, especially when feeling societal pressure to be the economic provider (Barker, et. al, 2011). Abuse of male societal power and control is illustrated through violence against women and sexual abuse of children.

The culture of machismo places pressure on men and women to conform to gender roles, causing equating men to dominance and women to submissiveness, therefore when members of society do not succumb to their roles, consequences occur, including violence against women. Bott et. al. (2012) reports that 24.5% of Guatemalan women have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) during their lifetime. Out of these women, 10.4% have been kicked dragged or beaten and 8.9% of women have been raped by an intimate male partner (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 20). In total, 12.3% of women surveyed have experienced any act of sexual violence ever by their intimate male partner (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 23). Due to the extreme psychological harm, many women choose to ignore their experiences of abuse and normalize their experiences for themselves, their children and others within the community (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 7; CICIG,

2016, p. 73). Normalization of violence against women within the community reinforces the submissive, docile role of women in society and begins to normalize violence against women of different, younger ages. Bott, et. al. (2012) found that women who are married at a young age experience higher rates of IPV. Guatemalan law states that 18 is the legal age to marry, yet the United Nations Children's Fund shows that about 30% of girls and young women are married before 18 years old (2016, p. 151). Yet, the law also states that girls as young as 14 can be married with parental or judicial court consent; hence, in 2015, 7% of Guatemalan girls under 15 were reportedly married (UNICEF, 2016, p. 151). Out of a sample of girls under age 15 who were married in 2012, 13.3% reported experiencing intimate male partner violence in the past month, including sexual violence (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 74). Consequently, the institutionalization of violence against women leads to violence and sexual abuse of children. Violence against women in the home enhances the possibility of sexual exploitation of children within the home (CICIG, 2016, p. 72). This perpetuates an intergenerational pattern of violence and sexual abuse of women and children by men.

High occurrence of violence against women due to the culture of machismo influences rates of child abuse. Within the home, sexual abuse and violence remains constant as many boys and girls are raped by fathers, stepfathers and other close male relatives (CICIG, 2016, p. 72). Violence towards girls in the home often goes unreported due to fear of the aggressor, disbelief of the crime or the mother will ignore the abuse because she herself is a victim or she fears losing the income from the male figure (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 106). In total, 5.1% of girls age 15-19 reported experiences of physical and sexual violence from known perpetrators in the past 12 months (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 145).

Highly sexualized and vulnerable, young Guatemalan children are more likely to become victims of sexual exploitation than women by familial and non-familial members. The lower the age of the child, the more likely the child will be exploited, peaking at ages 15-17, with the exception of virgins, in which case girls as young as 11 and 12 face commercial sexual exploitation (CICIG, 2016, p. 73-74). ECPAT (2011) conducted a study showing that 98% of victims of commercial sexual exploitation were between ages 15-17, with 66% of sexually exploited boys falling between ages 15 and 17. In Guatemala City and Ayutla, exploitation of immigrant boys nearly doubled the amount of sexually exploited men, yet girls still constitute the majority of sexually exploited individuals (ECPAT, 2014, p. 11). Increasingly popular, the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) continues to grow in Guatemala as the overt patriarchal society more willingly accepts the sexual exploitation of children, unlike that of North America or Western Europe, who supply the majority of perpetrators (ECPAT, 2014, p. 14). In many cases, virgin girls are preferred, representing another way male dominance is asserted through the violation of innocence (CICIG, 2016, p. 69). Having the highest earning potential as the main victims of sexual exploitation, girls are often sold in exchange for monetary or other forms of payment, and often resold between people (Villareal, 2013). UNICEF and CICIG report that among families that exploit their children, families most commonly sell their daughters into forced marriages in exchange for property or money, both contingent upon the behavior of the daughter in her new home (2016, p. 88). In some areas, such as the Mexican border, recruiters will offer poor mothers monetary compensation for selling their young, virgin daughters into trafficking (CICIG, 2016, p. 69). Recruiters capitalize on the vulnerability of the family and obtain consent from parents to exploit daughters in exchange for money, such as 500

quetzales<sup>10</sup> in the South West region (CICIG, 2016, p. 71). The devaluation of daughters by the chauvinistic society gives reason for families to profit off of the sale of their daughters into sex trafficking. Similarly, the devaluation of children in the machista culture justifies the sexual exploitation of children.

However, sex trafficking of all people is rampant in Guatemala. Of five cities observed, ECPAT Guatemala reported that 36% of individuals surveyed were aware of at least one case of trafficking for sexual purposes, in which 76.9% involved a child victim and 23.1% involved a female woman (Villareal, 2013). Of the known children, the majority were female, marking the common occurrence of minor female sex trafficking throughout Guatemala since over one third of the population could identify a victim, over three fourths of the identified victims were children and the majority of children were girls. Disparity in politics and economics influences higher poverty rates of women and children in Guatemala, further contributing to the potential of violence against women and sexual abuse of children, which creates an environment susceptible to sexual exploitation. As previously stated, males have greater access to education and power within politics and economics, leaving the subservient role of girls and women to the home and traditional domestic work. Even when girls have equal opportunity as male counterparts to attend school, many times they are faced with sexual violence from classmates and teachers. Social constructs of male hierarchy justify the sexual exploitation of children and justify the manipulation of the family to coerce children into sex trafficking. Females gain children's trust and lure them into sex trafficking while males dominate the trafficking business, reaffirming their superior societal position and reinforcing the inferior societal position of women and children, especially of the exploited children. Because of extreme poverty within Guatemala and

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the exchange rate as of 21 April 2018, 500 quetzales is equivalent to \$67.48.

other Central American countries, many Central Americans choose to migrate to more financially stable countries, increasing their potential for kidnapping and forced sex labor (TIP, 2017). Therefore, dependence on machista societal institutions increases the likelihood of sexual exploitation within Guatemala and Central America.

### *Manifestations of Dependency in Colombia*

According to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (2017), Colombia is ranked 36th out of 144 countries for gender parity with a gender parity score of 0.731, thus closer to achieving complete gender parity than Mexico and Guatemala. Colombia is considered an upper-middle income country where the proportion of men only slightly outnumbers women, 0.97 (World Economic Forum, 2017). Expectedly, Colombian men hold more political positions than women, 81.3% in Parliament and 64.7% in ministerial positions; however, a higher percentage of women work in managerial, legislative and senior official roles, 53.1%, in comparison to men, 46.9%, outnumbering both Mexico and Guatemala in the percentage of women in leadership roles within the business sector (World Economic Forum, 2017). The higher percentage of women in managerial roles influences the higher percentage of women participating in the workforce overall. Out of all Colombian women, 62.6% make up the workforce, totaling 43.0% of the Colombian workforce (World Economic Forum, 2017). Though more women are employed informally than men, more Colombian women have greater opportunities for economic achievement within the business sector and women are granted at least 14 weeks of paid maternal leave, encouraging greater female participation in the workforce due to lesser obstacles for women (World Bank Group, 2018). Yet, women and men are unable to work in the same areas, with certain areas that are considered “hazardous, arduous or morally

inappropriate” restricted to men only (World Bank Group, 2018). Greater equality between Colombian men and women contributes to the smaller pay gap between men and women.

Overall, Colombia has reduced the gender pay gap between men and women. Yet, the average Colombian man still earns more, \$16,924, than the average Colombian woman, \$11,477 (World Economic Forum, 2017). Though Colombian law does not mandate equal remuneration for equal work, it does have an anti-discrimination law for hiring women, contributing to the higher percentage of women in the workforce and higher wages of women (World Bank Group, 2018). Greater gender parity can also be attributed to education. Colombian women successfully attain higher educational achievements from primary to tertiary education than Colombian men and women have a 0.3% higher literacy rate than men (World Economic Forum, 2017). Yet, the Global Gender Gap Report (2017) states that in Colombia, more female youth, 30.3% are not enrolled in educational institutions than male youth, 12.3%. As a potential factor in the smaller number of female youth enrolled in educational institutions, no legislation exists covering sexual harassment towards women in education; likewise, as a potential factor in the larger percentage of women in the workforce, legislation exists covering sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank Group, 2018). Colombia is closer in gender parity than Mexico or Guatemala, but gender disparity still exists, affecting the higher rates of poverty seen for women and children than for men.

Though the economic gender gap in Colombia is smaller than that of Mexico or Guatemala, Colombia still has a high percentage of impoverished people. In 2015, 64.4% of the Colombian population lived under the poverty line with an unemployment rate of 10.9% for females and 17.5% for youth (World Bank Group). In 2015, Colombia showed a national poverty gap of 10.3% with a 15.7% rural poverty gap and an 8.7% urban poverty gap (World

Bank Group). Economically, in 2016, the top 10% of Colombians shared 40% of the nations' income, while the bottom 20% shared only 3.9% of income (World Bank Group). In general, rural women and youth are poorest and urban men are the least poor. In Colombia, many rural communities are minority communities, including especially poor afro-descendant populations (ECPAT, 2014, p. 7). High rates of poverty, specifically among rural areas in minority communities contributes to increased instances of violence against women and child sex abuse due to higher levels of dependence upon patriarchal structures for survival.

Historically, violence against women in Colombia has been influenced by many factors, including the prevalence of poverty and armed conflict. In a study of violence against women ages 15-49 by intimate male partners in 1995, 19% of Colombian women reported experiencing physical assault by their current male partner (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 20). In 2005, the number of women reporting experiences of intimate partner violence in their lives increased to 38.6% with 13.7% of women reporting being kicked dragged or beaten ever (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 20). In 2005, 20.7% of women reported experiencing intimate partner violence within the past 12 months (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 20). The significant increase in the number of women experiencing physical violence between 1995 and 2005 can be accounted for by different factors, including fear of the aggressor, different survey indicators, and societal changes in regards to disclosure about violence among others (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 7, 24). The United Nations Gender Statistics reports that the percentage of female Colombians who have experienced sexual violence by persons other than their intimate male partner increased from 6.1% in 2005 to 13.9% in 2010. Females also reported that 11.8% had experienced any act of sexual violence ever (UN Gender Statistics, 2010). During the armed conflict from 2001-2009, a survey indicated that almost half a million Colombian females were victims of sexual violence (ECPAT 2014, p.7). 9.7% of



women stated they had experienced “severe physical violence” by an intimate partner ever in their lifetime (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 21). In the same study by Bott et. al. (2012), in the past 12 months, 20.7% of women reported experiencing intimate partner violence, while 31% of women under age 15 at first marriage/union reported experiencing intimate partner violence in the past month. Many surveys include children under 18 in the data due to high prevalence of violence against both women and children, especially girls.

A study by Klevens, Bayón & Sierra (2000) found that more intimate male partner violence of women equates to more child abuse by the male figure within the home (p. 331). Estimates show that sexual abuse affects up to 2 million children in Colombia (Imbusch, et. al, 2011, p. 100). Low education and lack of adequate income increase the likelihood of violence against children. Therefore, families in rural areas tend to have higher prevalence of violence against children (UN Gender Statistics, 2010). In some cases, uneducated mothers with high dependence on their partners also abuse the child (UN Gender Statistics, 2010). As the highest percentage reported, girls age 15-19 reported that 31.5% had experienced physical and/or sexual violence in past 12 months (Bott, et. al, 2012, p. 31). Statistics from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean show that in 2015, 4.1% of 15-19 year olds claimed they were victims of sexual violence (2003). Female youth age 15-19 reported that 31.5% had experienced physical and/or sexual violence in past 12 months, including rape (UN Gender Statistics, 2010). Like Guatemala, early marriage of adolescent girls accounts for a higher prevalence of intimate partner violence within the lifespan. In Colombia, 15 years old is the lowest legal age for marriage, yet many rural communities allow marriages of younger girls, including child marriages, constituting child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children (ECPAT, 2014, p. 19). From 2008-2014 in Colombian, 6% of children were married at 15 years

of age and 23% of children were married at 18 years of age (UNICEF, 2016). Young marriages and child abuse impact the rampancy of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, due to children's dependence on authority figures.

NGOs, UNICEF and law enforcement agencies estimate that there are between 20,000 and 35,000 children commercially exploited in Colombia. Afro-descendant children are considered the most vulnerable to victimization of commercial sexual exploitation within Colombia, heavily influenced by the extreme poverty faced by this minority community (ECPAT, 2014, p. 10). The existence of gangs perpetuates this as minority communities are easiest to exploit. Mainly comprised of boys 12-14 years old, gangs provide boys with a social and emotional support system, but often subject girls to sexual violence, though boys are also subject to sexual violence (ECPAT, 2014, p. 7). Especially in instances of armed conflict the instances of sexual violence, specifically against the most vulnerable, rise. Due to gender discrimination, girls are often pressured or forced "into sexual liaisons with leaders or others" (ECPAT, 2014 p.7). Gangs profit monetarily from sexual victimization as well as gain more members from coercion, contributing to the prevalence of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America. In a 2010 report *Jóvenes que han mantenido relaciones sexuales en los últimos 12 meses* by the Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud, 20.3% of 15 year old, 35.4% of 16 year olds and 50.5% of 17 year olds reported engaging in sexual intercourse over the past 12 months (p. 350). However, the measure of sexual intercourse did not differentiate between consensual and nonconsensual sex. In Colombia, child prostitution is the most common form of sexual exploitation of children since adult prostitution is legal (ECPAT, 2014, p. 11). Yet, because adult prostitution is legal, children are oftentimes provided with false identification, so they can 'hide' if and when raids occur (ECPAT, 2014, p. 11). However, if caught, persons

under 18, though victims as per the CRC's determination of the age of the "child," are not exempt from prosecution because of their vulnerability, but are punished for their crimes (ECPAT, 2014, p. 11).

As an emerging country for the sexual exploitation of children in tourism, the demand for female victims has increased in Colombia. Mainly affecting coastal cities, like Cartagena de Indias and Barranquilla, large urban cities, such as Medellin and Bogotá also have a high prevalence of commercial sex tourism from primarily North American and Western European men (ECPAT, 2014, p. 15). The Colombian government has worked to dissuade business from aiding child sex traffickers and imposed fines and imprisonment for breaking the law. Yet, there is a general social acceptance by complicity or omission to the victimization of children in tourist destinations because of the machista society (ECPAT, 2014, p. 15).

Colombian children are not the only victims of sexual exploitation that are generally socially accepted. Victims, especially poor, rural minority afro-descendant victims are commonly exploited in Colombia (TIP, 2017). In contrast to the data from 2010, Colombian authorities only reported 47 victims of sex trafficking in 2017 (TIP, 2017). However, data on violence and abuse within Colombia suggests that there are thousands more victims of sex trafficking. Historical violence within Colombia created an environment conducive to sexual exploitation, especially of those most dependent, as in children. New effort to achieve gender parity in Colombia has lowered the disparity between men and women, elevating women's positions within political and economic structures and creating more protective laws. However, as seen in the data, violence against women is still prevalent and contributes to child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Poverty in Colombia provides the means of dependence that traffickers exploit for victimization.

### CHAPTER III: EFFECTS OF MACHISMO ON POVERTY

Women and children are always at risk of falling into poverty due to dependency on the decisions of a male-dominated, patriarchal society. Because the socially accepted patriarchal figure makes the decisions, he is granted both the financial and bodily control of the family and its members, which has visible adverse effects.

As seen through the data in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia in Latin America, a dominant culture centered on patriarchy contributes to the recurrent pattern of lower economic status, lower wages and a high rate of poverty for women and children. Individual country legal systems function at the advantage of the male head of house, more recently changing to accommodate for the female economically. Economically stringent environments provide little to no assistance for the family system forcing an increase in women and children's dependence on the dominating male figures. The dominant figure, therefore, has financial and physical dominion over the woman and children because of their vulnerability. Ergo, the machista culture's contribution to poverty leads to violence against women. This idea is validated through Sutherland, Sullivan and Bybee (2001), which found that poverty worsens the effects of abuse on women, specifically the effects of intimate partner violence on women's health. Women facing lower economic income have increased chances of experiencing violence within the home or community by a male figure, especially in societies dominated by men.

Similarly, Kasturirangan, Krishnan, and Riger (2004) found that culture significantly contributes to prevalence of domestic violence. In terms of patriarchal structures, different cultures experience different manifestations of patriarchy, which variously effect the experience of violence for women and children between cultures (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). Effects of violence against women and children varies in level and degree depending on the

pervasiveness of poverty within the community. However, poverty is identified as a universal factor which heightens the occurrence of violence within any culture (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). Other studies validate the influence of male attitudes on poverty and the prevalence of violence in a community (Bassuk, Dawson, & Huntington, 2006; Goodman, et. al, 2009).

Gwen Hunnicutt (2009) explicitly states that “the concept of patriarchy holds promise for theorizing violence against women because it keeps the theoretical focus on dominance, gender, and power... anchors the problem of violence against women in social conditions,” alleviating fault of a single individual. Furthermore, Hunnicutt recognizes the “labyrinths of power dynamics” in patriarchal structures illustrating the need to understand socially constructed culture and its manifestations of patriarchy within the specific culture. Furthermore, she assessed that though higher income aids in prevention of violence, due to the deeply ingrained ideology of gender norms in patriarchal societies. Arguing further, Hunnicutt states that violent male dominance of vulnerable women and children in the home can exist of the inability to perform his socially determined task as breadwinner, causing increased intimate tension and decreased confidence in his ability to fulfill the gendered societal role.

The prevalence of economic disparity and overt machista culture of patriarchy present in Latin America is evident. The inextricable connection between the dependence of women and children on the patriarchal figure and the increased vulnerability of women and children to predatory advances can be seen through the experience of poverty. This, in turn, illustrates the significance of culture when accounting for sex trafficking within Latin America.

## CHAPTER IV: MACHISMO AND ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

In order to combat the rampant sexual exploitation of children in Latin America, anti-trafficking efforts must examine the cultural manifestations of machismo as a contributing factor in the pervasiveness of sex trafficking. Governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies must identify causation of widespread social problems in the interest of providing adequate, sustainable solutions. Machismo, therefore, cannot be overlooked as a pervasive cause of widespread poverty throughout Latin America. Economic disparity based on gender discrimination and gendered social norms influences the higher poverty rates of women and children, exacerbating their potential for victimization through sex trafficking. Patriarchal roles of men and women contribute to women's lesser economic stability and increased dependence on men for economic stability. Poverty increases the pressure of men to economically provide and the vulnerability of women and children on social structures for economic stability. Vulnerability due to poverty provides opportunity for exploitation of women and children by those in positions of power for economic gain. Consequently, machismo, as a societal construction of power, promotes and encourages sexual exploitation.

Examining the risk factors, prevalence, and rates of violence against women in Latin America, The Pan American Health Organization's publication "Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis of Population-based Data from 12 Countries" (2012) states that:

There is a body of global evidence that violence against women tends to be higher in settings where social norms support a subordinate role for women in society, including norms that associate masculinity with male toughness, honor, and dominance, that promote male domination and control of women, that encourage a rigidly defined and enforced view of women's roles, and that encourage male virility while emphasizing female chastity. Whether these norms are themselves a causal determinant of prevalence or an indicator of underlying social, economic,

and political inequalities that contribute to levels of violence, or both, is less clear. (p. 106)

Attributing prevalence of violence against women to social constructions of masculinity and femininity in Latin America, the Pan American Health Organization acknowledges that violence against women is inextricably tied to patriarchal constructions and must be considered when challenging the normality and acceptance of violence against women. Asserted previously in the same publication, the Pan American Health Organization acknowledges that existence and acceptance of violence against women contributes to further violence and abuse of children within the home (vii). Therefore, they conclude that efforts to end violence against women “must also consider how to prevent and respond to violence against children” (vii).

In the ECPAT International Regional Overview of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children within Latin America and the Caribbean (2014), ECPAT claims that though anti-trafficking efforts have improved in recent years, social problems, such as “unequal income distribution, heavy dependence on the informal sector, political instability and high prevalence of crime and violence” negatively impact the development of the region, accounting for the high prevalence of poverty for women, children, and minority populations and societal tolerance of violence and discrimination against women and children (iii). The report concludes that to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America, governmental and non-governmental agencies must address “the remaining gaps in prevention, policy and legal frameworks, coordination and cooperation, recovery and reintegration and child and youth participation” (p. 41). However, the report fails to address the manifestations of machismo, having only stated the term once and never using its equivalent term, patriarchy. Yet, without directly stating *machismo* as one of the contributing factors of social problems, the report acknowledges the effects of cultural constructs on the extensiveness of sexual exploitation.

To sustainably and adequately combat sex trafficking, however, explicit knowledge of the Latin American culture of machismo and its manifestations must be researched. From this paper's study of the connection between the inextricable relationship of machismo and poverty to manifestations of dependency leading to sex trafficking in Latin America, the following key observations have been made to help anti-trafficking efforts:

- The inexistence of a uniform system to collect, categorize and track data of violence, abuse and sex trafficking within Latin America negatively affects efforts to combat inequality in Latin America. The majority of data on gender inequality and violence is collected by non-governmental and national organizations, which can reduce or inflate real data of victims. Literature reviews and compilations of data within and between countries consistently conclude the need of uniformity for more sustainable, accurate data to combat human rights issues, especially sex trafficking. (Barker, et. al, 2011; Bott, et. al, 2012; Imbusch, et. al, 2011; Krug, et. al, 2002; Pereda, et. al, 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Zhang, et. al, 2012)
- Economic disparity negatively affects the likelihood of women and children in poverty. Poverty cause economic dependency of women and children on patriarchal figures. To help eradicate poverty as a contributing factor of sexual exploitation, equal opportunity for men and women within the political and business sectors must occur. In doing so, dependency of women and children on patriarchal constructs lessens as does vulnerability to exploitation. (Aloáin, 2011; Bassuk, et. al, 2006; ECLAC/UNICEF, 2003; ECPAT, 2014; Goodman, et. al, 2009; Ñopo, 2012; Sutherland, et. al, 2001; World Economic Forum, 2017; World Bank Group, 2018)
- Inherent dependence of human beings is inevitable. Across all societies, patriarchal or not, dependency is a factor of humanity and therefore cannot be ignored as a tool of exploitation by traffickers. Dependency equates to vulnerability of the dependents on social constructs, such as income for survival. Hence, dependency is exacerbated by poverty and economic disparity, which contributes to other societal problems that play into human rights violations, such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America. (Aoláin, 2011; Bott, et. al, 2012; Fineman, 1995; Fineman, 2000; Fineman, 2010; Fineman, 2017; Goodman, et. al, 2009; Hunnicutt, 2009; Kasturirangan, et. al, 2004; Lerner, 1986; Matambanadzo, 2012; Millett, 1968; Walker, 2009)



## CONCLUSION

When accounting for the commercial sexual exploitation of children, the overt presence of the machista culture and its adverse societal effects must be considered for socially and culturally effective anti-child sex trafficking campaigns. Understanding the collective societal responsibility for dependency, due to inherent vulnerability of all members of society, is imperative to aiding the welfare of the poor, especially of women and children (Fineman, 2000, p. 16). Society reproduces and reinforces inequalities via its institutions providing an avenue to redress, reform, and rectify the systematic inequality, which contributes to the commercial sexual exploitation of children within Latin America (Fineman, 2010, p. 5). The systematic impoverishment of women and children due to social hierarchy creates vulnerable child bodies because of the parental and communal sexual exploitation of children for economic gain and survival. Extreme poverty and the feminization and acceptance of children as property significantly result from the Latino patriarchal culture. Therefore, anti-trafficking efforts must account for the societal construct of male domination in Latin America through the culture of machismo and must look at its connection to poverty in order to explain the causes of sex trafficking. As Fionnuala Aolaín claims, structural poverty, as a permanent emergency, establishes the perpetuated disadvantages of impoverished women and their children when crisis arise because of their inadequate access to social materials, capital and legal means to protect themselves rendering them prey to any person looking to profit (2011, p. 2). Machismo and poverty are so inextricably connected in their contribution to the commercial sexual exploitation of children that they cannot be overlooked when determining responses and designing schemes for anti-trafficking campaigns.

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