

“Toxic Masculinity in Latino Culture”

By Joe Blakely

Toxic masculinity, often epitomized by the concept of machismo, has deeply ingrained itself in Latino culture, perpetuating the suppression of women and contributing to a surge in violence against women in Latin American countries. This pervasive issue raises concerns about gender equality and the need for cultural transformation. Machismo, a term often associated with an exaggerated sense of manliness, is deeply rooted in family relationships and gender roles in Hispanic culture. Men are expected to display their dominance and power while women are traditionally assigned roles of servitude, reinforcing gender disparities from an early age.

Within Hispanic culture, girls are often taught household skills from a young age, while their male counterparts enjoy more freedom. This leads to the concept of adultification, where girls are expected to take on the role of caretaker, limiting their agency over their own lives and bodies. Disturbingly, catcalling and sexual assault are sometimes seen as forms of flattery rather than harassment, further perpetuating harmful gender norms. As a result, society restricts women's choices and empowers men to model their behavior on toxic examples, reinforcing a cycle

Toxic masculinity within Hispanic culture also contributes to economic disparities between men and women. In Latin America, a mere 4.2% of CEO positions are held by women, and the gender pay gap lags behind many other regions. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the economic situation for women, leading to job loss and increased financial vulnerability. Breaking free from the grip of machismo is possible, and various movements and organizations in Latin America are working tirelessly to dismantle toxic masculinity. Awareness and education, combined with the enforcement of laws and harsher penalties, are essential steps to combat the deep-seated issue of machismo and pave the way for gender equality and a safer future for women in the region.

