This is the published version

Crossley, Paul and Pease, Bob 2009, Machismo and the construction of immigrant Latin American masculinities, in Migrant men critical studies of masculinities and the migration experience, Routledge, New York, N.Y., pp.115-134

Available from Deakin Research Online

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Machismo and the Construction of Immigrant Latin American Masculinities

Paul Crossley and Bob Pease

INTRODUCTION

While a growing number of North American authors have researched Latin American men and masculinities within Latin America as well as the experiences of Latin American men migrating to the United States, there has been little research on the specific issues facing Latin American men in Australia. In this chapter we explore the experiences in Australia of a variety of male migrants from Latin America through three key elements which emerged through our research: the importance of men as ‘providers’ for the family and the place in men’s sense of self; the changing nature of men’s and women’s roles and statuses in Australian society and their difference from Latin America; and the shifting nature of what constitutes ‘home’ and a sense of belonging for Latin American men. In addressing the issues that the men face, we also examine the nature of the discourses on machismo and the almost fetishised nature of its oversimplified usage in relation to Latin American men generally and in defining their identities in Australia.

MACHISMO AND LATIN AMERICAN MEN

Most discussions of Latin American men and masculinities begin with an analysis of machismo. Ramirez (1999) notes how Latin American men are described as ‘machistas’. All men in Latin America and Mexico have been characterised as uniformly macho (Guttmann and Vigoya 2005), which typifies them as narcissistic, oppressive, loud-mouthed, aggressive womanisers. Islas (1999) believes that machismo is based on supremacist attitudes in relation to women and machismo has become an expression synonymous with sexism (Guttmann and Vigoya 2007). Many feminist writers in Latin America regard machismo as the fundamental basis of gender inequality, whereby such societies are characterised by excessive male privilege and power (Brusco 1995).

Some Latin American writers, however, believe that machismo can also entail more desirable attributes such as responsibility, perseverance and courage (Brusco 1995; Ramirez 1999). Brusco (1995) challenges the view
that equates machismo with patriarchy and Guttman (1996) also argues that machismo is not male chauvinism. Mirante (1997) maintains that there is a distinction between 'genuine' and 'false' machismo; the former is characterised by heroism, generosity and valor, the latter, a mask to cover up men's insecurities and fears.

Because machismo is a Spanish word, it suggests that Latin American male behaviour sets the norm for violence and sexism. Espada (1996) is concerned that this belief justifies repressive measures against Latin American men. Guttman (1996) also argues that when used by Anglos, machismo is a racist term because it associates negative male traits specifically with Latin American men, rather than with men in general. While Espada (1996) acknowledges that Latino male behaviour is sometimes violent and sexist, he argues that it is no worse than Anglo male behaviour, and Mirante (1997) also maintains that machismo is not unique to Latin American men. Machismo is found as much in North America, among American men in general, as it is in Latin America (Hardin 2002).

This focus on machismo in Latin America has tended to impede more nuanced discussions of Latin American masculinities and obscures other meaningful influences on men's lives such as class, ethnicity, socio-political position, cultural change, global capitalism, and so on. Guttman and Vigoya (2005), for example, identify significant regional, age, class and ethnic differences between Latin American and Mexican men. It is now widely recognised in the critical scholarship on men and masculinities that neither men nor masculinity are fixed or universal. This is no less the case with Latin American men (Archetti 1999). They are thus as varied and complex as men in Europe, North America and Australia.

RESEARCHING LATIN AMERICAN MEN

When discussing Latin American masculinities then, we should acknowledge that while male stereotypes may share many similarities across the sub-continent, there are also many differences, reflecting the unique histories, cultures and the myriad day-to-day realities of each country. Methodologically, generalising about Latin American men as a comprehensible category is difficult, as the differences between them are often as great as the similarities. We must be careful not to oversimplify common traits among men in this world region (Guttman and Vigoya 2007). Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, masculine commonalities across these regions do exist (Abalos 2002) and the extent to which we can generalise about Latin American men as distinct from emphasising their differences, generates tensions for researchers.

There has been considerable empirical research on Latin American men in the last fifteen years, covering fatherhood (Henao 1997); homosociality (Gastaldo 1995); identity construction (Ramirez 1999); reproductive health and sexuality (Viveros and Gomez 1998) and work (Fuller 2001). There have also been numerous country-specific studies in Nicaragua (Lancaster 1992); Peru (Fuller 2001); Puerto Rico (Ramirez 1999); Chile (Valdes and Olavarría 1997); Mexico (Guttman 1996) and Columbia (Brusco 1995).

As noted, there have also been a number of studies on the experiences of Latin American men migrating to the United States. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner's (1994) study, discussed elsewhere in this book, explores the experiences of Mexican immigrants in the United States. Abalos (2002) also describes the struggles of Latino immigrants in the United States who find that their masculine identities are threatened because they lack the skills and knowledge to attain success in North America. Torres (1998) also found that Latino men experienced internal conflict as a result of their attempts to adhere to a traditional form of masculinity that was no longer attainable by them in the United States. Weis et al. (2002) similarly describe the experiences of Puerto Rican men as marginalised, as they endeavour to find a place for themselves in North America.

In this chapter, we explore the consequences for Latin American men of engaging with Australian masculinities. Masculinities are 'imported', along with migrant men, and are enacted in different cultural and social settings in interaction with a range of diverse masculinities in Australia. While migrant masculinities may be developed in relation to a dominant 'Anglo' masculinity, they are also developed alongside a plurality of local 'ethnic' masculinities and varied gender relations, with differing configurations of masculinities emerging.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION FROM LATIN AMERICA

The construction of masculine identities occurs within the social and political contexts of particular countries. Given that the majority of interviewees are from Chile, Argentina and El Salvador, it is worthwhile outlining the history and politics of the time of the migration to Australia from these countries, as this will highlight the complex and contingent circumstances that affect migration and settlement flows.

This period of migration coincided with an era of political and social upheaval in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and El Salvador. Migration to Australia involved people fleeing economic insecurity and political persecution, and migrating under family reunion schemes. In Australia, the Whitlam Labor government (1972–75) gave greater assistance to refugees and those migrants seeking to settle. While these 'macro' factors effect the decision of people to leave their homes, other factors such as family, personal and relationship issues also need to be taken into account to understand why people migrate.

In South America, the late 1960s and early 1970s were times of dramatic political unrest, and the social and economic instability that ensued resulted in a number of military coups. These military governments, such as those
in Brazil (1964–85), Chile (1973–90), Uruguay (1973–84) and Argentina (1976–83), underwent long periods of violence and repression. But they often followed periods of social unrest, economic crises and political instability. These periods were not isolated, as post-colonial inequalities and social divisions were extreme throughout Latin America. Factors such as the rise of communism, the Cuban Revolution and the democratic victories of a number of left-wing governments gave new impetus not only to more socialist regimes but also to the conservative, military-backed regimes that overthrew them, often with implicit and explicit support from the United States government.

Perhaps the most brutal of these governments is that of Chile and Argentina. In Chile, the 1970s were dominated by General Augusto Pinochet, the leader of the military junta that overthrew the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende on 11 September 1973. Political in-fighting and economic problems escalated the tensions between left- and right-wing opponents. The outcome was a military coup and the installation of the Pinochet regime, one of the most brutal regimes in Latin America. After the coup, Congress was closed, curfews imposed, left-wing newspapers banned and a reign of terror followed, accompanied by high levels of unemployment (Ensalaco 2000). Tens of thousands fled the country for economic and political reasons during the next fifteen years and many more thousands suffered violence, torture and were ‘disappeared’.

In Argentina, political tension between left-wing Peronists and right-wing conservatives had been simmering since the 1950s (Lewis 2001). The economic failures of successive national governments, along with the intense political divisions within the left-wing Peronist government, also contributed to the general instability of the country and provided the military justification for their coup in March 1976. While the new junta defended its actions as necessary to protect the interests of all Argentines, the military focused on the ‘delinquent’ working classes, the trade unions and the Peronist and Marxist left ( Hodges 1988). This was the beginning of what came to be known as the ‘Dirty War’. In the first two and a half years of the ‘Military Process’, it is claimed that up to 30,000 people ‘disappeared’, that as many as 120,000 people were victims of torture and that at least 10,000 people were assassinated by the military junta and its supporters (Hodges 2001).

In El Salvador in the 1970s, we witnessed the exacerbation of increasingly high levels of poverty and unemployment with political and land-owning elites ruling the country. This period saw the heightening of already stark inequalities with 0.7 per cent of the population owning 40 per cent of the land and the average income of the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population greater than the combined average income of the lowest 90 per cent (Montgomery 1982: 27). In 1979, wide-ranging strikes, accompanied by global and national economic deterioration, led the national military to stage a coup to ‘stabilise’ the country. In response, in 1980 the left-wing

Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) formed a national guerrilla movement to combat the military government. This was the beginning of a long and protracted struggle between the military authorities and those they suspected of participating in or sympathising with the FMLN movement. While the national defence minister ‘admitted’ that 37,907 people had died in the twelve years until 1991, the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador claimed that as many as 30,000 people had been murdered by military-backed forces in the first three years of the conflict and that abuses of authority kept the population “in a permanent state of fear and insecurity” (Americas Watch 1991: 6).

These brief outlines point to the general economic and political unrest that characterised many parts of Latin America when migration to Australia reached its peak. The countries of origin of the other interviewees (Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru) have all experienced economic, political and social unrest during the second half of the twentieth century. Migration took place during a period of political instability and polarisation between strident anti-communist and anti-left-wing conservative governments and union-backed left-wing governments with socialist agendas and economic instability that revolved around the oil crisis of the late 1970s and the economic restructuring of the global economy based on neo-liberal policies.

Migrating as a refugee or as an exile, where entry is granted under humanitarian categories, is a fundamentally different experience to that of more contemporary migrants who choose to leave, but under very different circumstances to the 1970s and 1980s. As such, many arrived knowing nothing about Australia and speaking little or no English. Many also had low levels of education and often with qualifications that were not recognised by Australian authorities. During that period, many migrants worked in factories and in unskilled occupations. But not all migrate to escape totalitarian regimes, State-sponsored political violence and economic exclusion. The growth of the Latin American community in Australia during this period established the networks of family and friends that are so important for further family reunion migration. While forced migrants may have experienced violence, intimidation and economic hardship, contemporary migrants are overwhelmingly well-educated, professional, skilled people who choose to migrate to Australia for employment and study reasons or to improve their quality of life. It is this second group that now dominate migration from Latin America, although economic issues and security may still be important considerations.

One implication of these processes is that the largest communities from Latin America contain generational and class differences due to the different periods and their contexts of immigration to Australia. The background of an upper-middle-class 30 year old Cuban who moved to Australia in the mid 90s with his Australian girlfriend is very different to a 23 year old El Salvadorian man who fled the country as a political refugee in the mid 80s, different again to a 46 year old Chilean labourer of Mapuche heritage who
came in the late 80s with his wife to work for a few years because he had heard good things about Australia through friends who had arrived in the late 1970s.

**LATIN AMERICAN MEN IN AUSTRALIA**

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), in 2008 there were approximately 95,000 residents in Australia who were born in Latin America. The 2006 national census figures show that Latin-American-born residents constitute roughly 2 per cent of the Australian population who were born overseas and roughly 0.5 per cent of the national population. A substantial proportion of the immigration from Latin America took place between the mid 1970s and late 1980s, in the aftermath of military coups in Chile (1973), Uruguay (1973), Argentina (1976), and the civil war in El Salvador that commenced in 1981. These four countries still contribute the majority of migrants from Latin America and their now-ageing populations are relatively stable, with quite large increases in migration from different Latin American countries now emerging.

The men interviewed for this study point to the broad variation of migration stories, experiences of arrival and settlement and the longer-term consequences of migration. We will illustrate some of these themes with reference to the experiences of fifteen Latin-American male migrants; four from El Salvador, three from Chile, three from Argentina and one each from Cuba, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico and Colombia. The men came to Australia in their mid-to-late twenties. They come from a range of working-class and middle-class backgrounds and possess varying reasons for migration. While there are a number of similarities in the men’s experiences, the differences that emerged reflect a range of complex and changing masculinities both within Latin America and in Australia.

As well as the historical, cultural and socio-economic differences in countries of origin, the time when the men arrived in Australia is also significant. Policies around multiculturalism, immigration rules and regulations, the state and nature of the economy, and the gradual shifts in the sense of what it means to ‘be Australian’ have changed over the last few decades. Men’s roles and place in society have changed over that same period. While these differences are influential in relation to men’s experiences, migration can be an incredibly ‘leveling’ experience as men who leave behind their lives in Latin America often find themselves given the homogenising labels of ‘ethnic’ men, ‘migrant’ men, ‘Latinos’ and ‘Latin American’ men, or simply ‘refugees’.

**PROVIDING FOR FAMILIES**

The role of men as the key providers for the family household is a strong influence regardless of background and experience. Fuller (2001) has noted

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that masculinity has been associated with the provider role in all Latin American countries. Being the economic provider was central to all of the men interviewed, both in their countries of origin and in Australia. The dominant links with the strong tradition of the man as the sole or principal earner for the family and the paid work that men do are key elements in men's identities. Interestingly, this 'pressure to provide' was felt just as keenly by those men with a strong father figure, as by those raised in single-parent, female-headed households. Even in those homes where men claimed their own fathers were not the typical, and often stereotyped, 'macho' man, providing for the family was still an important part of being a man and maintaining masculine self-respect.

Breadwinning is often the key element in the levels of respect and authority accorded men in both the household and the community. Miguel, an El Salvadorian engineer whose qualifications were not recognised when he arrived in the mid 1980s, recounted that soon after arriving, his younger sister obtained a very well-paid job while he was studying English and working part-time. His role of 'taking care' of her was radically impeded because she was now the economic provider and therefore no longer recognised his authority as head of the household. As he put it:

Because I was the man I was supposed to take care of my sister, so I was supposed to be like a father figure for her. But when we came here... she got a job straight away... and I was studying and I was getting pocket money from the government and the roles changed... So that affected me a lot.

This role of the provider not only brings with it pride and respect, it also confers upon the man a sense of being in charge of the household. This sense of being in charge is taken for granted, but it is also felt as a social pressure, an expectation that this is what the man, as head of the family, should be doing. Miguel felt:

Suddenly I didn't have any more a say in what she was doing because she is supposed to be doing what I say, so it was like [she was saying] "Hey I'm the one bringing food here and you don't"... So it was expected of me as a man to take care of her and it didn't happen... So that gets your self-esteem very down because you're not the man of the house.

There are two points to explore here: firstly, the expected role as the 'bread-winning' head of the household and secondly, the importance of work in men's identities. This expectation that the man has to be the breadwinner, and therefore, head of the household was also felt by Ricardo, the Cuban man. The assumption that he, as the man, would automatically become the 'head' of the family ran into immediate problems.

At the time I wanted just to live, just to enjoy myself, just to go around. But I couldn't do that, because I had to look after my daughter. I had to become a father and I reckon that influenced me a lot, because at the time I had to be working around the house. I had to be a couple of years at home here in this country without work, so that my wife could go and work.

The inability to be a breadwinner and the double frustration at being 'kept' at home by his wife puts great strain on men but also challenges them to adapt and change and often, reassess what they had learned during their upbringing about the role of men.

The most desired state of affairs was still the traditional roles of the man working for money and the wife working at home with the children, even if this was no longer tenable here in Australia, and increasingly, not in Latin America either. The division between the male/public sphere and the female/domestic sphere remains strong, even when the gendered division of labour is recognised as a social construction rather than as a natural state. While many men are now happy for their partners to be working for money and contributing financially to the household, there was a common sense that this was often out of economic necessity and because of the wider opportunities afforded to women in Australia.

Being the provider is both premised on having a family to provide for and a key factor in being ready and able to maintain a family. Having a family is a key indicator of men's identity. While having heterosex was a common ritual of 'becoming a man', the most dramatic transition was from being a single man to being a father, or as Bernardo, a Chilean man, put it, becoming a "family man". Another Chilean man, Edurado, claimed, that by "having kids, you become a man!" Having children was commonly seen as a sign of manhood and a key element in men's status in their own eyes as well as the family and wider community. And having employment to ensure economic stability was often seen as a prerequisite for starting a family or the main requirement when one has a family.

The men contrasted their focus on their families to their perception that men of the older generations, their fathers and grandfathers, did not really help out with the raising of children or the care of the household and spent more time out working or with friends. Migrating to Australia, and the 'different' social and cultural values that they encountered helped shift the household division of labour. But migration aside, the roles of men and women in the workplace and the household, both in Australia and in Latin America, have changed substantially, even though paid work for men is still important in their definitions of themselves and their masculinities.

So not only social expectations of paid work and providing, but also the economic necessity of contributing to the household economy, was very real for some of the men who came from poorer backgrounds and more unstable countries. But even those from a wealthier background had experiences of
work and contributing to the maintenance of the household. As Miguel from Mexico said:

Many Mexicans work at a very early age. But I was working in a very well-paid job at a very early age, and it was a full-time job, at the same time I was studying. That experience, and the experience of my mother dying when I was seventeen years of age, all really transformed the way I used to see life.

Working for money was often important in the ways in which men adapted to their new environments, across classes and for both married and single men. Many men experienced a ‘drop’ in status when they arrived in Australia. They found the initial period was very difficult, both in terms of their ability to provide for their families, and in getting accustomed to different social and cultural environments. They had come from a familiar cultural and social environment to an unfamiliar one. But the one constant was the need to work and to provide for the family. As a result, paid work signifies one’s abilities to adapt, to gain respect and honour by providing for one’s family. This ‘inserted’ men into social structures and assists them to develop a sense of belonging and often, to re-orient their own identities as men.

WOMEN, RELATIONSHIPS AND GENDER ROLES

Men’s roles and statuses are strongly connected to the public realm. However, a shift in the provider role is also a challenge to domestic relations and part of wider changes in both Australian and Latin American gender roles and relations. As such, men’s notions of masculinities and male identities are tightly interwoven with women’s identities, gender roles and relationships. While many men were faced with differences in these when they arrived in Australia, the men that have been in Australia since the 1980s have seen changes in the ways in which gender roles are perceived and relationships conducted, both in Australia and in their own countries. While a majority of men thought it was important that a man be the father of the family, the provider and leader of the family, a number of men came from family environments where either their mother was the main breadwinner or also worked outside the home. Many men commented that the shifts in women’s roles have also changed in their countries of origin and that the family households of their childhood are changing substantially.

Men’s changes in attitudes and their own sense of identity followed those of the women in their lives. Upon arrival and settlement in Australia, it is the Latin American women who are presented with the greater scope and potential for change. The changes experienced by men were often driven by the demands and expectations of their female partners. Some of these men experienced either dramatic changes in their own roles and activities or separation from their partners’ roles. One of those who did change was Cesar, an El Salvadorian, who said:

My wife is from El Salvador, a very liberated woman too . . . They change, the ladies here. They change and we have to change . . . So immigration makes us change to a pace with the woman . . . In El Salvador it would not be like that.

So the growing independence of women leads to new forms of marital and domestic relationships. As women enjoy greater independence and economic power, the relationships between husband and wife take on a new balance and the onus of domestic duties can shift substantially. This occurs especially when women are in full-time work and men must help out in the house. At the same time, those whose family background led their fathers to participate in some household activities experienced less dramatic change, although what they were expected to do in relation to child care and housework was commonly broadened and intensified. Recognising these changes in themselves is often a striking experience for men, in particular when they make return trips home. These trips can often reinforce the notion that changes have taken place between men and women in both countries.

Migration provides opportunities for self-reflection and comparison between what it means to be a man in different countries and contexts. On the other hand, where changes do not take place, where men ‘resist’ changes in attitudes and behaviour, separation from partners can follow, with some men feeling confused at what has happened and some feeling marginalised by ‘the system’ that a few perceived as being positively biased towards women and their rights. For a couple of these men, this represented the swinging of the pendulum too far the other way from the cultural norm. While recognising the need for more equality, they believe that the welfare system and government support women too much. Carlos, one of the Argentinean men, who was going through a bitter divorce and custody battle with an Australian woman here, felt that “the macho in the family is the female now. That’s the way I see it”. This was particularly so for those men who married Australian women. Cesar, one of the men from El Salvador, explained:

To tell you the truth . . . the reason why I marry a Salvadorian was because we couldn’t figure out the Australian woman. Because we were used to lead and Australian woman is different . . . You want a girlfriend that doesn’t go out with her friends . . . Once they starting going out with you, you want her to be yours. You are the man.

In this case, the ‘Salvadorian woman’ is stereotyped against the ‘Australian woman’ rather than a ‘traditional’ woman against a ‘modern’ woman. Men who sought to maintain a traditional sort of relationship would often look
for a woman who was after the same thing within their own communities. Gabriel from Bolivia felt that this was also common:

> Over here you'll tend to see that Latin men, whatever their mentality or their philosophy, have very strong work ethics and some of them will work up to two jobs to sustain their families. Some of them will actually do this, work two jobs so that the wife doesn't have to work and is at home taking care of the kids.

There existed a general confusion about what it is Australian women want and how they see Latin American men. While these discussions provoked much mirth and joking, they also indicated a source of frustration for the men and often, a challenge to their own masculinities. Like Cesar mentioned above, many of the men found it hard to 'figure out' Australian women. Miguel from Mexico realised soon after arriving, that between men and women “there was a different way of relating to each other. I have to learn. I have to learn when I arrive in Australia”.

That is, the ways that men and women relate are different in Australia and this leads to a situation where men's 'masculine' behaviour had to be changed in relation to Australian women. Eduardo, one of the Chilean men, also claimed that things were different when he first arrived. His perception when he arrived was that “girls are more independent. It's not like ... relationships with Chilean girls back there”.

These experiences are important as they challenge what have often been taken-for-granted aspects of men's personalities and attitudes, as well as their sense of the 'normal' ways of relating to women. In this sense, the men themselves develop a sense of how they are perceived by Australian women and how they are differentiated from Australian men. As such, they have to learn new ways of being a man.

In this process, stereotypes play a huge role. It is here that the 'Latino' image can become a 'double-edged sword'. On the one hand, the image of the 'Latin lover' can reinforce a sense of Latin Americans as being more passionate and more romantic than 'Anglo' men. Cesar from El Salvador felt that women perceive them as being more 'gentlemanly' in that we are very romantic; that's the way they perceive us. We are party animals and all that ... Australian men usually go to a party, they sit and drink and they don't take care of their wife ... We go to a party and we attend to the woman.

However, the down-side to this image was that this may not mean that they are perceived as potential partners. While they may be good fun, they are not considered for a 'serious' relationship. In this case, the middle-aged, now single Gabriel from Bolivia spoke from his experience when he claimed:

> Well, I think they associate them with a bunch of male chauvinists, womanisers, Don Juans ... and that's not the case really. I mean we're no different to anyone else.

One Chilean man, Bernardo, felt that Australian women simply do not see him as a potential partner, while Ricardo from Cuba also argued that the Australian women he has dated saw him as just

> someone who dances very well, someone who's romantic, ... Good to go out with, good to have a chat with, good to have fun with ... I think she's just using me because what I provide her with is what's lacking in her life ... Because she's got the security ... But she doesn't have the romance, the chat, the communication, the fun.

Finally, two of the men explicitly argued this point while a few others raised issues of a similar vein: that the nature of relationships between Latin American men and women is of a different nature to that of Australian men and women. Juan, a 40ish Chilean man who has been in one long-term relationship with an Australian woman and 'dated' a few others, felt of Australian women:

> Compared to Chile they have ... probably a sense of relationship that's different from Chilean ... They probably have more like a relationship with men more ... like a contract! ... Chile's more like improvised. People just stay together because they have no other opportunities to be independent ... Not just because they love each other but also because there is some economical and physical needs. So that they have to be together whereas here that need is almost non-existent.

Ricardo from Cuba, who had lived under a communist regime until his mid 20s, agreed with this sentiment of the ‘business-like’ approach to relationships that Australian women used:

> Where I've seen differences is in the way we go about our relationships. We tend to be generally speaking less practical when it comes to relationships, because we still don't have the concept of a partnership ... So if I marry someone, there is no economics involved, in that I have to marry because I need a husband or I need a wife that's well positioned because of money or a profession ... There is no economics involved in relationships and I think that there is a lot of economics in the way people here go about choosing a partner ... Cuban men don't give a stuff if the woman doesn't work or will never work. That will never be a factor in the way I feel for her.
In this sense, then, the ways in which men approach relationships with Australian women are not only predicated on their own sense of what a man is and does in such situations but also in the wider social and cultural framework where men and women are instrumentally ‘evaluated’ and considered in terms of relationships. The combination of the ‘Latin-lover’ stereotype, mixed with a sense of a less rational way of going about forming relationships leads to a doubly negative perception, many of the men felt, that Australian women have of them. This perception is not of Mexicans, or Chileans, or Cubans, but of ‘Latinos’ and all the baggage that goes along with the preconceived characteristics of such stereotypes.

‘LATINOS’ AND OTHER MEN IN AUSTRALIA

In this final section, the experiences of men ‘fitting in’ and their relationships with other men were important elements of their experiences in adapting to and forging not only a life, but also an identity here in Australia. The issues raised here point to the constant negotiation and renegotiation of identity, cultural symbols and practices in the light of the migration experience and its ongoing impacts and patterns of social change in both the country of settlement and country of origin. A key part of this is the ways in which a sense of belonging, or not, are developed over the years.

The men’s view of their relationships with other men was intriguing. The relationships they developed with other Latin American men were particularly important for those who arrived as refugees and had few English skills. The shared experiences of migration and the possession of a common language obviously enables the men to mix with Latin American migrants from different countries, classes and social backgrounds that they would perhaps not normally mix with in their country of origin. As Miguel, from Mexico, remarked: “Migration gives you some experiences that are rich as a source of communicating to other people”.

While the sharing of Spanish is a significant factor in these relationships, it does have some unforeseen consequences. The variations in Spanish throughout Latin America are incredibly diverse and rich with local idioms, accents, slang, jokes and so on. For a number of the men, their level of ability in English is also an area of frustration compared to their fluency in Spanish. The performative aspect of Spanish continues to be a key identifier of where one is from and is important in maintaining a sense of national identity while at the same time being a vehicle through which ‘Chilean-ness’ or ‘Argentinean-ness’ is maintained within the general Latin American community. Ricardo, from Cuba, argued that given the often low numbers of people from a number of Latin American countries:

I guess that all of us try to make an effort to recognise that we don’t have communities here and we sort of created a community of our own ... We developed this ‘cross-language’ way of going about things.

The formation of this community and this sense of ‘being Latino’ is also a way in which differences between Latin American men are perceived and how friendships develop across national boundaries. For example,

Argentine men ... are the ‘roosters’ ... and then you got the Chileans ... The guys are pretty cool ... Colombian guys are very serious ... and Salvadorians are competitive. (Jose, El Salvador)

Yeah I think, like with the Chileans and probably the Argentineans and Uruguayans, I think they have something common. But I think many men, especially from Central American countries are more Machistas. (Edwardo, Chile)

Rafael, from El Salvador, also felt that despite differences, friendships are made:

Most of my friends are from different countries. That’s the other issue. You are Peruvian, Chilean, Argentinean, Salvadorian. Indeed we are quite different in so many ways you know, like our language a little bit, our food a little bit. But my friends ... can be Peruvian, Chilean, Salvadorian.

This can even extend to perceived antagonisms that exist between countries, such as those that continue between Argentina and Chile:

Even though the majority [of friends] are Chileans, I think I get along with people from different parts of South America. Salvadorians, Argentineans, yeah there’s not much difference between, you know. Being a Chilean or being an Argentinean here, even though like in Chile we hate Argentineans. But it doesn’t happen here. We kind of relate to the same thing, we have a laugh and everything. (Juan, Chile)

So not only are masculinities changed in the migration experience, so is men’s knowledge of other Latin Americans and therefore of themselves. That is, the men reflected not only on gender roles and their own upbringing and cultural background, but exposure to other Latin American men highlighted similarities and differences. This reassessment of one’s own identity also relates to the men’s understanding of Australian men. The relationships they developed with Australian men often depended on English language skills and also on their working history and how much they have come into ‘contact’ with Australian men.
A number of the older men said that their non-existent English skills when they arrived, and the fact that they worked in factories, meant that they mixed much more with other migrants rather than with 'Aussies'. The development of 'Aussie' friends often reinforced their sense of being 'Latino' and the stereotypes of each other were sometimes reinforced. For example, a number of men talked of the machismo of Australian men, which was felt to be a part of Australian masculinities. Some of the men suggested that it was less here and others felt that Australian men were just as macho. Thus, machismo was not necessarily seen as different 'here' or 'there', but to exist in greater or lesser degrees, reinforcing the notion that machismo is a global category, existing in some form everywhere. But there was also a sense that while Latin American men are perceived as incorrigible, chauvinistic machos, 'Aussie' forms of machismo are not seen as such and are tolerated and even encouraged. Julio, an Argentinean man, attempted to explain the differences between up-front Latin American machismo and what he perceived as the more subtle forms of Australian machismo:

Latin Americans in my view are much more in touch with who they are ... Men are probably very narrow-minded and chauvinistic. But that's what they are. They don't hide that; they are proud of that. Where here the image that is given is quite different ... It's just we are told we are different here ... In Latin America you will see people saying "Yep we are shitting on these people and we are happy, we are stronger, we enjoy that, let's go! Let's do more!" That's the difference you see ... In that sense I think that the Latin American man is more honest with himself.

Forming strong bonds with Australian men was often seen as a difficult thing to accomplish. While friendships were common, there was a widespread response that one's best and closest friends were either from one's own country or from other Latin American countries. For example, Pedro, a more recent migrant from Colombia, felt that Australian men are "not the kind of people who are calling to see how you are every day".

Unlike men from Latin America, these kinds of reflections reinforce ideas about what differentiates Australian men from Latin American men and what are their good and bad qualities. Some men regretted not having more male Australian friends but the reasons for that are not clear. Juan from Chile commented:

I think it's really hard to relate to Australian guys ... It never happened to me that I said: "This is my Australian friend, my mate" ... I have girlfriends that are Australian but I never had a male, that I could say this is my friend.

Entering into the world of the Australian male is, for some, as bewildering as it was trying to understand Australian women. But in trying to do so, and reflecting on their success or otherwise, they both challenged and often reinforced characteristics about themselves and about men from Latin America. This also included how they themselves had or had not changed during their time in Australia.

One of the key factors that influenced the extent of men's changes and adaptations is age. The older one is when migrating, the more difficult it often is to alter one's own idea of oneself and adapt to changing environments. But changes always occur, albeit to different extents. For example, Eduardo from Chile commented:

I think I'm a bit of a mix and I like that mix because I had my views back when I was in Chile, I had nothing else to look for so it was just that. Then I came here and I assimilated other things and it created like a whole new me. It's not just the one in Chile or the one in Australia. It's a bit of a mix of the two.

An oversimplified notion of assimilation as abandoning everything to become 'Australian' has been rightly condemned. However, a number of men also said that it was vital for them to assimilate, that is, to 'fit in', to understand cultural practices, symbols and attitudes and to develop an awareness of the differences and similarities between Australia and their countries of origin. These changes were often highlighted when men returned to their countries of birth. One of the Chilean men, Juan, reflected on how these differences felt when he went back to Chile for a visit:

I notice when I went to Chile I was more like an Australian than a Chilean because I would repress myself about a lot of things that anyone would do there, especially about women and how you doing, like piropos ['compliments']. I wouldn't do that, because I'm so used to this society now. Yeah, I think in that sense it would probably ... take me some time to get back to being a Chilean again ... Like if you see a beautiful girl, you just keep going. You don't look back and try to pick her up.

This also applied to the feelings of belonging between both countries:

I owe a lot to Australia and at the same time I owe a lot to Chile too and I think in my heart I will be always for both sides and I think none of the two is better than the other one. When I go to Chile, I start bragging about how good Australia is and when I'm in Australia I start bragging about how good Chile is! (Bernardo, Chile)
political change, personal life histories, and the local impact of global forces. In Australia, there has been a lot of writing in recent years about the crisis in masculinities, about boys doing poorly in secondary schools, the high rates of male suicide, men's mental health and homelessness and so on. Men's stories need to be drawn out and talked about not only for the sake of men's health but also to help us understand the specifics of migration, settlement and identity for Latin American men in Australia.

CONCLUSION

This research deals with the role that a wide range of factors play in the construction and expression of Latin American masculinities. Much of the sociological study of Latin American men focuses on working-class men and the relationship between class, education, poverty and ethnicity. Their impact on the formation of different forms of masculinity requires further elaboration. In Australia, this class factor, along with the influence of multicultural policies, has historically been an important influence in the construction of Australian masculinities and therefore, in the ways in which migrant men have negotiated their own sense of masculinity.

The forces that influence male identities and masculinities are broad and constituted by both larger macro factors such as class, race, culture and social hierarchies, and micro factors that include the personal impacts of divorce,
8 Looking for Respect
Lebanese Immigrant Young Men in Australia
Scott Poynting, Paul Tabar and Greg Noble

INTRODUCTION: THE LEBANESE ‘OTHER’ IN AUSTRALIA

Arab and Muslim immigrants in Australia, particularly young men of this ethnicity or faith or both, have arguably become over the last fifteen years or so the foremost folk demon in the national common sense (Poynting et al. 2004). Increasingly, with moral panics over ‘ethnic gang’ crime, ‘ethnic’ gang rape and supposed terrorist cells in Australian suburbia, this irreconcilable otherness has been attributed to problematic masculinity. Media and popular representations abound, at times propagated by police and politicians, of a criminally disposed, violent and aggressive male youth culture among these groups, with no respect for ‘our’ law. New South Wales (NSW) police set up their ‘Middle Eastern crime squad’ to ‘deal with it’. Silly stories abound among shock-blog columnists and their readers, about sexually frustrated Muslim young men motivated to self-destructive acts of terrorism through the promise of virgins in eternal paradise for male martyrs. Certain harrowing cases of group sexual assault are attributed to ethnicity or Islam (while others are, as usual, ‘whited out’): the misogynistic, predatory and violent Middle Eastern male forcing his lasciviousness on ‘our’ women, for whom he has even less respect than his own. In all of this xenophobic folklore, the image of the ‘Leb’ looms large. Before analysing this common sense, it is useful to provide an account of Lebanese immigrants in Australia.

ORIGINS OF LEBANESE IMMIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA

The 2006 census recorded 74,850 Lebanese-born people in the Australian population (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2006). Some 0.7 per cent of the population, or about 140,000, identified a Lebanese ancestry (with 86 per cent of the Lebanese-born doing so). The combined effects of a lopsided economic development and undemocratic communal politics, along with being situated in a region ridden with national and international conflicts, gives Lebanon a strong propensity to export inhabitants seeking better fortunes. The economic disintegration of the Muqata‘aji system (a form
Migrant Men
Critical Studies of Masculinities and the Migration Experience

Edited by Mike Donaldson, Raymond Hibbins, Richard Howson and Bob Pease
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Foreword

That globalization is gendered has become such an axiomatic truism in the social sciences that it is rarely interrogated. Yet the gendered dynamics of globalization usually focus on the experience of women—displaced, trafficked, employed—and the resulting transformation of domestic relationships that stem from the disruption of traditional family forms.

But it's equally important to examine the ways that globalization changes masculinities. Globalization shifts the social arrangements between men and women, between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between state and citizen. Particularly, globalization has widened the rifts between the rich (class, country, region) and poor, resulting in massive wealth transfer upwards. Every industrial country has witnessed an increased divide between rich and poor, just as the world economy as a whole has witnessed a widening chasm between rich and poor nations.

Globalization includes the gradual proletarianization of local peasantries, as market criteria replace subsistence and survival. Local small craft producers, small farmers, and independent peasants traditionally stake their definitions of masculinity in ownership of land and economic autonomy in their work; these are increasingly transferred upwards in the class hierarchy and outwards to transnational corporations. Proletarianization also leads to massive labor migrations—typically migrations of male workers—who leave their homes and populate migrant enclaves, squatter camps, labour camps. Most migrants are men.

The essays in this book mark the first attempt by social scientists to delineate this gendered migration. Whether the discussions are more thematic and theoretical (as in Bob Pease's examination of the relationship between public and domestic patriarchies) or particular (as in Ray Hibbins' and Richard Pringle and Paul Whiteman's ethnographic portraits of Chinese and Māori men in Australia), the essays together provide the first country-specific collage of different migrant masculinities that are patched together in a mosaic of identities.

Most social science is like abstract painting: big patterns, large structures, giant swatches of colour outline the grand patterns of interaction
and inequality. The essays in Migrant Men are more pointillist—tidy, contrapuntal, precise. Only from afar, and taken together, can the eye put the pieces together and engage the larger pattern. Reading this book, we both get both closer to the action and feel the larger shapes and patterns shifting before our eyes.

Michael Kimmel
New York

1 Men and Masculinities on the Move

Raymond Hibbins and Bob Pease

INTRODUCTION

We live in turbulent times, in which socio-cultural and political changes involving technology, terrorism, violence, refugees, natural disaster, the consequences of ‘failed’ states death by disease, and have become part of what we live with every day. These phenomena transform cultures and nations, as do transnationalism and globalisation. Such transformations have implications for communication, citizenship, national affiliations, immigration policies, health regulations, safety and security, crime, state borders and identity crises. Together with socio-demographic changes, these transformations have economic, political and diplomatic, religious, sporting and other cultural implications. The gendered nature of these massive transformations is only now being addressed. This has been obvious in research on the exploitation of female labour, international sporting labour and the corruption surrounding vulnerable groups fleeing terrorism and intranational conflicts and violence involving different ethnic groups. As Connell (1995: 82–83) has argued, in the world gender order involving most of these movements, there is a ‘patriarchal dividend’ for men collectively arising from higher incomes, higher labour force participation, unequal property ownership and greater access to institutional power. Men are privileged sexually and culturally. What influence have these global phenomena had on Australia’s gender regime and more particularly on those men and women who have migrated to Australia either by force or of their own volition? This raises questions about the influence of migration on identification and ethnic, gender and sexual identity; the role of the diaspora in identity formation; the influence of dominant local groups and local hegemonic masculinity on male gender identities; and the influence of transnationalism and global movement on identities.

To examine these issues, we adopt a social constructionist approach to gender. Masculinity is socially constructed within specific historical and cultural contexts of gender relations. Such an approach emphasises not only the variation of masculinities between different cultures and within different historical moments, it also emphasises gender differences arising from
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