

Peruvian masculinities: An overview

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ABSTRACT

This article is an overview of Peruvian studies and research on men and masculinities. This field of study has around forty years of existence and Peru has contributed with scholarship that advances the field both theoretically and methodologically. This overview identifies seven main areas prioritized by Peruvian social scientists: 1) the construction of masculinities; 2) masculinities and gender violence; 3) reconstruction and relearning of masculinities; 4) paternities; 5) emotions and corporality; 6) representations of masculinities in the media and literature; and 7) masculinities and gender diversity. I conclude this overview by highlighting new ways for research.

Keywords: Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity, Gender Relations, Gender Equality, Peru.

Masculinidades peruanas: una revisión

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta una revisión de los estudios sobre hombres y masculinidades en el Perú. Este campo tiene casi cuarenta años en desarrollo y ha brindado aproximaciones teóricas y herramientas metodológicas esenciales. En esta revisión encuentro siete áreas que han sido priorizadas por investigadores en las ciencias sociales peruanas: 1) las construcciones sociales de las masculinidades, 2) masculinidades y violencias de género, 3) procesos de reconstrucción y reaprendizaje de las masculinidades, 4) paternidades, 5) emociones y corporalidad, 6) representaciones de las masculinidades en los medios y literatura, y 7) masculinidades y diversidades de género. Concluyo esta revisión delineando nuevas direcciones de investigación.

Palabras clave: masculinidad, masculinidad hegemónica, relaciones de género, igualdad de género, Perú.



WHAT MAKES A MAN?

One month after the August 2016 march held in Lima under the name of “Ni Una Menos” (“Not One [Woman] Less”)—an event considered one of the largest demonstrations ever held in Peru—20 men came together in Campo de Marte¹ to hold their own demonstration, calling it “Ni Uno Menos” (“Not One [Man] Less”). Participants interviewed stated: “women have been granted privileges [...] using this pretext of empowering women, they want to diminish men.” Readers can draw their own conclusions about the character of this demonstration.² Meanwhile, the Barbarian Peru brewery produced the BarVaso, a glass “forged in iron and testosterone to impede this pinky from rising against you [...] a glass as robust as you are.”³ These are far from just local anecdotes. Ultraconservative Tucker Carlson from the United States is so worried about the “war on masculinity” and the decline in levels of testosterone, which allegedly will lead us to “the end of men,” that he proposes testicle tanning, the so-called Red-Light Therapy.

What makes a man? Is it the physical strength which permits him to exercise violence against others; his socialization in a cis-hetero patriarchy; the capacity to oppose certain gender mandates despite this socialization; the exercise of his sexuality; the responsibility to be a “provider” for his family; the capacity to take care of others; or the capacity to repress emotions? It has been a little more than forty years since the study of men and masculinities caught the interest of social scientists; they have explored these questions in detail and have come to conclusions that can be summarized as follows: a man is all the aforementioned and more.

¹ A large public park located in the district of Jesús María, in Lima.

² #NiUnoMenos: ¿Por qué salieron a marchar estos hombres? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPJW8aRbpuM>

³ Barbarian Perú | El BarVaso <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IKveEaL3z8>

Research is needed to provide an in-depth analysis of the many forms of the expression of masculinity and to explore their political and ethical implications. This is especially important in times when several promoters of hate have appeared in the political scene to infringe on the freedoms and rights of marginalized individuals, in order to promote and prolong the interests of those in power. The feminist movement along with calls for the depatriarchalization and decolonization of masculinities have led to significant societal advances in terms of gender relations, but they have also encountered strong, vocal opposition. There seems to be a shared sensation of a loss of privileges, of sanctions for conduct that is no longer acceptable. The opposition to feminist activism is manifested in daily life and on social media. These media have been useful, for example, in articulating movements against street sexual harassment (Vallejo, 2018), or in the case of collective indignation regarding political issues (Ramos, 2015); nevertheless, these are also spaces that promote disinformation and misogynist behaviors protected by anonymity (Nagle, 2012; Phillips, 2021). In Peru, social networks continue to be a venue for racism (Cerna Aragón, 2012) and online gender violence (Hiperderecho, 2018).

These changes on the interpersonal, social, and virtual levels are also affected by other factors, such as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. While there are efforts to work on issues of *machismo* and gender-based violence in Peru by the government, NGOs, and academia (Hernández Breña, 2019; Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables, 2016; OXFAM, 2015), the pandemic—especially during obligatory confinement—led to an increase in reports of violence of as much as 48% between the months of April and July 2020 (Agüero, 2021).

This context is part of much larger processes that are influencing the ways masculinity is expressed, as well as on the reconfiguration of gender relationships. As someone interested in this field, I am familiar with recent research that explores what it is like to be a man at the present time. This wealth in scholarship has led to both theoretical and methodological advances as well as critical revision of foundational concepts. Below, I briefly present the concepts that are essential to situate ourselves in studies on masculinity, describe the criticisms to which they have been subjected, and note their reformulations. I then provide a brief review of research on masculinity in Latin America and the Caribbean, and then go on to an analysis of the research carried out in Peru. The most representative studies on masculinities in Peru are organized around seven thematic areas: 1) the construction of masculinities; 2) masculinities and gender violence; 3) reconstruction and relearning of masculinities; 4) paternities; 5) emotions and

corporality; 6) representations of masculinities in the media and literature; and 7) masculinities and gender diversity. I conclude this overview with some final reflections.

DEFINITION, PROBLEMATIZATION, AND ADVANCES IN THE STUDY OF MASCULINITIES

Foundational concepts always undergo a period of rework, especially when the social panorama has experienced diverse changes such as those that have occurred in recent years. Masculinities are currently lived differently than when these concepts were first formulated. Nevertheless, it is important to take note of them. Raewyn Connell argues that “masculinity is not a coherent object about which a generalizing science can be produced” (Connell, 1995: 69) and defines masculinities as “simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture” (1995: 71). Connell’s conceptualization presents relations between masculinities (hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, marginalized); however, research has prioritized hegemonic masculinity. This has been defined as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (1995: 77). It has also been noted that hegemonic masculinity is generally perceived as “the most honored or desired” form of masculinity (Connell, 2000: 10). Other authors, such as Kimmel, highlight the centrality of power in the study of masculinities. Kimmel notes that “the hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power” (1994: 125). Hegemonic masculinity can lead some men to strictly identify themselves with dominant practices that distance them from the feminine and to become involved in practices of homophobia and misogyny. Criticism of the use of this concept warns against always equating hegemonic masculinity with toxic characteristics, and call for the reformulation and amplification of this concept in relation to feminism, intersectionality, and the Global South (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018).

Critical perspectives of the foundational formulations of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity inquire into different local and cultural nuances that influence the way masculinity is performed. Thus, there are efforts to question and to deconstruct “the hegemonic” within hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004;

Yang, 2020) and to explore the nuances that this concept takes on in at different scales (Messerschmidt, 2019). The advance of feminisms and the increasing denunciations of abuses of patriarchal power in different contexts have led to the characterization of certain expressions of masculinity as “toxic,” along with their effects on the psyche and behavior resulting from the mandates of masculinity (de Boise, 2019); nevertheless, it is still unclear how to differentiate toxic masculinity from hegemonic masculinity (Harrington, 2021).

US sociologists Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe formulate the concept of “hybrid masculinities” (2014). These are forms of expressing masculinities which incorporate elements of marginalized or subordinate, and feminine, identities. Thus, the emergence of hybrid masculinities is indicative of the expansion of the frontiers of masculinities that, at the same time, distances itself from traditional and hegemonic discourses. For the Peruvian case, Liuba Kogan (2021) employs this concept to understand the practices of body and appearance management by young men in Lima who go to barbers. Another advancement toward understanding masculinity’s diverse forms of expression is the concept of “caring masculinities,” as coined by Karla Elliott (2015). Caring masculinities are informed by feminism and critical masculinity studies and indicate the importance of exploring and analyzing men who dedicate themselves to practices of care, whether in the private or the public spheres. While men engaging in practices of care is nothing new, as outlined in an edited volume on the subject (Kramer & Thompson, 2002), interest in the experiences of men who care has increased in the last years. The shift toward research on male caregivers highlights the role of care and emotions in the formation of masculinities (Hanlon, 2012), as well as the care of children with disabilities (Jackson 2021). One approximation to caring masculinities in Peru could begin with a reflection about the differences in the use of time as well as the quantity of time that men dedicate to domestic tasks or the care of children (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2010).

REFLECTIONS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mara Viveros Vigoya, the renowned Colombian feminist, established research on men and masculinities in Latin America and the Caribbean around 1980, when men began to be described as beings “who have a gender and produce gender” and NGOs and universities started introducing the theme of masculinities into their policies and projects (2001: 237). Viveros Vigoya points to *O Mito da Masculini-*

dade (The Myth of Masculinity) (Nolasco, 1993) and *Dime Capitán: reflexiones sobre la masculinidad* (Tell Me Captain: Reflections on Masculinity) (Ramírez, 1993) as two crucial initial reflections on what it means to be a man. Nolasco (1993) deals with the dilemmas of being a man in Brazil, especially regarding tensions related to work and paternity, while Ramírez (1993) explores the contradictory aspects of masculinity in Puerto Rico, also related to work, family, and power. Aguayo and Nascimiento (2016) discuss the influential studies published in the region that center on gender equality, sexuality, and violence, and establish them as foundational (Fuller, 1997; Valdés & Olavarria, 1997, 1998). Research in Latin America on the topic has been strongly influenced by Connell's formulation of masculinities and hegemonic masculinities while they bring to light how these concepts change when confronted with the local dynamics in a particular region. The field of masculinity studies in Latin America was then legitimized and entered the mainstream through a series of conferences organized by the International Network on Studies on Men and Masculinities, starting in 2004 in Puebla de los Ángeles, Mexico (Fernández Moreno, 2016: 216).

Scholarship in the region centers on two main themes: the social construction of masculinity and gender violence. To be a father, to be sexually active, and to have a space in the public sphere are still thought of as important qualities in order to be considered a real man by peers (Callirgos, 1996; Vasquez del Aguila, 2013). The importance of being the family's breadwinner for the social construction of masculine identity has also been explored. Works like those of Quaresma da Silva and Ulloa Guerra (2012) in Cuba identify the importance of men's social expectation of being the provider for the family, while at the same time reaffirming the division between "the father, breadwinner of the family, and the mother, provider of affection"⁴ (2012: 201). Studies also describe generational differences in expectations regarding masculinity. For example, in Chile, older men point to the importance of being a provider for the family, while younger men refer to this expectation as an external social pressure, something that could indicate a masculinity in transition (Poo and Vizcarra, 2020).

Gender violence has been—and still is—a concern for Latin American researchers, especially given the increasing number of femicides (Segato, 2003). In an effort to understand masculine violence, the edited volume of Garda and Huerta (2009) explores how early socialization, experiences of violence, and relationships with women shape practices of gender violence. Barker, Aguayo, and

⁴ All translations from Spanish are made by the author.

Correa (2013) analyze a survey on men and gender violence in Brazil, Mexico, and Chile, and find that the consumption of alcohol and feelings of depression during the previous month are important factors in the exercise of violence against women. While the notion of machismo, which “celebrates honor and masculine prestige” (Mosher, 1991: 202) has been linked to gender violence, it should be kept in mind that this category has been imposed from the Global North and from an ethnocentric perspective that reifies stereotypes (Cowan, 2017; Gutmann, 1997; Ramirez, 2008). After this brief review of the field of study of masculinities, changes on the conceptual level, and research in Latin America, I now present my approach to identifying the research that I consider most representative and the thematic areas that they identify.

A CURATORIAL APPROXIMATION

This essay does not presume to provide an exhaustive revision of the literature on masculinities in Peru. I believe that readers will most benefit from a review of a selection of representative works from each thematic area; this is why I describe my approach as curatorial. This makes possible to provide a *transversal* view of the principal arguments and avoids us becoming lost in the large number of existing studies. There are various reasons for this: First, the purpose here is to provide an overall vision of the most significant contributions to the literature. Second, this a personal and subjective reading of what I feel and think are the most representative works that advance our understanding of masculinities. I engaged in this review from a place of privilege and class bias. Thus, as always, take your precautions. Third, this is only a starting point. The ideal would be for each person to be inspired to read the sources discussed here, review the bibliography, and find more—and better—texts. Fourth, while systematic literature reviews have a long history in the social sciences and are useful tools, they also end up reproducing inclusion biases, in addition to presenting possible problems of transparency and heterogeneity of sources (Davis et al., 2014). These pages seek to go beyond the best-known researchers in the field of masculinities to include other voices which may not be published and do not appear in the databases. This is also an effort to think, in a different way, about what we understand as “being cited” and the politics of citation, in addition to interrupting its reproduction to recognize other types of works and knowledge (Kim, 2020). Finally, and most importantly, I believe that the most groundbreaking research can be found in theses (professional degree, master’s,

doctoral) which, for various reasons, have not been “published” as an academic article or book. State and NGO reports, for example, have been essential items to understand masculinities in Peru.

MASCULINITIES IN PERU

Reflecting upon masculinities in Peru is a necessary task. As noted above, this area of study is now almost forty years old. This section presents representative and significant studies that explore areas that are critical for the study of masculinities in Peru, which are necessary for achieving a better understanding of gender relations as well as for setting public policies. I have grouped the studies reviewed into seven thematic areas: 1) the social construction of masculinities; 2) masculinities and gender violence; 3) reconstruction and relearning of masculinities; 4) paternities; 5) emotions and corporality; 6) representations of masculinities in the media and literature; and 7) masculinities and gender diversity. Each section can be read independently. Happy reading.

The social constructions of masculinities

One of the principal topics of research about masculinities in Peru is the exploration of how they are locally constructed. That is, what historical, political, and economic factors molded them and how masculinity is traversed by dynamics of class, race, gender, generation, and ability, among other factors. Norma Fuller (2001) explores the role of the body, individual history, and institutional spaces in the conformation of masculinity in men from popular and middle classes in the cities of Lima, Cusco, and Iquitos. Despite the large sample of participants, the findings show that the conceptions of masculinities were more or less shared. Young men prioritized both solidarity and competition between peers, while adults emphasized responsibilities towards the family. For the interviewees, essential matters included the subordination of other men and women, the ability to defend the honor of the couple or the family through the use of violence, sexual activity, and, above all, work and paternity. Carlos Cáceres et al. (2002) present the constellation of factors that influence masculinity in Chiclayo, Iquitos, Ayacucho, and Lima. The team explored the perceptions of men (heterosexuals, bisexuals, gays), women (including abused women and women who were cheated on), police, judges, and prosecutors. The authors used interviews and focus groups to explore three important issues related to sexual health: relationships between

multiple couples, violence against women, and homophobia. This study's principal achievement was to bring to light how social class influences different masculine perceptions and practices. The middle class tries to distance its practices related to masculinity from those of the popular classes. For example, while infidelity is censured among the middle classes (although it is validated in homosocial groups), couples from popular classes assume that infidelity is "inevitable." Among popular classes, the use of physical violence against women is common while among the middle classes, emotional and symbolic violence predominates. Homosexuality or bisexuality is pathologized and medicalized by the middle classes, while in the popular classes it does not seem to question hegemonic masculinity to any great degree.

Cultural, ethnic, and geographic differences are also a focus of interest in understanding masculinities. Luis Elvira Belaunde (2018) offers an approximation of the dynamics of gender and kinship in the Peruvian Amazon region. In her analysis, the author includes the roles played by the colonial legacy of Peru as well as the current extractive economy in the configuration of sexuality and gender relations. To speak of Amazonian masculinity implies differentiating it from coastal masculinity in order to understand it on its own terms. Adriana Verán Casanova (2017) explores affection in the relationship between young couples and married couples in Awajún⁵ society. The author describes in detail how both members of the couple take autonomous decisions to initiate a relationship or to get married. They also recount that the school is an important site for finding a partner and falling in love, although it is also a place of control and supervision. The men generally take the initiative with women and, in general, verbalize their affection more often. The identity of Nikkei (Japanese-Peruvians) has been analyzed based on personal testimonies and on artistic productions. López-Calvo (2013) investigates the roles and gender relations represented in the poetry of Doris Moromisato. In the poems *Crónicas de mi padre (Chronicles of my father)*, Moromisato describes the figure of the father as stoic, taciturn, and sad. But gender relations in the Nikkei community are not completely homogeneous, nor is masculinity as stoic as it might be portrayed in poetry. This is demonstrated by Akemi Matsumura Vázquez (2016) in his exploration of performance, especially dance, in the construction of youth Nikkei identity. Dance serves as a tool in the formation of identity through collective memory, in addition to representing and

⁵ Indigenous group in the Peruvian Amazon.

reproducing levels of authority and gender roles. The representation of delicate femininity and warrior masculinity in dance is also mentioned.

Rossio Motta (1998) studied two Andean communities and inquired how a boy is recognized as a man by other community members. This recognition is granted when the young man is officially registered as a community member and thereby indicates his willingness to take on political positions in his community. These positions are a source of status, social prestige, and masculinity. Communal work and the formation of a family are important, since men who do not have a partner are subject to mockery and can be considered incomplete or helpless. But these masculine mandates are also resisted and subverted as Carlos Tello Barreda (2020) demonstrates in his analysis of a section of the *Qhapaq Qolla* dance entitled “*chinka chinka*.” The name of this dance can be translated as “*perdámonos*” (let’s get lost) or “*escapémonos*” (let’s escape). The author analyzes how Andean men resist and subvert stereotypes and gender mandates through this courtship dance. The person chosen to dance the *chinka chinka* must be courageous and strong, but also extroverted and jocular (*extrovertido y jocosos*), characteristics distant from hegemonic masculinity. At the same time, during the dance the man reveals his sentiments and intentions regarding the woman and does not avoid public demonstrations of affection, which he displays in front the rest of the dancers and the audience. Studies about Afro-Peruvians also highlight representations and cultural practices, particularly in their depictions in media and literature. Sharún González Matute (2018) focuses on racism directed at Afro-Peruvians in the sports press. The author denounces different degrees of adjectivation and dehumanization present in labels such as olive (*aceituna*), and seal (*foca*), among others. Meanwhile, César Romero Fernández (2021) approaches racialized masculinities by pointing out the hypersexualization of Afro-Peruvian men. He emphasizes the influence of the colonial and cis-hetero-patriarchal system in which racialized masculinities are in constant tension and negotiation with whiteness.

Masculinities and gender violence

Given how widespread gender violence has become, it is imperative to understand the role of masculinities. Lucero del Castillo Ames (2021) explores the narratives of men who, after being sentenced for engaging in family violence, receive court-mandated treatment at a Center for Institutional Attention in Lima. Through the recounting of their life stories, the author explores the relationships and configurations between private life, violence, and social structure. The stories reveal

men's poor relationships with their fathers and especially the scarce transmission of feelings and emotions. The author emphasizes relationships with work and the lack of free time, in addition to the dynamics of love relationships, where the idea of property over women is emphasized. The notion of women and their bodies as property is explored by Lizeth Vergaray Arévalo (2021) in "*hombres consumen los cuerpos de mujeres*" ("men who consume women's bodies") in La Pampa, Madre de Dios⁶. The author describes La Pampa as a "zone of virility," especially the town's bars and bar-brothels. In addition to describing the hypermasculinization of mining work, the author analyzes men's perceptions of women who work in bars. Two common perceptions, for example, are that women like "easy money" and negating that there is sexual exploitation in the area.

One of the forms of violence in which the mandates of masculinity are apparent are sexual abuse and rape. The book *Yo actuaba cómo varón solamente* (I only behaved like a man) (León & Stahr, 1995) presents a collection of interviews with men sentenced and jailed for these crimes. The book exposes how the interviewees perceived the exercise of their sexuality, masculinity, and relationships with women. In addition, it reveals that they felt incapable of resisting the social masculine mandate of conquest and sexual violence. Ruth Alicia García Vivar's (2019) study of men jailed for rape extends the analysis initiated in León and Stahr's interviews. García Vivar notes that men who are jailed have a strong aversion to homosexuality and homoeroticism and reject anything that can be considered feminine. The men interviewed were under strong pressure from the expectations and mandates of hegemonic masculinity. In this situation, the author argues, if they did not live up to these mandates, they would find themselves in an identity vacuum.

Miguel Ramos Padilla (2006) explores masculinities in the exercise of physical and emotional violence among men from popular sectors in Lima and Cusco. In analyzing the life stories of men who engaged in violence against their wives or female partners, the author finds that the use of physical violence is based on discourses such as the "natural" authority of men over women, violent upbringings and, primarily, judgement and ridicule by other men if they are unable to maintain their authority over their female partners. In the case of men who engage in emotional violence, the author notes that, although it is not exercised, it always has a latent presence. At the same time, the interviewees noted that one episode

⁶ Madre de Dios is a region located at the southeast of Peru. Recent scholarship has focused on the dynamics and implications of illegal gold mining.

of physical violence was sufficient to stop their partners from provoking them. Even when there is no physical violence, it is understood that the relationship of the couple is a space where control is exercised.

Reconstruction and relearning of masculinity

Ramos Padilla's study (mentioned above) includes men who stated that they did not employ violence. There is reference to diverse socialization experiences where democratic and egalitarian social relations existed. The teaching of these ideals within the family can have an influence by demonstrating there are types of relationships among couples that are not governed by stereotypes and traditional gender expectations. No less important is the fact that in certain relationships the distribution of power favors the woman, which makes it difficult for the man to exercise violence.

It is certainly important to further investigate these types of masculinities that are non-violent or that question and wish to change violent behaviors. Research by Jaikel Rodríguez Bayona with men who participated in the program "*Oye Varón. Aprende a vivir sin violencia*" ("Hey Man. Learn to live without violence") (2014), and with men who engage in antipatriarchal activism (2019), provides important insights of forms of resistance towards hegemonic masculinity. In the case of the men in the reeducation program, the author focuses on the role of emotions. While the interviewees point to ideals, such as the heterosexual man, the provider, protector, and conqueror, the author hypothesizes that the exercise of violence—for the men interviewed—is, at the same time, an appeal for affection. He also notes that if at the beginning men only speak of emotions such as jealousy or frustration, the participants recognize—though with difficulty—emotions such as loneliness, neglect, and pain. In his research on antipatriarchal activism with members of the *Red Peruana de Masculinidades* (Peruvian Network of Masculinities), Rodríguez Bayona emphasizes the need to create spaces for the recognition and denunciation of machismo. It would be possible to assume responsibility for *machista* practices in such spaces; however, at the same time, these spaces could be converted into spaces in which to obtain "prestige," clean up one's image, or aspire to be recognized as "allies." Such spaces would not be free of violence since other types of hierarchical practices could develop.

Finally, Igor Valverde Rodríguez (2020) explores processes of reconstruction of masculinity in male aggressors participating in reeducation programs at a Centro de Atención Institucional Frente a la Violencia Familiar (Center of

Institutional Attention to Family Violence) in Lima. The main finding is that the participants “cede power” rather than actively try to leave behind violent practices. The participants in this program took part because they had been condemned and forced to participate. Thus, they see this program as a punishment rather than as an opportunity. Nevertheless, and although their experiences vary, they do find important reasons to leave behind *machista* practices and behaviors, even though this is always a process of construction and re-construction.

Paternities

Many of the life stories of men who engage in physical or psychological violence reveal that they had an absent relationship with their father or paternal figure. To become a father is seen as a landmark in masculinity. Generally, it marks a step toward more responsibility, having a partner and a family, and being in a position to be recognized as a man by peers. *Ser papá en el Perú* (Being a father in Peru) (Plataforma de Paternidades Peru, 2016) presents a detailed review of the literature on paternity in Peru and synthesizes the public policies that deal directly with the subject. This review presents an overall image of paternity in Peru: stereotypical social representations of paternity, gender differences in activities within and outside the home, the use of violence, and the social expectations towards fathers. Of particular interest are the findings on public and social policies. These reproduce the role of the father as breadwinner and do not consider men as caregivers. In addition, there is an obvious need for public policies that allow for a balance between work and family life.

Paternity is considered essential by the men interviewed in Norma Fuller’s research (1997, 2000, 2001). They see it as a kind of “consecration.” Various dimensions of personal and public life take on a new meaning with the advent of paternity. Men point out that they are entering a new stage, they feel they can form a family, and that others recognize them as men. The interviewees also state that paternity results in no one doubting their manliness. Others report conflicting emotions between the discourses of the responsible father and the absent father. With their sons, fathers have a relationship of identification and authority, and in some cases corporal punishment is used. When it comes to daughters, the interviewees report having a more affectionate relationship. The relationship between paternity and affection is not a topic that has received much attention. Miguel Ramos Padilla (2001) offers some reflections about masculinity and affect. The men’s lack of an affective language does not come from a lack of emotions, but

rather from the effort to repress them and maintain control in various situations. While the author recognizes that social and political changes have an effect on the reconfiguration of paternities, it seems that it is still difficult to think of masculinity as linked to the expression of love of children and family. Nevertheless, expressions of emotions and feelings are expressed in other dimensions such as art and the body.

Emotions and corporality

Liuba Kogan and her coauthors (2020) propose an original approach to the theme of emotions, analyzing the lyrics of hip hop songs produced in the city of Callao, adjacent to Lima. Music allows for the expression of individual experiences as well as broader social processes. For example, analyses of hip hop lyrics reveal feelings of ambivalence about life on the streets and even the use of violence. It is particularly interesting that music can manifest emotional sorrows such as desperation or loneliness, issues that—as we have seen above—are not mentioned by interviewees when talking about masculinity. Emotions, especially shame, in Lima’s “world of gangs” is explored by Martín Santos (2002). The author emphasizes the centrality of emotions and the role they play in the dynamics of socialization in a gang in Lima. Socialization within gangs abounds in dynamics that obey the mandates of masculinity, but also closely interact with emotions. For example, the fear gang members feel must be converted into violence; when the body is wounded, these wounds are later considered as insignia which are symbols of manliness. The quest for the respect of others also implies running the risk of being humiliated within the group. Santos reveals that the practices of gang members are not only mediated by emotion but also by ethical and moral issues.

In line with the reflections of Liuba Kogan (2009, 2010), I argued in a previous study that the body—and especially corporal aesthetics—becomes an essential component for the expression of masculinity (Villa, 2015). I was able to reflect upon on the management of upper-class young men’s bodies and appearance in a way that diverged from hegemonic masculinity. These young men prioritize refined musculature, take great care in arranging their hair, pay attention to facial and bodily skincare, and dedicate time and money to buying clothes. Although these men spend a lot of time on their appearance, the mandates of masculinity require them to hide these efforts. That is, they work on their appearance in order to later “de-arrange” it in a controlled way, in what I call “meticulous carelessness.” Another study on corporal aesthetics in barbershops in Lima was conducted by

Octavio Centurión Bolaños (2021). The author explores how barbers' discourses about hair involve discussions about gender, race, and social class. The study provides an interesting reflection about the barbershop as a homosocial space that allows clients to speak about their problems and experiences while the barber plays the role of a psychologist. Homosociality and masculinity in Peruvian pro-wrestling are explored by Alex Huerta-Mercado (2015). With a strong emphasis on performance, Huerta-Mercado extends the analysis of masculinities and explores the types of masculinities and conflicts that are represented in the ring. The wrestlers construct and perform a character that not only represents different models of masculinities but also different social values (as in the cases of wrestler "The Professor" (*El Profe*) or Macelino "The *Chicha*⁷ Fighter"). Pro-wrestling allows for a form of expression in addition to being a way to achieve catharsis.

I conclude this section calling attention to global trends such as Korean dramas and K-pop⁸ which can also change and shape our understanding of masculinities in Peru. A study by Judith Silva Gonzáles (2022) explores how Korean dramas (*doramas*) influence the Peruvian youth's representation of gender. Participants in the study note that *doramas* emphasize the emotional side of men and also portray their *tenderness*. This research engages with representations of "soft masculinity" that can delineate other forms of expression. It also demonstrates alternative ways of being a man and demonstrates that it possible for there to be masculinity without *machismo* nor violence. Peruvian youth who consume Korean dramas also value caring for their appearance. They do not see any problem or tension between being a man and self-care.

Representations of masculinities in media and literature

To assert that the media reproduces binary and simplistic stereotypes of gender is nothing new. Although things have changed, there is still a long way to go in portraying all of the different expressions of manhood. James Dettleff (2015) analyzes representations of "fragile" or vulnerable masculinity in a Peruvian drama show. Though the series analyzed by Dettleff continues to reproduce gender stereotypes, the author focuses on characters that have the characteristics of the hegemonic ideal who, in various circumstances, stray from it. For example,

⁷ Peruvian social sciences have used this term to refer to a mixing of different cultural styles (coast, Andes, Amazon) merging due to different waves of migration to Lima..

⁸ Term for South Korean pop music.

the character who is not a family provider nor does he seduce women. Conflicts also exist. A character who displays a different kind of masculinity “gets tired of being the good guy,” and in another case, there is a balance of power in a couple which favors the woman, and this makes the man appear emasculated. Literature is a crucial space to explore the “crisis” of masculinity. Margarita Saona (2021) provides an exhaustive analysis of the illusiveness of the power of the patriarch when he cannot embody the law. The literary corpus that Saona analyzes is a place where men—especially the father figure—fall apart when they cannot deal with emotions, feelings, and deceptions that result in their inability to occupy a position of power. Saona’s analysis reveals a broken masculinity which is closely related to and influenced by colonial, class, gender, and race dynamics. Studies by Patricia Ruiz Bravo (2000, 2001) present an intersectional analysis of masculinities in recent Peruvian literature. Her analysis goes beyond representations of masculinity to point out systemic issues. The novels analyzed deal with Lima’s traditional social order and how sexuality or the transition to the adult world alter this order. For example, in Jaime Bayly’s novel *No se lo digas a nadie* (Don’t tell anyone), the homosexuality of the protagonist is clearly counterposed to the figure of the father, who represents the image of the master and patriarch.

Eduardo Huaytán (2016) analyzes *Amor Mundo* (Love World) by José María Arguedas. Huaytán examines the various ways that sexuality and masculinity are intertwined and how the protagonist—Santiago—learns to construct and perform masculinity in relation to societal expectations. The author suggests that one of the principal issues dealt with in the stories in *Amor Mundo* is the possibility of expressing masculine sexuality without violence. Finally, Jose Luis Rosales Lassús’ (2014) study is an original analysis of virile, and masculine representations of national heroes Miguel Grau⁹ and Túpac Amaru II¹⁰ in school textbooks. The author prioritizes an approach from visual anthropology as well as an analysis of the discourse of schoolteachers. The study reveals that the image of Túpac Amaru II is linked to the ideal of a rebel-revolutionary while Miguel Grau’s is linked to notions of chivalry. Rosales Lassús finds that there is a tension between the representation, legitimization, and identification of these Peruvian heroes, but also notes that the images of both national heroes are in constant processes of reinvention and even subversion.

⁹ Peruvian naval officer who participated in the Battle of Angamos (October 8, 1879) between Peru and Chile.

¹⁰ José Gabriel Condorcanqui (1738-1781) is considered a rebellious figure. He led a rebellion to overthrow Spanish colonial rule.

Masculinities and gender diversity

The processes of subverting the images of national heroes have been studied by Alberto Patiño Núñez (2017), with special attention to the *Las Túpac* project of Javier Vargas. The project consists of a set of images presenting Túpac Amaru II with feminine makeup and hair styles in order to generate a conflict between what is expected of traditional heroic masculinity and elements that do not fit with this representation. Patiño Núñez argues that these types of projects and images are a way of creating resistance through the subversion of traditional images. To see Túpac Amaru II transformed into Farrah Fawcett or Marilyn Monroe is an exercise that leads the viewer to think about what it means to be a man or to be a hero. In addition, it makes it possible to go beyond a binary conception of gender. Another study that leads us to rethink masculinity is Adriana Gallegos Dextre's (2019) study about the corporal and identity experiences of transmasculine individuals in Lima. The author presents masculinity as something that—rather than depending on a body—depends on who performs it. Research on transmasculine individuals allows us to observe the negotiation of concepts of gender, both traditional and diverse, as well as the tensions and ambiguities that exist among these perceptions. For example, such studies note that penetration—or being penetrated—continues to be a subject which is not talked about and can generate mixed emotions and frustration. In addition, analyses find that when transmasculinities are constructed, the rejection of the feminine is reproduced; this constitutes a similarity with the construction of cisheterosexual masculinity. Conceptions about traditional gender roles also influence the experiences of gay men. Diego García-Rabines (2022) explores the way that gay young men in Lima understand love and intimate relations. While the men participating in the study conceive of their experiences in terms of the traditional and modern ideologies of gender and also strongly reject the passive/active model, the practice of penetration continues to be understood in the light of discourses of masculinity and domination. At the same time, discourses about romantic love are also reproduced under the lens of a heterosexual relationship, as is evident in phrases such as “looking for love” or for the “right guy.” Finally, Giancarlo Cornejo (2011) provides a powerful queer autoethnography which reveals the effects of violent language and the pathologizing of difference. Cornejo remembers that when he was five years old, a girl at school called him a “*maricón*” (fag). Just as language can create realities, it can also—as in this case—undo identities. The author also describes problematic interactions with his school psychologist who spoke to

his parents of their son's problems of sexual identity and the interactions with a physical education teacher who tried to correct the effeminacy of the author. Cornejo comments that when he was eleven, he told his mother he was attracted to men, and she started to cry. She later took him and his brother to see an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie.

A BRIEF FINAL REFLECTION

The studies discussed here demonstrate that while there are many ongoing processes of questioning and of change, there also many things that remain the same. In other words: yes, there are changes, but Arnold Schwarzenegger continues to have a presence in our imaginaries.

I am well aware that the changes that lead Peru to become a more just and egalitarian society will not be the direct product of research, but these studies can serve as an input both for the creation of new sensibilities and for new public policies. At the beginning of this essay, I noted the tensions that exist between the advances of feminism and the resistance of men to a perceived loss of power, which is articulated and ranted about by presidents, congressmen, people on social networks, our fathers, brothers, and even by ourselves.

Currently, we lack studies about Peruvian men who—for various reasons—do not want to be fathers and about fathers who seek to spend more time with their children. We also need research that not only compares the differences and similarities of masculinities in the various administrative departments of Peru, but also on the intergenerational dynamics of masculinity. It also seems that the majority of studies have been done on men who do not have any physical or psychosocial disabilities. Inquiries about how masculinity is constructed and lived in these types of cases is also needed. It also should not be assumed that masculinity is equivalent to power. bell hooks (2005) notes that men are afraid of changes, but that does not mean they don't want them. The works discussed here do a great job in showing how some men accept and adopt changes while others resist them. They can do both, too. Of course, the discussion should not be reduced to the simplicity of the binary of change–resistance, but it is starting point to formulate questions, do research, and write.

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