

Latin American (LA)¹⁾ Male Migrants and the Readjustment of Their Masculinity in Japan

Analía VITALE

Migration to and settlement in a new society compel migrant men to revise and reconstruct their own masculinities. This paper examines to what extent migration provides Latin American men an occasion to redefine themselves as workers, homemakers, husbands, parents and friends in a new environment where their own masculinities may not work as expected in their home countries. Drawing on qualitative research, through the analysis of in-depth interviews, this paper examines LA migrants who moved to Japan primarily to improve their economic situation. Some of these men experience the same gender practices in Japan that they did in LA, with a traditional division of labor at home, feeling in control and being the main breadwinner of the house. Others are required to be more flexible and accepting of change, particularly in the domestic sphere, due the social and cultural constraints that often result in these “outsiders” experiencing limitations and exclusions in Japanese society.

移民男性の男らしさの再調整 —日本に於けるラテンアメリカ男性の事例—

新しい社会への移住と定住は、移民男性が自分の男らしさを修正し、その環境の中で適応することを求められる。本論文はラテンアメリカ移民男性が新しい環境の中で、母国で通用した男らしさが適応できない場合に、労働者、夫、父親、友人あるいは主夫としてどのように自分自身を再定義しているのかを明らかにすることを目的とする。調査の対象は主に経済的な理由で日本に移民してきたラテンアメリカ男性であり、質的調査に基づいた詳細なインタビュー分析を行った。結果として、何人かの移民男性は母国と同じような役割であり、特にラテンアメリカと日本で変化はなかった。したがって男性は外で働き、家事は主婦の担当という伝統的な役割分担であった。一方で、何人かの移民男性は変化に対してフレキシブルに対応し、特に家庭内の領域において男女の役割を柔軟に変えている。このことは日本社会の社会的・文化的制限によって彼らが「アウトサイダー」であるという立場を受け入れていることを表している。

Introduction

Early research on international migration focused mostly on male immigrants (Pedraza, 1991) but was gender neutral studies or gender blind studies. This resulted in female immigrants becoming either “invisible or stereotyped” (Boyd 1986). And with the phrase of “migrants and their families”, women and children were introduced in the picture as secondary participants in the migration process. These traditional migration studies focused predominantly on men as generic or non-gendered humans, and as a result, ignored the gendered dimensions of men’s experiences.

The stages of exit, entry and experiences in the countries of settlement were recognized in fact as gendered, and this produced different propensities for migration as well as different outcomes for women and men (Donato, et al, 2006). Studies found different results for migrant women; some point out that in contrast to men, women themselves gain more personal autonomy and reduce more patriarchal control than in their home countries (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992, 1994; Pedraza, 1991; Barajas & Ramirez, 2007; Zentgraf, 2002). However, women’s employment does not mean greater gender equality, resulting in a need to reassess the initial conclusion concerning women’s liberation through migration experiences (Pedraza, 1991).

While the relationship between gender and migration is an increasingly popular area of research, the process of migration affects men and women differently with regard to patriarchal ideologies and practices (Pessar, 1999). Women studies have developed so far that male migrants as subjects have been ignored almost to the same degree as the female migrants had previously (Pessar and Mahler, 2003).

The scholarly literature to date often portray migrant men as the “primary movers”, whose desire to relocate is decisive in their families’ emigration because of their major contribution to their families’ livelihoods. This generic male migrant has until now been “perceived as an individual, rational decision-maker seeking to maximize his labor and this generalized ‘man’ also failed to explore men’s particular experiences and views in addition to marginalizing the role of women in migration” (Hibbins and Pease, 2009, p. 4).

On the other hand, some studies portray migrant men as encountering changes in their masculinity in the U.S. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner (1994) have observed that Mexican male immigrants in the U.S. found that their patriarchal privileges were significantly diminished, by the process of migration, for example they lost the monopoly over decision-making in their households and participated in more domestic chores. Torres (1998) adds that some Latino men attempt to follow a traditional form of masculinity, which is barely attainable in the U.S. these days, and which ends in personal conflict. Yet still other studies added that even if there is a kind of negotiation of domestic responsibilities at home, many other factors lead immigrants to continue following traditional gender roles (Willis and Yeo, 2000).

What happens to heterosexual LA male migrants adjusting to a new environment and a new society, and what happens to their definition of being men or masculine? What influence does the Japanese gender regimen have on these men who have relocated to Japan either for economic reasons or of their own volition? Does their masculinity survive in the Japanese culture and customs, or do they need to reconstruct it? This paper attempts to evaluate the impact of the transnational migration of LA men and their masculinity in terms of their employment and in their domestic sphere.

1 Latin American Masculinity

This paper adopts a social constructionist approach to gender where masculinity is socially constructed within specific historical and cultural contexts of gender relations. Such an approach emphasizes the variation between not only different cultures and historical moments, but also in relation to race, age, ethnicity and sexuality, among other factors (Kimmel, 2000). Because gender or masculinity is created in a specific context, men are continually in a process of constructing themselves, which also results in challenges and change, which occurs in particular communities of practice (Eckert and MacConnell-Ginet, 1992). Considering the various dimensions that intervene in being a man, it has been pointed out there is a need to refer to masculinities in the plural, instead of saying there is “only one

masculinity” (Rosas, 2013). Individuals make choices on their own as to how to be male, though most scholars agree that these choices are not isolated from societal expectations, cultural models and ideologies about gender, certain constant features of social construction of the masculinity that permeated daily practices, create social expectations, etc.

Most discussions about Latin American men begin with “machismo”, defined in negative terms like *narcissistic*, *oppressive*, *loud-mouthed*, *aggressive womanizers*, as well as positive terms like *responsibility*, *perseverance* and *courage* (Crossley and Pease, 2009). Generalizing about Latin American masculinity as a comprehensive category is difficult as the differences between them are more often as great as the similarities. However, machismo is not unique to Latin American men; it is also found as much in North America as it is in Latin America (Hardin, 2002).

A traditional description of masculinity is defined by avoiding female behavior and weakness, striving for success and achievement, and seeking adventure – with violence, if necessary. In the case of Peruvians, having a job represents achieving the status of being a man, and is a preliminary step to setting up a family and the source of social recognition. Moreover, such men’s masculinity arose from the provision of material goods to their family and social prestige. The domestic sphere is defined as feminine, since it is under women’s rule. Therefore, even if a man is the ultimate authority, he “runs the risk of being feminized simply by his presence” in the home (Fuller, 2001, p. 319). However, despite the data focused on hegemonic masculinity in the migrants’ home countries, a more flexible and complex definition of masculinities emerged (Andrade, 2003; Pineda 2001).

In the case of Japanese men, they are represented by the social stereotype of a salaryman: a middle class man who works long hours for a big corporation, goes drinking after work with his workmates and/or clients, and also devotes his weekends to the company, barely spending time at home. He is the head of the family in terms of power, authority and possession (Robertson and Suzuki, 2003). They are educated to be strong and dominant (Sugihara & Katsurada, 1999), although in the home, the women tend to be in control (Ogasawara, 1998).

When men migrate to another country they bring with them assumptions and

practices associated with manhood in their home country. Additionally, they deal with a new sociocultural environment, a host society with its own hierarchy of masculinities, where the male migrant needs to reconstruct and redefine himself if he wants to adapt to the new circumstances. During the settlement process and beyond, male migrants need to adapt their own definitions of gender to the surroundings. And with this process, male migrants are learning new codes and symbols associated with the local variants of masculine behaviors (Hibbins and Pease, 2009). LA men need to negotiate their way through multiple variants of masculinities in an unfamiliar multicultural setting. So, how do LA men deal with their own expectations of being capable of financial sufficiency, for example? However, first, the social conditions for LA men's immigration to Japan needs to be addressed.

2 The socio-political context of migration: from LA to Japan

Latin Americans from Spanish speaking countries emerged as a "new migrant population" in Japan in the nineties. The majority are from Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, countries where their own circumstances at the time of migration pushed these people to emigrate elsewhere, such as to Japan. The data shows that almost all the men coming to Japan from Spanish-speaking countries are mostly equal in number with women (See Table 1).

Initially much of the flow of Japanese people who emigrated between late 1800 and up to the 1950s was to North and South America. Japan welcomed back around 190,000 Japanese descendants or *nikkeijin* mainly during the 1990s, making up a racially similar, but culturally and linguistically different subpopulation. The 1990s was a period of migration, which coincided with an area of political and social upheavals and economic instability in Peru, Argentina, Brazil, etc. Moreover, the huge economic disparities between these Latin American countries and Japan made immigration much more attractive.

Not only did the domestic circumstances of each country push people to move abroad, but also having Japanese ancestry was an advantage in choosing Japan as a home. Due to the acute labor shortage, Japan revised the Immigration Control and

Table 1 Total number and percentage of male registered aliens from the six most common Spanish-speaking nationalities in Japan

Country		Peru	Bolivia	Argentina	Colombia	Paraguay	Mexico
1990	total #	10,279	496	2,656	425	672	786
	% of males	68%	57%	61%	24%	53%	45%
1995	total #	36,269	2,765	2,910	1,367	1,176	1,238
	% of males	59%	62%	55%	33%	50%	45%
2000	total #	46,171	3,915	3,072	2,496	1,678	1,740
	% of males	55%	56%	53%	33%	52%	48%
2005	total #	57,728	6,139	3,834	2,902	2,287	1,825
	% of males	54%	55%	56%	35%	52%	51%
2010	total #	54,636	5,720	3,181	2,606	2,098	1,956
	% of males	53%	54%	56%	35%	53%	55%
2015, June	total#	47,800	5,394	2,631	2,240	1,863	2,135
	% of males	52%	53%	54%	36%	52%	57%

Sources:

財団法人入管協会 (1991) 「平成 3 在留外国人統計」財団法人入管協会。
 財団法人入管協会 (1996) 「平成 8 在留外国人統計」財団法人入管協会。
 財団法人入管協会 (2001) 「平成 13 在留外国人統計」財団法人入管協会。
 財団法人入管協会 (2006) 「平成 18 在留外国人統計」財団法人入管協会。
 財団法人入管協会 (2011) 「平成 23 在留外国人統計」財団法人入管協会。
 在留外国人統計 (2015) <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?lid=000001139146>

Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, allowing up to the third generation to settle in Japan and have the status of “long-term resident”, and permitting them to reside and work – including unskilled work – without restrictions. Also, spouses and children were legally permitted to live together. All these conditions among the Latin Americans in Japan implied that this population has significant diversity with regard to social class, educational levels, jobs and social experiences in their own countries.

Most of the LA migrants fill labor market segments described as “3D” jobs (*dirty, dangerous and demanding*). They belong entirely to Japan’s secondary labor market, and from 1992 there was an increase in the number of part-time employees and people doing other informal work such as temporary, day-labor, and temporary-agency workers, known in Japan as “non-regular employees” (旗手, 2014). Many were Japanese descendants who knew nothing about Japan and spoke little or no Japanese. The majority of them settled in manufacturing industry areas around the greater Tokyo metropolis and Aichi prefecture, but also a minority dispersed around the country. The economic crisis in 2008 affected Latin American workers the hardest (樋口, 2011a), and the Japanese government offered assistance to return to their

countries. However, the biggest group, the Peruvians, stood out for coping with the crisis in Japan instead of returning to their country like, for example, many Brazilians did (樋口, 2011 b).

3 Doing research with Latin America men in Japan

The aim of this study is to explore the connection between gender and migration of LA men in a Japanese socio-economic and cultural environment. Interviews, conversations, and observation were conducted with LA male residents in Japan. The interview questions were open and broad. The questions were primarily centered on general information about their background, but specifically on their migration stories, experiences of arrival and settlement, and the long-term consequences of migration in relation to any changes that occurred in their attitudes and behaviors with regard to paid work, their female partners and family life.

The 36 subjects for this qualitative research were recruited through a snowball sampling, with the first respondent helping to make contact with future participants among their acquaintances. Almost all men were interviewed in person, but two times Skype was used because those individuals live in a distant geographical area from the interviewer. The interviews lasted at least two hours, and the conversations were all carried out in Spanish, recorded and later transcribed, as previously agreed upon. Upon publication of this paper, many of these interviewees remain in contact with the interviewer through emails, Facebook, social events, meetings, etc.

The interviewees are mainly from Peru (15) and Argentina (9), and a few are from other countries in Central (5) and South America (7). Their ages are between 26 and 65 years old. Their educational experiences are from incomplete high school up to advanced degrees; their social classes range from lower to middle. In terms of their Japanese ancestry, only six of the interviewees were either second or third generation, which means that they are culturally Latin American. Six of the interviewees are single and live alone, eight are married to women from their home countries and have children, thirteen have Japanese wives with children and nine have Japanese wives and no children. The majority of these men were employed at

the time of the interview, with the exception of one who was unemployed and another who was a full-time homemaker. For those employed, a great number of them are working manufacture-related jobs. Four of the interviewees are blue-collar part-time or temporary manual laborers with limited contract, fourteen are blue-collar full-time manual laborers with limited or unlimited contracts. These two groups of unskilled workers belong to small to medium-sized companies. Two of the interviewees are highly-skilled full-time company employees, three work either part-time or full time in the field of education, seven are self-employed, and four are university students. Table 2 in the annex can be referred to for details on interviewees.

Among these LA men, mostly they migrated to Japan for economic reasons and had their families join them in Japan afterwards, or they have a Japanese spouse which might mean having a different experience adjusting to Japan. The first group came to Japan to work because of their economic difficulties in their own countries, even if they had higher educational credentials, and being descendants of Japanese allowed them to reside and work unrestrictedly. Others first came to Japan with their tourist visas, but at the present are married with Japanese, so they have attained spousal visas. All of them who work have blue-collar jobs.

A few number of these LA men have Japanese wives who are the breadwinners in the household. Most of these men have unstable jobs or are househusbands due to their lack of occupational skills. They already had a Japanese wife or partner before coming to Japan, and in Japan are househusbands or work under limited term contracts, on an irregular basis, and/or in the manual labor industry.

The smallest group is single LA men who came to Japan as university students. They have a certain status in Japan due to their educational credentials being recognized by Japanese universities and enjoy financial security from their scholarships.

One implication of these processes of migration and settlement in Japan is that a sample of LA men have various educational and class backgrounds in their home countries. However, there are a number of commonalities in our participants' profiles. As is known about this topic of economic migrants and social capital (Bourdieu, 1991), everyone discovered or soon realized that their education, qualifications and/or job

experiences in their own countries were ignored or not recognized by the host country's authorities²⁾. Accordingly male migrants are marginalized by class and ethnicity, since the beginning of the process of migration into the Japanese social system.

One more shared feature of all of the subjects is the lack of Japanese language ability and not fully understanding Japanese culture and customs before coming to Japan. It was not until they lived in Japan that some of them gained some Japanese skills and comprehension of Japanese social conventions and habits. Simply having Japanese ancestors did not mean any advantage compared with the non-Japanese descendants, as all the interviewees explain. Having East Asian features helped them to live unnoticed in public places until, for instance, the Japanese nationals realized that they do not follow native-like conversations. In general, all the interviewees' parents or grandparents assimilated completely into the LA society and did not even teach them about their Japanese customs, culture or language just because they could not think about coming back to Japan at the time. There was one exception, one interviewee who used to listen to Japanese spoken by his parents, attended Japanese language school on Saturdays and mastered the language up to intermediate level before coming to Japan.

4 The social reconstruction of LA migrant masculinity

Emerging from the data collected using the methodology of narrative inquiry are a number of thematic lines, considering how each interviewee constructs and makes sense of his story as a migrant in Japan in relation to one's own definition of being a man or of masculinity in Japanese society. The adjustments are necessary in their various roles in the public and domestic sphere of their lives, such as breadwinners, husbands, fathers, household managers, friends and members of Japanese society. For a better understanding, we will focus on nine participants' cases to illustrate these male migrants' experiences.

4.1 Employment status and being a “provider”

Fuller (2001) stressed that in all LA countries, masculinity is based on men's capacity of being financially independent because having paid work is directly linked to their male identity. In addition, academic research describes male migrants as the main movers in their families with the goal of emigrating and relocating their families, which is crucial for the whole family's livelihood.

Some of the LA men that were interviewed, first came to Japan to work as unskilled manual laborers, save money and then bring their families to Japan. See for example, the story of Participant 1, who is 44 years old. As a third-generation Japanese descendant, he came to Japan 22 years ago when he heard of the possibility of working without constraints in Japan. He went to Lima by foot because he had no money for transportation from the remote area where he lived and because of his very low income and job situation at that time. He got the chance to go alone to Japan and spend a year in Northern Japan, but because he was earning less income than he thought he would, he soon moved to Western Japan for a better job, got settled, and saved money to bring his non-Japanese descendant spouse and his first child to Japan.

The need to move around Japan to find better working conditions is one feature of all migrants, not only men but also women, especially when they are single and/or without children (浜松, 2000). This same interviewee described himself as the head of the household, having the opportunity to come legally to Japan and work hard for his family. He recently bought a house and also a car. The 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 house, as in the following case, because becoming the head of the house is not lacking of additional challenges.

The story of Participant 2 is one of many who overcame difficulties in many ways. He recalls:

“hasta el segundo año lo pasaba llorando aquí, no entendía el idioma, no conseguía trabajo, estaba a punto de volverme a Perú, no me podía solventar, aún

casado” [I would cry all the time here until my second year. I couldn’t understand the language, I couldn’t get a job, I was about to go back to Peru. I couldn’t make ends meet, still married]

He came to Japan with a three-month visa to work in hotels in the entertainment field, but he soon met a Japanese woman and with the marriage he got a resident visa. Although his wife had a job, her income was supplementary, not enough to support both her and her husband. While he was studying Japanese, he found a job in a very small company as a part-time worker, and later on he got a full-time contract and presently he earns the main income for the two of them.

“Le dije a mi esposa que yo iba a poder un dia ganar lo suficiente para que ella no tenga que trabajar mas, y por suerte, ahora ella ya está en la casa, descansa. [I told my wife that one day I’d be able to make enough so that she wouldn’t have to work, and luckily, she can stay at home now and rest]

When they arrive in Japan, some men experienced a loss or drop in their status of being capable of success in their jobs. The precise case of Participant 3 helps to illustrate the discussion by David Block (2010; 2007) about the relationship between the agency of the migrant at the micro-level, and the social structure, or the macro-level social structure, of the host society that organizes what kind of resources can be accessed by or denied to a migrant. This male migrant’s agency refers to the capacity to exercise power and ambition, but in an unknown and different environment; he needs to adjust and overcome barriers, negotiating structural and material constraints (Higgins, 2010, p.377). At 32 years old, he came to Japan with his Japanese wife, who has a stable and secure full-time job; they met while she was sightseeing around Latin America. They got married in his country with the plan of living in Japan. He had a job as an engineer in his country, but without any prospect for future promotion, so initially his plan was to look for work related to his field of expertise in Japan using his English language skills. However, he soon discovered he would not be recognized or employed without Japanese language skills and social

connections, of which he is lacking. His next plan was to use Japan as a career ladder, to jump to a job related to his field abroad. Before long, he realized that he needed to learn Japanese after failing to find engineering-related work overseas and due to the strong opposition from his wife with regard to his moving abroad.

Meanwhile, Participant 3 took Japanese classes while not working and was entirely financially dependent on his Japanese wife. He even tried to get part-time hours as a Spanish teacher and other types of part-time work, such as a waiter in his neighborhood restaurant, but he was getting nowhere due to the competitive market of private language teaching and he was rejected for the other jobs, such as those in customer service, due to his lack of Japanese skills. Eventually, after about two years, he became a blue-collar worker with a full-time job at a factory. After being employed for about a year and a half, he is still working hard to get the best score in time and production on the assembly line, and he is also providing the management with new ideas to improve the production. Nevertheless, he has already realized that with his low-skilled, poorly paid and devalued work, and the Japanese system of ranks and promotion in the workplace, there is no chance of having any promotion solely because of his university degree. For him, it is clear that he is performing beneath his skills and expertise, and he is still wondering how he can surpass this situation.

However, at the same time, paid work is the fundamental basis for him. He feels a huge relief and satisfaction with his new life: "You cannot imagine how well I feel having my own job and my own income now". Even though he is paying his wife back for his costs of the wedding and other expenses since she helped him come to Japan, he already bought a new car, reaching a lifestyle improbable or unthinkable in his own country. The initial period was very difficult and stressful for him in the unfamiliar cultural and social environment, but he described himself as constantly looking for a way to get a job and get self-sufficient. In the last contact with him, he got a visa to visit the U.S., a place where he could theoretically become an engineer or another highly skilled profession due to his English fluency, whereas in Japan with his poor Japanese skill, nationality, and other factors, he has little chance to become a highly-skilled professional. In sum, this interviewee manipulated many aspects of his life to get to a place where he feels or recognizes he is in control and has a power to

make decisions, opening new doors for his future career, which would have been unachievable without the motivation to get a full-time job.

In most of the cases, the affirmation of Piller (2001) can be applied here. “The foreign spouse is at an economic disadvantage both in the employment market and in the marital relationship: economic asymmetry or downright dependence in the marriage relationship creates a potentially conflict-laden power imbalance” (Piller, 2001, p. 217). This is especially a fact for LA men who pursue becoming detached or autonomous from their wives on whom they are economically dependent; they want to have control of their own income.

Among LA men, working for money and being capable of being the economic provider is often the most important aspect in adapting to their new social environment, across classes and educational backgrounds. Following Piller’s statement, the next section is related levels in their marital relationships.

4.2 Settlement patterns of LA men in Japan

Newly married couples in some cultures may set up house together as a common norm or practice. With an adult man who has a family, when he migrates for work and/or for better economic opportunities, often the wife and their children later follow him. This has been one current view of transnational migration, with the family reunification phenomenon. The kinship rules of residency, which entails a man is followed by his wife or female, might be reproduced in a transnational migration. The rule of the wife having to move to live with her husband has been assumed as axiomatic or taken for granted (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2008). In addition, family migration decisions are typically based on assigning high priority to a man’s occupational successes, and the woman’s career endeavors are considered secondary. A couple who decides to migrate might have a “lead migrant” – usually the man – due to a better job opportunity and a “tied migrant” – usually the woman – who moves along with the lead migrant. As a consequence, these arrangements might explain why one partner’s career is on hold and/or has less income than the other partner (Lersch, 2015). Therefore, in the case of LA migrants, when the Japanese descendant is legally able to work and settle in Japan without any consideration of gender, what

kind of rules of kinship or residency – also in regard to the institution of marriage – are put into action for LA men? Furthermore, in situations where the Japanese national ensures legal residence of the foreign spouse, what are the features of settlement of LA men married to Japanese women?

For LA Japanese descendants migrating to Japan, the “primary movers” are both women and men, single or as a couple, because of the descendent principle: being Japanese descendants themselves or because their spouses are Japanese descendants provides them with the opportunity to legally work in Japan and bring their spouses and children with them. Therefore, the female or male spouse’s legal access to Japan contributes to an overall substantial improvement for both of them, as a couple. The mobility of these couples to a long-distance labor migration provides the change to an upward social mobility, at least in financial or economic terms and mutual support. Among all the interviewees, some came to Japan while single and got married with a LA partner in Japan, and others were already married and either came alone or with their spouses and brought over their children afterwards. Ultimately, the criteria of settlement or residency are based on the best economic or financial situation for the LA married couples without any gender distinction.

In the case of marriage between a non-Japanese-descendent LA man with a Japanese national, the patriarchal system with regard to residency is modified. The Japanese partner is the one providing the legality to his residency in Japan. In this case, marriage may appear a relatively efficient way to ensure a certain stability and/or upward social mobility. LA men’s marriage to Japanese nationals provides the means to fulfill their social and material aspirations for a better life in relation to financial security and economic stability.

It is clear that the residency of these men is mainly decided by their wives’ and/ their children’s advantages that result in the couples’ well being. Their Japanese wives are the ones with enough social connections for a certain economic stability, a social network of relatives and friends for support such as to help find the wife a job, help for their children, etc. which their LA husbands lack. These women are generating the main income for the couple or the family, so for these men, the need to follow and support their wives’ decisions, job circumstances and opportunities is

crystal clear. One interviewee, Participant 4, came to Japan with his Japanese wife to work in the field of education. He is very involved in politics, and explained in detail his move to a new neighborhood because of the environmental contamination in his former area of residency in the aftermath of the 2011 Great Eastern Japan earthquake and tsunami, even if that meant his commute to work took much more time. But that argument became weaker or insufficient, lacking the complete picture when much later in the course of the interview, when talking about the difficulties with small children and childcare when they are ill and because his wife is also working, he said that they live twenty minutes from his in-laws' house, and they ask them to help with their small children in those cases. The researcher got the feeling that their moving to live near his in-laws – and therefore having their help on a daily basis with their two small children and one more on the way – was one of his wife's main reasons to move, not just the environmental contamination.

Nevertheless, none of the LA men live with their in-laws, which is not the case for many LA women married with Japanese nationals (Vitale, 2014). Some of them say that they barely see their in-laws and/or they had a difficult time at first being accepted by the Japanese wife's family. Others say they have an exceptional relationship with their in-laws, where they became very close with them, sometimes more than with their own wives. A common topic for the male migrants who requested approval from their future wives' parents to marry their daughter was the feeling of being judged on whether or not they could provide financial security for their daughters. The interviewees also pointed out their in-laws' apprehension about their economic stability and future.

For example, Participant 5 from South America came as a foreign student and when he decided to get married with his girlfriend, her parents wanted him to have a stable job, and he got it as promised. But afterwards, he discovered that with that job he had a limited income and few future prospects, feeling completely unsatisfied and trapped in what was supposed to be a "stable or steady" job position from his wife's and in-laws' point of view. He finally decided to quit and changed to a freelance job, and though at first it was unstable and not secure, he got a much higher income and future prospects.

For some Japanese wives, even if the husbands are of LA origin, they believe their husbands should eventually be the breadwinners of the household, and this is an extension of the gender expectations from the Japanese in-laws, regardless of the son-in-laws' country of origin. The man being the principal provider of the house is a rule, which crosses countries and continents from Latin America as far as Japan. That is to say, it is not nationality, race or social class and all the cultural baggage that includes them, but gender roles which organize the social relations and structure in the family.

Unless the male migrant is able to provide for the family and secure a significant income for the family, when the LA man's employment is not secure or stable, he is "tied" to his Japanese wife. She leads the family settlement, and her employment and social network is prioritized. The LA man is the "follower" or "associated mover" and "tied to the Japanese national" in the process of settlement.

4.3 The domestic sphere and division of labor at home

The realm of the domestic sphere is associated with the private lives of the migrant people unrelated to the rules and views of the public sphere. However, the possibility of knowing the Japanese language and customs for the LA men is a factor to take into account. More specifically, the household chores, cooking, and cleaning might be done without any interference from the environment of the host society, but when having a Japanese wife and/or children, the encounter or contact with the Japanese educational and health system is unavoidable. So, what is the division of labor like in the families of LA men? How do LA men reconstruct their own masculinity whilst having female wives incorporated into the labor market?

The traditional division of labor between LA men and LA women in Japan, as in the country of origin, is the same as usual: when the migrant men have full-time employment, the chores at home remain on the shoulder of their wives; women's traditional roles are naturally based in the home. Even in the cases where there is an economic need and/or an increase in opportunities for their wives to work alongside these LA men, these roles at home still apply, which is even more remarkable considering that the LA women are also working full-time as manual workers like their partners (高谷 et al. 2013). In addition to any work outside the home, the

implicit norm of women's work as homemakers is clear, from everything related to their children's school matters, visits to the doctors, cleaning the home, cooking, etc.

Furthermore, it is commonplace for these LA men to feel incompetent in childcare and domestic chores. Paternity, as a real daily contact with children and being active participants in their children's care, is the role least developed or least emphasized compared with being an economic provider for their families, a paid worker, and the "strongest member" of the family.

These LA men do not talk much about their working LA wives' income, making their wives' financial contribution to the household invisible. Due to the women's role in family subsistence production, the female partners' contribution to the household is not adequately acknowledged as such.

Without a doubt, the same social and cultural values related to gender that they encounter in Japan do not help to shift the household divisions of labor that they had in LA, as opposed to what other migration studies might say³. On the contrary, these LA men's domestic practices fit within the locally established gender norms. Japanese families often involve the Japanese wives taking care of the house, the children and the budget of the family and the Japanese men working full-time and being dedicated and hard workers for the company.

The preservation of these gender hierarchies is a fact even in the case of both spouses from LA who also needed to learn and adapt to the new social environment of Japan. One of the interviewees mentioned before, Participant 1, says:

"mi esposa fue aprendiendo japonés poco a poco... aprendió hablando con las mujeres, usted ya sabe cómo hablan, no? y ella se encarga de los chicos, es la que les entiende mejor, les prepara su comida japonesa, los atiende, va a la escuela"
[My wife started learning Japanese little by little ... she learnt to speak with other women, you know how they talk, right? And she takes care of the kids, she's the one who understands them better, makes them their Japanese food, takes care of them, deals with the school]

The role of the man is related to the success and achievement as the breadwinner

of the house, but sometimes the material basis of this expected order is interrupted due to the man's unemployment or having an unstable and/or a low-income job. This disadvantage is because the migration process and the adjustment to the new society is brought up or called attention to and often leads to the creation of a new division of labor at home.

Participant 6 from Peru came to Japan on a tourist visa, then paid for a Japanese school until got married. He and his Japanese wife decided that she would maintain her full-time job even if they have children. He is self-employed, so his schedule varies, but mostly is on weekends and holidays and mainly at night. The children are already in middle school, and from the beginning this interviewee has been in charge of the household chores and children, except for the Japanese paperwork and dealing with Japanese-language-related tasks, with which his wife is in charge.

“mira, yo casi no voy al colegio, saben que tienen un papá extranjero, pero trato de no ir, para las mujercitas no les gusta que el papa vaya y esté ahí... la madre se ocupa de todo en japonés” [I mean, I hardly ever go to their school, they know their father is a foreigner, but I try not to go, girls don't want their dad to be there ... their mother takes care of everything in Japanese]

One more interviewee, Participant 7, from Peru left his university studies incomplete, first came with a tourist visa and has been in Japan for 20 years. He got married for the second time with a Japanese woman, and not having a stable job, he is the one in charge of the domestic chores, cleaning the house, doing the shopping and cooking. He says:

“he estado de arbito en arbito, ahora estoy haciendo un arbito de limpieza de máquinas por pocas horas, tres días a la semana, me ofrecieron más horas pero igualmente ya se que no es bueno pues no me tomarán como permanente ... como soy el que no está trabajando soy el que hago las cosas en la casa, también he aprendido a cocinar, pero si ella puede lo hace ella” [I've been going from one part time job to the next, now I'm working part-time cleaning machines for a few

hours, three times a week, they offered me more hours but I know they won't give me a permanent job ... since I'm the one who's not working I take care of the housework, I've also learnt to cook, but if she can, she does it]

In any case, the inability to be the breadwinner challenges these men to adapt and change the household division of labor. Therefore, it seems that the lack of a paid job pushes a more egalitarian division of chores at home. However, as in the case of the ones who recently got a full-time job, the division of roles returned to the so-called "traditional" place, and the women get stuck with the double duty again. In contrast to the social progress with regard to gender equality in many countries like Australia (Hibbins & Pease, 2009), or a more debatable issue if the migration itself promoted gender equality like in the US (Donato, 2006), in Japan there is little ideology related to equal rights for the genders enacted through governmental discourse and popular culture, which would help the empowerment that Japanese and LA women could get through their jobs and career development.

4.4 Homosociality and heterosocial relationships

The migrants' readjustment of their masculinity also includes their social life, the construction of a network of friendship and heterosexual encounters in the host society. On one hand, homosocial spaces represent one more area for reaffirmation of man's masculinity (Butler 1990, 1993). The homosociality includes bonds of friendship implying mutual identification and shared life experiences to define relationships based on power and cooperation between men (Sedgwick, 1995). In the case of Latin America, there is an assurance men will be granted "access to networks of influence, alliances and support" by engaging in the typically male activities of sports, drinking alcohol, frequenting brothels, or discussing social conquests. Joining these "masculine solidarity networks" means that the members will gain varying levels of entry into or even control in societal systems of power (Fuller, 2001, pp. 325) On the other hand, LA men are also challenged when facing Japanese women by their physical appearance. Male attractiveness is related to strength, robustness or hardness, and male beauty is also associated with a typical Caucasian look: white skin, blond hair and blue eyes.

For a heterosexual LA man, his attractiveness might emanate from the foreign physical traits or features he has, as opposed to what the Japanese man has. Consequently, in the case of male migrants in a constant negotiation and renegotiation of their masculinity, what kind of homosociality takes place in a new and almost unknown society? And furthermore, when surrounded by Japanese women, what new feature might be added to the value of his masculinity?

All of the interviewees reported that most of their friendships were developed in their native language, irrespective of their levels of Japanese language ability. Almost all of them were quoted as having meetings, gatherings, practicing sports or different events mainly via the Spanish language. In some situations, their shared language and experiences of migration obviously enable them to mix more easily with Latin American migrants than those from different areas of the world. This means that not only the language of communication is the same, but they also share common experiences in adjusting to Japan, and at the same time, they also share to some degree culture codes, preferred pastimes and hobbies.

Although some have Japanese friends, for others forming strong bonds in the Japanese language was often not an option in their social lives. Some interviewees expressed a certain frustration about their level of Japanese and perplexity over Japanese customs and social values, and they said their best and close friends were those from LA. In consequence, one might assume that homosociality takes place with the condition that there is a shared sense of male identity, cultural symbols and practices.

The impact of migration on daily life for these LA men also provides opportunities for self-reflection and comparison between what it means to be a LA man in Japanese society versus their home countries. For example, the previously mentioned Participant 6 describes himself as a “magnet” for Japanese women:

“solo por el hecho de ser extranjero, por ser latino las chicas te persiguen, eso para una o dos veces como travesura está bien, pero todas las veces, no, eso no es correcto, pues tú no eres una máquina de sexualidad, de diversión y la gente es gente humana, si la gente busca eso, no seas una herramienta de eso, pues tu

imagen se refleja en eso. En el entorno que me rodea no permito eso. [Just because you're a foreigner, Latin American, girls chase you, that's fine if you want to have fun once or twice, but not every time, that's not right because you're not a sex machine, and people are human beings, if that's what people are looking for, don't take part, because it affects your image. I don't allow that around me]

Participant 8 is also from Peru, and due to the economic difficulties that his family suffered, at 29 years old he quit his university studies and decided to come to Japan on a tourist visa. He was able to work many manual-labor-type jobs, and moved around the country for a long time due to a lack of proper documentation, but a few years ago he became a documented alien. He says:

“aquí en Japón, la atracción que muestran las japonesas por el extranjero es... está ahí el cartel este de extranjero, uno que es extranjero y hasta tiene cara de asiático pero es extranjero... y es así, por más feo que seas siempre va a haber una mujer para ti” [Here in Japan, Japanese women show a real interest in foreign men ... it's like you're carrying a sign ... and that's how it is, no matter how ugly you are, there will always be a woman for you]

For some LA men, having different appearance might be an advantage in the social and heterosexual market of occasional and open relationships with Japanese women. However, when talking about their relationships with their Japanese wives, various dynamics appear. On the one hand, some felt criticized by their Japanese wives because they expected their husbands to provide financial security for the household, assuming LA men could have the same amount of economic success as their Japanese counterparts in the same environment. This was expected not only by their Japanese wives but also by their in-laws. What these men are expressing is the difficulty in having to construct self-images that are not in accord with what is socially expected around them by those most close to them. So migration does not only create a new familial and social environment, but also a need for reconsideration of their own abilities and desires.

On the other hand, stereotypes play a huge role in the LA men's situation. They justified their marriages because, as men, they provide a substantially different relationship as non-Japanese men. All the interviewees recognized that their Japanese wives chose to be with non-Japanese husbands, that their wives might be seen as weird or strange Japanese people who wanted to avoid the expected life of having Japanese husbands with stable incomes, devoted to their companies their whole lives. Their Japanese wives chose to have LA men as partners, precisely because they did not want the expected lifestyle or daily journey as Japanese national wives. However, Participant 9, a Peruvian who came to Japan 21 years ago with a tourist visa, tried to work in his university degree field, but was unsuccessful, and he eventually found a way to be self-employed. He says:

“yo creo que me eligió por sonsa, porque si hubiera sido más inteligente hubiera elegido a un japonés, ahora tiene más necesidades que si se hubiera casado con un japonés, que se hubiera evitado” [I think she chose me because she wasn't thinking, because if she had been a bit smarter she would've chosen a Japanese man, now she has more needs than she would have had if she'd married a Japanese man, which she could have avoided]

In this case, as in many others, they are aware that the comparison with Japanese men and the logic of being instrumentally evaluated or judged is unavoidable. However, later in the talk, this Participant 9 says:

“en el colegio de mis hijos, empezando por el jardín, nos ven como la pareja ideal, y me encanta estar con ella, y tomarle de la mano y salir, salimos a la calle sonriendo, la trato con respeto, igual que a mis hijos” [At my kids' school, starting in Kindergarten, everyone sees us as the perfect couple, and I love being with her, and holding her hand and going out, we go out on the street smiling, I treat her with respect, and my children too]

Like Participant 9, other interviewees regard the 'Latino' image. They value the

supposed “non-Japanese way” of being a couple: their conversational skills, romantic relationship and comprehension between the two. They feel Japanese men are the ones alienated due to the social gendered division of labor. Almost all the LA men defined themselves as just the opposite from the type of man who disappears the whole day for work, like an unreachable being, lacking in verbal communicational skills and expression of love and bodily contact. They are defending themselves or credit themselves as more romantically valuable, a “Latin lover”, than the Japanese stereotypical man image. Therefore, they believe their Japanese wives are choosing a more humanistic heterosexual relationship than a cold and rationally driven life or business-like approach of a stereotypical Japanese marital relationship. By discrediting the typical Japanese man, they are crediting themselves with having certain traits or stereotyped features of the Latin American heterosexual man, which they imply is an advantage to their Japanese wives.

Conclusion

LA male migrants strive for success in a new social environment like Japan. The adjustment to living in Japan is based on their integration into the Japanese job market, the settlement patterns of the couple and/or family, the division of labor at home, and their homosociability and heterosexual relationships.

The life trajectories of these LA men show that they are experiencing a downward social and occupational mobility regardless of their position in their home countries, unless their higher educational credentials are recognized by the Japanese universities so they are included in the circle or career path toward upward social and occupational mobility. In their adaptation to the new job market, working for money is key to both single and married men in their own definition of success, which is independent from their social class and educational degrees.

In the case of both husband and wife being from LA, the settlement of residency in a new environment is based on either the husband's or the wife's highest income/employment opportunity. However, in the case of a LA man having a Japanese wife, the latter having the main source of income, social connections, familial and friend

support for the couple, the LA man is tied to these advantages of the wife's, which provide the best chances for the two of them, therefore making him dependent on his Japanese wife.

LA men, when marrying LA women, might reproduce the same division of labor at home as if they were in the home countries. However, with Japanese wives, migrant men tend to have more flexible masculinities and are often more involved in the domestic sphere in Japan than in their country of origin, especially those with unstable employment or low-status/unskilled jobs.

Compared to in their home countries, the way of being male or masculine is readjusted in Japan as these men travel across and within different sociocultural environments linked to particular configurations of employment and the intimate sphere of the family. There is further readjustment within the sphere of a community such their children's school, the Japanese extended family, etc., obviously varying according to their social positions, educational levels, chances of better jobs or recognized qualifications, not to mention individual migrant agencies.

Finally, certain cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as a Japanese cultural environment of patriarchal structure of gender roles might promote a certain inability to exercise the LA men's parental roles.

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Notes

- 1) This study will cover Spanish-speaking men from Latin America.
- 2) One interviewee evoked his ignorance at that time, when attending a meeting with representatives of the Japanese employment agency in Peru. He brought his curriculum vitae prepared to get the best opportunity in the Japanese labor market, and he soon became aware that the only offer from the Japanese side was to be recruited for manual labor in a factory.
- 3) When migrant women move from less developed countries to developed countries, they

gain contact with more independent, diversified opportunities, promoting their own gender equality, as is discussed by Donato (2006).

Annex

Table 2 Sample demographics

Interviewees with LA wives with children (N=8)					
No.	Age	Years of residency in Japan	Country of origin	Highest level of education completed	Occupation
1	44	22	Peru	High School	Manual worker
2	57	23	Peru	Middle School	Manual worker
3	51	20	Peru	High School	Manual worker
4	38	22	Peru	Bachelor of Arts	Manual worker
5	40	22	Peru	High School	Manual worker
6	50	21	Peru	Bachelor of Arts	Manual worker
7	56	24	Peru	High School	Manual worker
8	53	23	Peru	Middle School	Manual worker
Interviewees with Japanese wives and children (N=13)					
No.	Age	Years of residency in Japan	Country of origin	Highest level of education completed	Occupation
9	40	14	Other South America country	Master of Arts	Educational field
10	45	12	Other Central America country	Bachelor of Arts	Manual worker
11	44	11	Other Central America country	Master of Arts	Homemaker
12	49	22	Other Central America country	Bachelor of Arts	Self-employed
13	47	21	Peru	Bachelor of Arts	Self-employed
14	38	6	Other Central America country	Vocational School	Educational field
15	30	4	Argentina	High School	Manual worker
16	42	8	Argentina	High School	Manual worker
17	33	5	Argentina	Bachelor of Arts	Highly skilled employee
18	51	22	Peru	High School	Manual worker
19	37	8	Argentina	Bachelor of Arts	Self-employed
20	39	9	Other South America country	Master of Arts	Unemployed
Interviewees with Japanese wives without children (N=9)					
No.	Age	Years of residency in Japan	Country of origin	Highest level of education completed	Occupation
21	48	20	Peru	High School	Manual worker
22	51	21	Peru	High School	Self-employed
23	38	12	Peru	High School	Manual worker
24	35	3	Other Central America country	Master of Arts	Educational Field
25	44	9	Other South America country	Bachelor of Arts	Self-employed
26	51	18	Peru	High School	Manual worker
27	65	24	Argentina	High School	Self-employed
28	41	6	Argentina	High School	Manual worker
29	44	19	Argentina	High School	Manual worker
30	45	17	Other South America country	High School	Self-employed

Single LA interviewees (N=6)					
No.	Age	Years of residency in Japan	Country of origin	Highest level of education completed	Occupation
31	26	4	Other South America country	Bachelor of Arts	Foreign student
32	32	5	Argentina	Master of Arts	Foreign student
33	36	10	Other South America country	Master of Arts	Foreign student
34	25	4	Other South America country	Master of Arts	Highly skilled employee
35	32	7	Argentina	Master of Arts	Foreign student
36	34	14	Peru	High School	Manual worker

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