AFRO-COLOMBIAN MASCULINITY: THE CASE OF AFRO-COLOMBIANS
CHARCO AZUL, CALI, COLOMBIA

By

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I dedicate this thesis to my daughter Laura Reyes
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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

AFRO-COLOMBIAN MASCULINITY: THE CASE OF AFRO-COLOMBIANS CHARCO AZUL, CALI, COLOMBIA

By

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May 2004

Chair: Anita Spring
Major Department: Latin American Studies

My purpose in this thesis has been to examine a group of Afro-Colombian men and women and their perceptions about masculinity, gender relations, gender roles, and racial discrimination. In the process, I aim to provide an approach that can capture the Colombian gender and racial orders, and by extension the racial rankings characteristic of other Latin American societies with a similar history of slavery. The problem addressed in this thesis is that ideologies of gender and race have led to a belief that Latin men, and Afro-Colombian men in particular, constitute a group whose symbolic representations of masculinity merges in the concepts of hyper-masculinity and machismo. By comparing the perceptions and practices of what it means to be a man between two distinct groups of men (based on race, social status, age, employment, and place of residence), Afro-Colombian men of the city of Cali and white/mestizo men of the city of Armenia, this thesis attempts to confirm the following hypothesis: despite the social and racial differences between the two groups of men studied, Afro-Colombian men of the
neighborhood Charco Azul and men of the city of Armenia, there are more similarities than differences in their perceptions and practices in what it means to be a man, and with respect to gender relations. The differences found in the two groups of men are embedded in the lifecycle, age, and social class. Hence, the question is whether or not Afro-Colombian men conform to machismo, the Latin American template of masculinity.

By focusing on gender, my aim is to build a multidimensional picture of “blackness” in Colombia, considering a variety of contexts. Blackness is not the only criterion for assigning social status, nor is it only a reason for discrimination. Gender has been used to create and consolidate hierarchies among women and men and between men. This thesis is relevant not only to Colombia and Latin America but also to issues of “race” and “gender” in general. The aim of this work is to examine the relationship of men and masculinity, and to describe and explain the hierarchies among men.
This thesis is about gender and race relations in Colombia. The ideas for this study were prompted by a growing awareness that many studies of ethnic and minority men and women (Black, native, Indian, Latino) in Latin America have been based on generalizations about *machismo* and *marianismo*. Gender and racial ideologies have led to the segregation of Latin America men and, in particular, to the segregation of black and Indian men. The Colombian elite, along with some intellectuals, has suggested that Afro-Colombian men constitute a group whose symbolic masculinity is represented in the concepts of *machismo*, and hyper-masculinity. The literature further suggests the hypothesis that notions of *machismo* are widely shared by individuals, regardless of their age, sex, social class, or racial status.

In order to test this hypothesis, the research was designed to compare gender relations and ideas of masculinity amongst two groups of men who were maximally different from one another. The first group consisted of young men (15 to 25 years of age) of Afro-Colombian descent who were lower class, unemployed residents of Charco Azul, a poor area of the city of Cali. The second group consisted of adult white/mestizo men (30 to 40 years of age) who were employed, middle-class residents of the more affluent city of Armenia.

The data from the Afro-Colombian men were collected during three weeks of fieldwork in Charco Azul. The data for men of the city of Armenia were collected mainly from the work of anthropologist Mara Viveros (2002). The hypothesis of this thesis states
that, despite the demographic differences (race, social status, age, employment, marital status) between the two groups of men studied, young Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul and adult men of Armenia, evidence more similarities than differences in their perceptions and practices in what it means to be a man, and with respect to gender roles and gender relations. Moreover, the differences found between the two groups serve to highlight the multiple meanings of masculinity in the context of Colombian society.

Specifically, this thesis attempts to answer the following questions: 1) Do the interviewed adult men of the city of Armenia subscribe to the Latin American template of masculinity? 2) Do the interviewed young Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul subscribe to the Latin American template of masculinity?

This thesis is divided in six chapters. Chapter 2 describes and analyses the themes, concepts, and characteristics of the Latin American template of masculinity, machismo. It focuses on the construction of gender identity and the construction of the nation in relation to gender. Second, it discusses the overlap between gender, ethnic and racial identities, and the construction of stereotypes of ethnic men and women. Third, it describes the images of Latin men and women portrayed in the literature and the media in the United States. Fourth, it presents explanations for the emergence of hyper-masculinity among Latin American men.

Chapter 3 presents a brief discussion of the history of the perception of black people in European thought, and traces the development of racial discrimination of blacks in Latin America. It gives a description and an analysis of the perceptions of white/mestizo society on people of Afro descent in general, and on Afro-Colombian people in particular. The chapter summarizes the justifications for slavery adopted by the
European elites before and after colonization, and describes white elite perceptions of black slaves as an indispensable labor pool. Chapter 4 further provides a brief description of the social and living conditions of Afro-Colombians in terms of income, employment, geographical distribution and education.

Chapter 5 describes the research design and the methods used to gather the data. It describes the similarities in the perceptions and the practices of masculinity between two groups of Colombian men with different socio-demographical characteristics. Finally, in chapter five, I address the following two questions: 1) Do the interviewed adult men of the city of Armenia subscribe to *machismo*, the Latin American template of masculinity? 2) Do the interviewed young Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul subscribe to *machismo*, the Latin American template of masculinity?
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes and analyses what has been written by authors such as Fuller (1997), Mirandé (1997), Kaufman (1997), Kimmel (1997), Connel (1997), Viveros (2000), and Bonvillain (1995) about masculinity, gender roles and gender relations in Latin America and the characteristics of the Latin American template of masculinity, *machismo*. It focuses on the construction of gender identity and the construction of the nation in relation to gender. Second, it discusses the overlap between gender and ethnic and racial identities, and the construction of stereotypes of ethnic men and women. Third, it describes the images of Latin men and women portrayed in the literature and the media of the United States. Fourth, it presents a series of explanations for the emergence of hyper-masculinity among Latin American men.

Social Construction of Masculinity

Authors such as Fuller (1997), Mirandé (1997), Kaufman (1997), Kimmel (1997), Connel (1997), Viveros (2000), and Bonvillain (1995) have argued that a man’s self perception of masculinity has been grounded in vague concepts of authority and tradition. One difficulty for men has been how to construct self-images that accord with different aspects of their identities and not simply with what is socially expected. Fuller (1997) argues that the stereotypes of the *macho*, the Latin American template of masculinity, excludes such subjective dynamics making individuals believe that men are made from a series of absolutes: they never cry, they must be the best, they must always compete, they must never retreat. This is the model that some men are attempting to overcome. It has
been argued (Fuller 1997, Viveros 2000, Gutmann 1994, Mirandé 1997) that the concept of masculinity is socially constructed, and that factors such as social class and race contribute and offer variations to such a construction.

Kaufman (1997) suggests that the dominant ideas of masculinity vary from one society to another, from one time period to another, and from decade to decade. Each sub-group, based on race, class, sexual orientation, etc., defines masculinity according to the economic and social possibilities of the group in question. For example, part of the masculine ideals among white-working-class males emphasizes their physical skills to manipulate the environment, while the ideals of upper-class white males emphasizes their verbal capabilities and skills to manipulate the environment through economic, social, and political means. Each dominant representation is related to the real possibilities in the life of these men and the tools that they have at their disposal to exercise some form of power. Hence, there is not only one form of masculinity or one form of masculinity or one way to experience being a man. The different experiences of men, their power and privileges, are based on a variety of positions and social relations. However, men generally have privileges and relative power over the women of their same group.

Despite the dynamics that the masculine model may offer, it is then concluded by many social scientists (Gilligan 1982, West 1989, Bem 1974) that in western cultures, a masculine constant remains, and in order to be considered masculine, an individual should not possess feminine attributes. Defining masculinity as the opposition of that which is feminine finds its roots and support in the patriarchal system, which main axis

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1 Connell (1997) argues that the patriarchal structure exists in spite of the deterioration of masculine roles (women as head of households) and in spite of the resistance from diverse groups (feminist), which in turn represent difficulties to the patriarchal power. These groups have questioned the legitimacy of male power.
of gender power relations is that of the subordination of women. The patriarchal system
serves as a socializing tool and model in the social construction of masculinity, and
defines which types of behavior are accepted and expected from a man. Patriarchy not
only offers men power over women, but it also offers a range of hierarchies of power
among different social groups of men and that different masculinities are created.
Kimmel (1997) argues that the Latin American template of masculinity, defines
masculinity as a man in power, with the possession of power, and matches masculinity
with force, success, authority, and control. These characteristics perpetuate the power of
men over women and over other men. Hence, the Latin American template of
masculinity, *machismo*, can be defined as the configuration of generic practices that
adhere to the ideals of patriarchy that guarantees the power of men and the subordination
of women.

However, Kaufman (1997) argues that what is important to consider is not only that
men have the power as a social group, but to affirm that there are different forms of
power between men. Within this context, there are gender relations of domination and
subordination between groups of men. For instance, patriarchy places homosexual
masculinities in the lowest part of gender hierarchy within the category of men.
Homosexuality represents everything that is expelled from the patriarchal model of
masculinity. Thus, homosexual masculinity is associated with the feminine. What this
implies is that patriarchy negates the diversity within the category of homosexuality by
associating it only with femininity.

Society defines what it means to be a man through the contrast of local definitions
of masculinity in opposition to a set of other groups, such as sexual minorities, racial
minorities, and above all, women. To a great extent, masculinity is defined on the basis of what the individual is not rather than what the individual is. Kimmel (1997:58) points out that when men are asked how they know a man is a homosexual, most answers made reference to a list of feminine behaviors: “a homosexual walks and speaks in a certain way, he acts differently; he is very emotional and shows his feelings to others” (Kimmel 1997:58). Kimmel also argues that as a result, masculinity becomes a lifetime search for men. In general, masculine identity is born from the resignation of the feminine, which leaves the masculine identity fragile and always in question.

Psychologist Robert Brannon (1976) points out that masculinity has been defined as follows: a) A man must never do something that remotely suggests femininity, he should reject everything that relates to femininity; b) Masculinity is measured by power, success, wealth, and social status; c) A man must always be in control and not show his emotions; d) A man should be bold and aggressive. These are the elements that define masculinity and to which all men must measure to determine their masculinity. Brannon (1976) argues that such a model is unachievable and is a cause of confusion and disdain on men.

Despite any variations of race, social class, age, and sexual orientation, to be a man means not to be like women. In addition to these social proscriptions of masculinity, Fuller (1997) analyzes representations of masculinity characteristic of middle-class Peruvian society. She concludes that masculinity is configured in three ways in Peru and in Latin America: natural (manliness), domestic (father, husband), and outside (work, politics). Each figure is based on different, and sometimes opposite, moral codes: the natural realm corresponds to differences in sexual organs, reproductive roles, and
physical strength. The public realm is associated with virility, which in turn is obtained and recognized by society (politics and work), and it is regulated by honesty, efficiency and contributions to the well being of society. Hence, work is the fundamental axis of adult masculine identity; when an individual enters the labor market, it means that the individual has reached the status of adult. This in turn constitutes a precondition to establish a family that in turn provides social recognition.

The domestic realm is associated with the family (marriage and paternity) and constitutes the center of affection; the definition of the domestic configuration is love, authority, protection, respect, and responsibility. For adult men, marriage is a necessary step to accomplish manhood. Likewise, conjugal life provides sexual security and the opportunity to demonstrate to other men that an individual is sexually active and is capable of exerting authority and protection. Moreover, authority over a wife and children is a central component of the masculine identity and a man who fails to obtain the recognition of his authority loses his masculine identity.

The domestic sphere is dangerous because it is considered to be feminine. Fuller (1997) argues that every man must confront each of these contradictory demands throughout his life, giving play to each depending on his stage in the life course and the particularities of his personal life. She also suggests that a man can risk his masculinity by losing two crucial traits: first, virility by his excessive contact with the feminine world and the domestication of his sexual life; second, and his authority over women. Fuller states that the sexuality of a man cannot be domesticated, even in marriage, because putting his sexuality under the control of a woman represents its destruction. The free exercise of the feminine sexuality is threatening to a man’s masculinity. This is deeply
associated with the capacity of men to control the sexual activities of women in his family (wife, sister, daughter).

In general, two tendencies define masculinity: One relates a man’s masculinity in its ability to be responsible and the other one associates masculinity with the ability to sexually conquer women, the latter being the most important. Despite the traditional masculine template that is followed by Latin American societies (through the works of Fuller 1997, Viveros 2000, Mirandé 1997, Gutmann 1994), it is fair to mention that men of the middle-classes have expressed feelings of disagreement towards the hegemonic discourse of masculinity. They have questioned the roles they have internalized and some have tried to modify specific masculine conducts. They agree that women can perform and achieve the same goals as men and that machismo/virility is old fashioned.

**Social Construction of Gender**

It has been suggested that gender categorization may have begun in concert with an economic division of labor. When technological innovations eventually “led to the development of a number of different productive processes, divisions of labor became practicable (Bonvillain 1995:4). Connell (1997) suggests that the process of gender construction assumes two features. First, It assumes that society treats men as uniform objects in relation to the masculine model and that women are subjected to a societal feminine model as well. Second, the process of gender construction tries to increase all the possible differences between men and women. Historically, societies have not only established gender differences, but have also constructed behavioral models to fit each of them. Connell (1997) states that concerning the social organization of masculinity, it has been found that all societies have notions of gender similarities and differences but that
not all have the concept of masculinity nor do all societies believe in patriarchy and/or *machismo*. As described by Bonvillain:

> People in every culture maintain and transmit ideas about the roles that women and men perform, the rights they have in relation to each other, and the values associated with their activities. Gender models are all social constructs, developed and sustained specifically within each culture. Gender constructs make use of sexual differences between males and females, but they are not constrained in a predetermined manner by these sexual differences. If they were, roles performed and values attached to women’s and men’s behavior would be identical in all societies. (Bonvillain 1995:1)

Bonvillain (1995) points out that variations in activities and attitudes are well attested throughout the world. Although some pattern of gender differentiation exists in all cultures, the degree of separation and the rigidity of boundaries vary. Thus, masculinity is considered as a set of changing meanings that we construct through our relation with ourselves, with others and with the world. Viveros (2003:37) points out that:

> Masculinity is not an essential or static quality but a historical manifestation, a social construction and cultural creation. It is important to avoid asserting the existence of a black, gaucho, or working-class masculinity in Latin America. It is important to recognize multiple masculinities and also understand the relationships that exist among them and note that gender identities and class or ethnic-racial identities are acquired simultaneously and generate social practices marked by these multiple identities.

Joel Streicker (1995:55) analyzes the links established among class, race and gender. He claims that:

> The interdependence of race, class and gender is related to the naturalization of difference and provides a powerful way of neutralizing social and individual subjectivities. The notion of masculinity is constructed not only in opposition to femininity but also in contrast to the masculinity of black and rich men: The first group is considered dangerous and associated with what is animal, whereas the second is perceived as more feminine because rich men are seen as more interested in themselves and more subject to restrictions imposed by their wives.

Marques (1997) argued that the patriarchal system treats people as if they were alike to those of their same sex and different from those from the opposite sex. To
illustrate this, an individual male can be potentially more or less aggressive, however, his socialization stresses aggressiveness. Society treats him as if he possesses the aggressiveness that is attributed to the masculine model. Marques points out that if society treats an individual according to the preset model, the successful creation of the man it conveys may result, or it can damage an individual by demanding from him a quality that he may not possess. Despite the negative results that the patriarchal system may have on some men, overall, the masculine predetermined model can protect an individual as it provides qualities that he has not yet reached, and it also asserts that to be a man is a great advantage. Marques (1997) points out that men are considered important in a patriarchal society: first, because women are not important; and second, because all that is considered important is defined as masculine; to be a man is important because it is associated with the things that are regarded to be of importance in life.

The Concept of Machismo

Marques (1997) suggests that a man who internalizes the patriarchal message preferably relates only with men, his relation with women are secondary as to obtain specific services, such as domestic services, sexual favors, and as a link to other men. In general, men enjoy working, consulting, and spending their leisure time with other men. Kimmel (1997) suggests that the patriarchal system advocates that men should ignore women. However, it proposes that men should seek women only as complementary companions. It affirms that it is not good for men to be on their own and that the role of women is to serve as complements for the men but not the other way around. In any case, the formula manifests the idea that a man plus a woman equals a complete man (Marques 1997:29). For instance, men see women through calculating eyes and seek women who can partially or completely satisfy their needs and demands as lovers, servants, etc.
Marques (1997:20) suggested that the patriarchal process of socialization consists in fomenting in each male certain characteristics, while amputating other characteristics. For example, affection and interest in intimacy and domestic matters are socially repressed and everything that is considered to contribute to the social success of male individuals is encouraged. Bonvillain (1995) suggests that tendencies toward the development and maintenance of different kinds of gender relations and ideological constructs are manifests in different kinds of societal types. That is to say, gender constructs are influenced by economic modes and by forms of political organizations.

Fuller (1997:25) has also suggested that in general, men prefer to relate with other men, and that this is particularly prominent during the period of adolescence. For instance, during adolescence, Latin American boys generally gather in male groups. She suggests that this new environment constitutes a guarantee of masculinity since young males escape the treatment as little boys from their parents, and also it aids in dissipate their uncertainties about their masculine identity. Moreover, young males are pressured by the group of male friends to initiate sexual life. For instance, collective masturbation, visits to brothels and movie theatres for pornographic films were the instances frequently mentioned by the men interviewed.

The group of male friends plays an important role in the lives of the young individual since it provides greater reliability than parents or the school. Kimmel (1997) argues that men need the approval of other men to secure their place in the masculine world. That is to say, that masculinity is a homo-social approval. In the male group, young men develop a disdain for women (as the subject), a cult for physical force, and a taste for transgression. Kimmel (1997) suggests that these new-formed characteristics
conform to what is known as *machismo*. As described by Roger Lancaster (1992) cited in. (Chant 2003:16)

*Machismo*...is not exclusively or even primarily a means of structuring power relations between men and women. It is a means of structuring power between and among men. Like drinking, gambling, risk-taking, asserting one’s opinion, and fighting, the conquest of women is a feat performed with two audiences in mind: first, other men, to whom one must constantly prove one’s masculinity and virility; and second, oneself to whom one must also show all the signs of masculinity. *Machismo*, then, is a matter of constantly asserting one’s masculinity by way of practices that show the self to be ‘active’ not ‘passive’ (as defined by a given milieu)

Kimmel (1997) also suggests that *machismo* could be a component of the culture that is transmitted by the group of male friends. This culture emphasizes the rupture with the values of the domestic space of the family, and overvalues the non-domesticated aspects of masculinity such as physical strength and virility. In addition, Gutmann (1994) suggests that *machismo* is an expression of insecurity of young males with respect to their own virility and their capacity to obtain recognition from their male friends. He also suggests that *machismo* has been attributed to particular social groups such as the poor, the less educated, the less urbanized, the young and black men in Latin America. Chant also argues:

*Machismo* has long been recognized as encompassing the notion of competition between men, but it is probably true to say that in early work on gender in Latin America more emphasis was given to its implications for women...The negative outcomes of *machismo* such as violence financial irresponsibility and sexual infidelity were also seen to be intensified in situations of poverty, thereby leading to the construction of a class-contingent gendered male subject (Chant 2003:15-16).

Mirandé (1997:67) states that *machismo* has been defined as the expression of exaggerated masculine characteristics, ranging from male genital prowess to towering pride and fearlessness. In broader terms, *machismo* refers to a “cult of exaggerated masculinity, characterizations of *machismo* have overwhelmingly concurred that among
its central tenets lies the assertion of power and control over women, and over other men. Another important strand is that of virility, asserting that ‘in Latin America, the symbolic representation of masculinity and male sexuality merge in the concept of machismo’ (Chant 2003:14-15).

Ultimately the machista (male chauvinist) is propelled to dominate and subdue others in order to deny his weakness, dependency, and regressiveness (Mirandé 1997: 36). Mirandé argues that machismo is not a universal Latin American trait, but it is a common feature of Latin culture.

The cult of male virility and machismo is seen by many as a characteristic not only of Mexico, but of all the Spanish America. It is a mechanism of denial, reaction formation and sublimation used to repress persistent feelings of femininity. Woldwert (1983) argues that mestizo society is a product of some form of metaphysical bisexuality whereby the Spanish conquistadors assumed the active, aggressive male role in metaphorically raping or sodomizing the passive or feminine Indian. In addition, the mestizo macho seeks social and sexual dominance in and outside his household. In contrast, the chastity and purity of his “own” women (i.e., wives, mothers, daughters) must be protected to death.

Mirandé (1997) argues that while “macho” has been traditionally associated with Mexican or Latino culture, the word has recently been incorporated into American popular culture. Macho stereotypes are used to describe everything from rock stars and male sex symbols in television and films. He points out that when those stereotypes are applied to entertainers, athletes, or other superstars, they imply positive characteristics such as strength, virility, masculinity, and sex appeal. But when the stereotypes are
applied to Mexicans or Latinos, “macho” remains charged with such negative attributes as male dominance, patriarchy, authoritarianism, and spousal abuse. Although both meanings connote strength and power, the Anglo macho is clearly a much more positive and appealing symbol of manhood and masculinity than the Mexican/Latino macho.

Mirandé’s work reveals that there are significant differences according to socioeconomic status in the conceptions of the word macho. Men with more education, with higher income, and in professional occupations were more likely to have a positive conception of the word. They are less likely to associate the word “macho” with negative behaviors such as drinking and trying to prove one’s masculinity. Although Mirandé’s findings are not conclusive, they have important implications. First, the so-called Mexican/Latino masculine cult appears to be a more complex and diverse phenomenon than is commonly assumed. But the assumption that being macho is an important Latin American cultural value is seriously called into question by his findings. Most of his respondents did not define macho as a positive cultural or personal trait or see themselves as macho. Only about one third of the men in his sample viewed the word “macho” positively. He concludes that if there were a cultural value placed on being macho, it would be expected that the Mexican respondents would be more apt to identify and have positive associations with it, but the opposite tendency was true.

**Gender and Race**

Such generalizations are based on nonexistent or misinterpreted evidence. Stereotypes about Latin American Afro-descendant men and women deny aspects of their masculinity and femininity when they are contrasted with the stereotypes of the superior white and mestizo (a person of mixed racial ancestry) men and women. As Mara Viveros (2003) shows in her survey of contemporary perspectives on masculinity in Latin
America, “In Latin American societies-multicultural with a broad array of social classes-it has become necessary to think about the various ways in which masculine identities are constructed in various social sectors, ethnic groups, and socio-cultural contexts.” Viveros (2002:10) has demonstrated that “the overlap between gender and ethnic-racial identities” such that the masculinities of one ethnic-racial group emerges in contrast to other ethnic-racial masculinities, as men use aspects of their corporeality in constructing their ethnic-racial identities as much as their gender identities (Gutmann 2003:6). As described by Gutmann:

From this perspective Mara Viveros (2000, 2002) analyzes the representations of masculinity of a group of adult men from middle-class sectors of Quibdó, the capital of the Chocó region of Colombia, where the largest percentage of the Afro-Colombian population lives. The author contends that sexual performance and a capacity for seduction and conquest are traits linked to black and masculine identities. Rather than conforming the racist stereotype that black men are obsessed with sex, this finding illustrates the overlap between gender and ethnic-racial identities (Gutmann 2003:36).

Furthermore, in discussing ethnic-racial and class divisions, Norma Fuller (1997) shows how working-class men in Peru may recognize the existence of racial hierarchies but cleverly invert them by claiming the virile attributes for themselves and feminizing the men of the dominant class. In this way, men from the lower-class neighborhoods, and those with Indian or black ethnic or racial features, can claim to be more masculine than mestizo (mixed race) men (Gutmann 2003:6).

However, as described by Chant:

While machismo has often become embroidered and reified as it has moved into increasingly global usage…it is important to remember that stereotypes usually have some grounding in practice. Indeed, to deny the existence of a cult of ‘exaggerated masculinity’ in Latin America would be inappropriate, when there is so much evidence of male domination and/or mistreatment of women, and where women and men in every day life refer to machismo as denoting particular modes of male behavior, some of which are construed as positive as well as negative (Chant 2003:16).
Chant argues that masculinity is something men are not born with, but must constantly earn. There are numerous public spaces in Latin America in which men are expected to cultivate and/or reaffirm *machista* modes of ‘manliness’. She gives an example from Costa Rica, that ranges from permanent spaces such as the *cantina* (male-only bar or saloon), where men drink and socialize with other men away from ‘domesticating influences’ of women and children, to more temporary, but ritual, spaces such as the bull-ring, which, during the celebrations held annually in the villages, becomes an arena in which men publicly display their nerve, wit, stamina, and skill in the spectacles of bull-baiting and bull-riding. This example highlights the significance of *machismo* as a performance, which is validated by the approval of other men. Chant (2003:16) also argues that there is oppression imposed by *machista* norms on men who fail to measure up to ideals of manhood such as courage, the ability to provide financially, and/or be virile and sexually dominant.

Mirandé (1997) suggests that these images (*machismo, marianismo*) have been used to perpetuate negative conceptions of ethnic men and women and also to legitimate their economic subordination. Most Latin American countries (and the United States) have used this strategy to control and restrain the social mobility of ethnic and other minority groups by associating and relegating these minority and ethnic groups to certain occupations. In addition, Oliart (1994:2) asserts that the cultural construction of race is derived in great part from the construction of separate and distinct gender identities, so that colored races are “feminized” and thereby diminished. The argument is that in every instance in which men are controlled or subjugated, they metaphorically assume the female passive role. Therefore, much of what has been written about the images of ethnic
men and women has been negative, stereotypical. It could be argued that elites use certain images to perpetuate negative conceptions of ethnic men and women to legitimate their continued economic, political, and social subordination.

Fuller (1997) points out that in Latin America, the world is typically divided into masculine and feminine spheres that correspond with super-ordinate and subordinate elements in society. The masculine sphere is ambitious, assertive, rational, analytical, individualistic, competitive, dominant, and aggressive, whereas the feminine is warm, affectionate, understanding, cooperative, and loyal. In addition, masculinity and femininity have been seen as attributes that are fixed across time and social context rather than defining them as a more fluid, and idealized response to various social situations.

**Images of Latin American Men**

Although fewer scholars today argue that all Latin American men exhibit an obvious and identical *machismo* or that *machismo* in the sense of sexism is unique to Latin America, both popular and much scholarly literature maintain a tacit view that *machismo* is ubiquitous if not universal in the region (Gutmann 2003:18). Some scholars suggest that *machismo* and excessive displays of masculinity and male sexuality are found in all Mediterranean and Latino cultures. Gutmann (1996) notes that in a large number of societies, persists an ideology of masculinity and the concern with the state of being a ‘real man’ or ‘true man’. Perhaps the most significant conclusion that can be drawn from recent research and writing is that Latino men do not constitute a homogeneous, monolithic, unvarying mass, as was depicted in the traditional model. Fuller (1997) suggests that there is not one masculine mode but a variety of modalities and masculinities that are different, and often contradictory.
In *The Meanings of Macho*, Gutmann (1996) gives examples of men’s behavior among themselves and towards women and raises several central issues, from images of what *ser hombre* (to be a man) means to different men and women at different times. For instance, he describes the Mexican male as neither loud nor insensitive. Instead, he describes them as sensitive, loving, and loyal. The Mexican man demonstrates his manliness through action, not by abusing people to proclaim his manhood. One major outcome of Gutmann’s research grounded in detailed fieldwork at the grassroots has been the dismantling of stereotypical images of Latin American men as ‘irresponsible husbands’ and ‘distant fathers’. Gutmann suggests that it is necessary to revise the beliefs that all men in Mexico (Latin America) today and historically have little to do with children. Instead, more active and less active parenting by men seems to correspond more to other factors such as class, historical period, region, and generation. Chant (2003:14) points out that for numerous, though not all, men and women in Mexico and Latin America, active, consistent and long-term parenting is a central ingredient it what it means to be a man, and in what men do.

With a similar analytic perspective Marie Dominique de Suremain and Oscar Fernando Acevedo (1999 cited in Viveros 2003:34) show in their study on heads of households and fatherhood among popular sectors of the population of Colombia that concurrent with new social and parenting demands on fathers, the objective obstacles impeding a positive realization of this paternal role have multiplied. By obstacles they mean the social conditions prevalent among the popular sector in Colombia—unemployment and/or unstable employment, and displacements—and factors related to transformations in families in Colombia such as the increase in marital separations and
women’s adoption of new roles. That is, there is a tremendous gap between the model of an ideal father, which is increasingly common, and the actual possibilities of putting this model into practice, especially in the popular sectors. They argue that this disparity has negative consequences as much for men themselves as for the whole family group, increasing discord between genders and generations.

Goldwert (1983) pointed out that the origin of excessive masculine displays and cult of masculinity in Mexico and other Latin American countries can be traced to the Spanish Conquest, as the powerless colonized man attempted to compensate for deep-seated feelings of inadequacy and inferiority by assuming a hyper-masculine, aggressive, and domineering stance. There are several explanations for the emergence of hyper-masculinity, or outward masculine displays among Mexicans and Latin American Men. Mirandé (1997) points to the existence of three main views, one being that it developed out of the humiliation suffered by indigenous men not only at their own defeat, but at the rape of their women by the Spanish conquerors:

Native men develop an overly masculine and aggressive response in order to compensate for deeply felt feelings of powerlessness and weakness. *Machismo* then, is nothing more than a futile attempt to mask a profound sense of impotence, powerlessness and ineptitude, an expression of weakness and a sense of inferiority (Mirandé 1997:36).

Mirandé argues that this view is negative—even pathological—because it assumes that the so-called Latin American protest is a response to intense and persistent feelings of powerlessness and weakness. Rejecting the explanation that *machismo* was a response to emasculation wrought by the Conquest, the second model proposes that the cultural emphasis on masculinity was a characteristic of Spanish society prior to the Conquest that was imposed on the native population at the time of conquest. The Spanish culture was deeply patriarchal, predicated on the primacy of male “honor,” on the inherent
inferiority of women, and on the need to strict sexual control and domination of wives, concubines and daughters (Mirandé 1997:45). These beliefs became exaggerated as the conquistadores engaged in brutalizing sexual exchanges with indigenous women whose “race” conferred upon them an even lower status than their Iberian counterparts.

Gender relations can be characterized on a continuum from full equality to the complete domination of members of one gender by members of the other. Gender equality is used to refer to a constellation of behaviors, attitudes, and rights that support the autonomy of both men and women. Women and men may have different economic, social, and political roles, but the valuation and rewards given to them are roughly similar (Bovillain 1995:3). In contrast, gender inequality refers to denial of autonomy and equal rights to one group of people based on their gender (Bovillain 1995:3). For instance, before colonization, women of the Aztec and the Incan empires had a high social status. Though these indigenous empires were highly stratified, they were more or less egalitarian in terms of gender relations. Women were considered the equals of men and took part of all, with few exceptions, in the social and religious activities and the governing of the communities. Administrative power was exclusively a male domain (Bonvillain 1995:123).

Women were important in the economy, participating as independent producers of crafts, pottery and textiles; they were also priestesses, doctors and merchants. Women had full participation in the social and economic activities; they had their own religious organizations and deities independent from that of the men (Nash 1980:137). Men were experts in warfare and contributed to the expansion of their empires. Men were enlisted
to construct and maintain public works projects such as palaces, temples, forts, irrigation systems, and roads (Bonvillain 1995:122).

Among the common class, gender constructs were based on ideological beliefs that emphasized the interdependence of all natural forces and of all people. Balance and reciprocity between women and men were consistent with the desired equilibrium thought to underlie and unite the universe. The necessity of balance was expressed in the division of labor within households, assigning complementary tasks to husband and wives (Bonvillain 1995:124). Even thought there were ‘appropriate’ female activities such as spinning and weaving, women were allowed to other jobs (Silverblatt 1980:154). Silverblatt (1980) points out that there was equality in the relationship between spouses and the designation of authority was based on order of birth, with no distinction made in terms of gender. With the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors, women were highly exploited. Men owned their female relatives and their labor.

Under the Spanish eyes women were legally minors and were denied access to positions within the religious and political institutions. The Spanish crown and the Catholic Church reinforced the idea of men as heads of the home and the owner of his wife and children (Nash 1980:141). Women’s status declined and their rights were vastly diminished, after the Spanish conquered the Inca and the Aztec empires. Although both women and men lost their independence under the Spanish rule, women carried multiple burdens based on their race, class, and gender (Bonvillain 1996:146). Therefore, as Goldwert (1983) indicates, machismo and the cult of masculinity were introduced to the New World by the Spanish conquistadors, who were excessively macho. Thus, Latin
American masculinity is not a form of protest that emanates from feelings of inferiority but is an assimilation of the value system and world-view of the conquistadors.

A third and less popularized view is that masculine displays may have had pre-Columbian origins, and specifically an Aztec trait. Like the Spanish, the Aztecs were a warring, military society in which men dominated women, so it is not entirely inconceivable that this legacy passed into the conquest period and beyond. Indeed, while machismo is widely argued to derive from the Spanish term, ‘macho’ for male, it could be argued that it may have come from the classical Nahuatl language whereby ‘macho’ meant ‘image’ or ‘reflection of oneself’ (Mirandé 1997:142). Another perspective was that machista tendencies were clearly evident in Aztec society long before the arrival of the Europeans and that the Spanish emphasis on caballería and hombría had their counterparts in Indian culture. There were, in fact, striking parallels between the two groups. According to Nash (1980:136) both social systems were patriarchal, they were predatory and military nations in which men were dominant and women were subordinated. In the Aztec culture, a man’s destiny was to become a warrior and to struggle on the field of battle, whereas a woman’s destiny was to struggle within the home.

Nash (1980:145) has rejected the view of universal and unvarying male dominance and suggested that the relative dominance of men and women could be linked historically to economic and structural conditions. She argued that, there was an interrelationship between male specialization in warfare, predatory conquest, and a state bureaucracy based on patrilineal access to its benefits between men and women. For instance, according to Silverblatt (1980:154), because Incan rule spread though military conquest,
the prestige of men as warriors increased, resulting in the warrior image emerging as the principal image of manhood. An ideology of conquest, then distorted the traditional balance believed to obtain between men and women. As men were identified with war, women became perceived as inferiors. In a symbolic manifestation of these constructs, groups defeated by the Incas were referred to as “conquered females” (Bonvillain 1995:125).

Mirandé (1997) states that although the Aztec universe was based on the idea of dualities, in which the male sphere was the battlefield and the female sphere centered on domestic duties, women were certainly not confined to the home. Women of all classes participated at all levels of Aztec society. Noble women were recognized for their good deeds, whereas lower class women contributed to the more basic needs of society as weavers, spinners, and cooks. Women also accompanied men to battle and served as cooks and carriers of supplies. Nash (1980) states that almost half of the eighteen months in the Aztec calendar contained feast days in honor of feminine deities or cults.

Images of Black Men

Likewise the behaviors of black men, and especially of young black men are defined as deviant and their presence as socially and morally threatening to the non-black community. Staples (1985) argued that black men have always had to confront the contradictions of maleness ascribed by society. He also argued that black men are subject to societal disgrace for failing to live up to the standards of manhood on the one hand (e.g., as providers), and for being super macho on the other (e.g., hypersexual). The behaviors and attitudes of black men are perceived as deviant behaviors by non-blacks.

Majors (1992) point out to Merton’s Theory of Individual Adaptations and anomie that states, that, socially deviant behavior results for certain groups because,
while they may share the society’s basic goals, they do not share the means to achieve them. The differential access to the opportunity structure encourages certain individuals to function defiantly in order to obtain rewards of a material or prestigious nature. Merton (1949) argues that in Latin America, much greater importance has been given to achieving economic power and social prestige, and lesser emphasis has been given to the means of accomplishing these goals. He also argues that the equilibrium between culturally designated ends and means becomes highly unstable with progressive emphasis on attaining prestige by any means.

Mosquera (1998) argues that a rigid class structure, as that of Colombia, may limit or completely close access to approved modes of reaching these goals to a considerable part of the population. In this context deviant behavior is tacitly approved and promoted. She also argues that blacks live in a situation of social inclusion-exclusion where they are considered citizens like the rest of the population, but in practice they are discriminated against and as a result, making more difficult the access to their social goals.

As Lemelle (1995) puts it “black men are defined by the middle class as social deviants.” The ruling class defines what is deviant while simultaneously defining what is to be considered the norm. The elites attain domination through the production of knowledge to serve their interests. In addition, he also argues that to understand the behaviors of black men, it is necessary to be sensitive to the social context that produces them. It is also important to understand the roles available on the stage of their social life. The available roles for males provide myths that they usually internalize during socialization. Social class might provide some insight into differences between a group
of men in opposition to another; that is, social class is only one element determining inequality in society. There is a functional role for the mythic black male. He also argues that the myth is often taken literally in a society to codify belief and morality in order to structure social action.

Similarly, neighborhoods or *barrios populares* (where the majority of the residents are black), are generally stigmatized by outsiders (non-blacks) as dangerous poor, dirty and often considered as a red-light district. *Barrios populares* is a euphemistic term covering consolidated working class areas, peripheral invasions, and pirate urbanizations (Wade 1993:209). Lobo (1982) gives a through description of the stereotyping of a squatter settlement where the main residents were migrant families from the Andean Highlands. She stated that among middle and upper class *Limeños*, squatter settlements and their residents were stereotyped as harboring criminals and social degenerates.

**The Concept of Marianismo**

Stevens (1973) suggests that the counterpart of “machismo” is “marianismo”, defined as the cult of feminine, spiritual superiority that engenders abnegation, and an infinite capacity for humility and sacrifice. Stevens adds:

Among the characteristics of this ideal are semi-divinity, moral superiority, and spiritual strength. This spiritual strength engenders abnegation that is an infinite capacity for humility and sacrifice. No self-denial is too great for the Latin American woman; no limit can be divined to her vast store of patience with the men of the world. Although she may be sharp with her daughters-in-law-she is and must be complaisant toward her own mother and her mother-in-law for they too, are reincarnations of the great mother. She is also submissive to the demands of the men: husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers (Stevens 1973:94).

She suggests that the origin of what she calls a “syndrome” lay in the Old World cultures, traveled to the New World with the conquistadors, and thereafter came to their
fullest expression in mestizo Latin America. She also argues that Marianism (or Mariology), a movement within the Roman Catholic Church that venerated the Virgin Mary, has provided a central figure and a convenient set of assumptions around which the practitioners of marianismo have erected a secular edifice. This idealized femininity offered a series of beliefs about women’s spiritual and moral superiority to men that acted to legitimate their subordinate domestic and societal roles (Gutmann 2003:9).

Does this mean that all Latin American women conform to the stereotypes prescribed by marianismo? Obviously not, as in most societies, individual behavior often deviates widely from the ideal. But the image of black-clad mantilla-draped figures kneeling before the altar, rosary in hand, praying for the souls of their sinful men, dominates the television and the radio programs and the popular literature, as well as the oral tradition of the whole area. Stevens (1973) argues that the same culture provides an alternate model in the image of the “bad woman” who boasts custom and persists in enjoying herself. This kind of woman is not viewed as a “real woman.” By publicly deviating from the prescribed norm, she has diverted from those attributes considered characteristically feminine and in the process has become somewhat masculine (Stevens 1973:96).

Shirlene Soto (1990) has criticized the stereotypes of the good and suffering mother images of the Latin American women. She claims that there is a fixed representation of Latin American women. That is of the Latin American Indian woman that portrays the image of the immobile, secretive, passive, victim of long suffering. Furthermore, this fixed representation of women limits the possibility of a Latin American woman with different traits. According to Behar and Gordon (1996), feminists of more developed
countries such as the United States portray Latin American women as sexually constrained, ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domestic and as victims of *machismo*. Suggesting that these feminists subliminally present themselves as educated, modern, and as having control over their bodies and sexualities, and as having freedom to make their own decisions.

As described by Gutmann, there are various reasons that could explain the homogenization of Latin American women’s experience: first, that the interest in making women visible in a male-dominated world called for a strength in numbers that was probably best served by binding women under the banner of a unitary gender identity. Women’s struggle for equality was construed primarily as one that had to be waged alongside other women against structures of patriarchy. Gutmann argues that the idea of women’s “interests” as differentiated on grounds of “class,” “race,” age and so on was potentially diversionary and could undermine solidarity and momentum. Second, information on women (not only in Latin America) was so deficient that this scarcely allowed for general conceptual formulations, let alone once which catered to difference and to the complex interactions of gender with other identities.

Third, the fact that the “epicenter” of feminist scholarship and development policy-making lay in the North led, at times, to an homogenization of the experiences of women in regions of the South. Gutmann (2003:8-9) concludes that, while there may have been substantial recognition of diversity among women within Latin America, this was less apparent in “global reviews”. Instead, in the interests of codifying a complex range of emerging data, international analyses sometimes fell back on reactive monolithic stereotypes which tended not only to mask difference, and to “exoticize” Latin American
women’s experiences, but did so through a lens which privileged issues that accorded with the preoccupations about gender oppression among Northern feminists. Explanations for ‘gender subordination’ held to be categorically evidenced by factors such as high fertility and lack of labor force participation, were often reduced to “culture” and “tradition,” with “motherhood” commonly signaled as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to women’s emancipatory possibilities (Gutmann 2003:8-9).

Undeniably, the pattern of attitudes and behaviors puts a distinctive stamp on Latin American society; certainly there are enormous pressures on individual women to conform to the traditional roles. Sometimes the results are tragic, both for the individual and for the society that is deprived of the full benefit of the individual’s potential contribution. As well, it is quite apparent that many women have contributed to the perpetuation of the myths that sustain the patterns described. Stevens is accredited by focusing on the role of the individual in the shaping of their own life situation, and emphasizing aspects of ambiguity and complexity in gender relations; and also by having raised important, if “awkward,” questions about the part played by women themselves in maintaining oppressive gender relations (Gutmann 2003:10).

**The Image of Motherhood in Latin America**

Gutmann (2003) states that “motherhood” has always loomed large in images and representations of women in Latin America. There is no question that in mestizo Latin America at least, motherhood has been both privately and publicly venerated, expressed in the form of monuments or in vast and elaborate celebrations of “Mother’s Day” which have tended to persist as a public exaltation of private, and often heavily essentialized, female virtues. Furthermore, men and patriarchal states heavily condition motherhood, so
that disrupting the link between women and motherhood is crucially important in the gender struggle (Gutman 2003:13).

However, there is an alternative discourse that takes the standpoint that motherhood is a source of power, and more particularly a basis for political participation, identity, resistance and/or transformation. Mellibovsky (1997) reveals through the testimonies of the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo² how motherhood has given Latin American women a space to act against the state and how motherhood gave women a more “legitimate” reason to mobilize insofar as this was not overtly “political” (Gutmann 2003:11). As Stevens (1973) argued, marianismo, or the cult of feminine spiritual superiority, is as prevalent as and symbiotic with machismo but less understood, and far from being victims, Latin American women are conscious beneficiaries of that myth.

**Gender and the Nation**

Gender discourses have been utilized in the creation of new Latin American states. Gender discourses have been used to maintain control of the lives of a country’s citizens and to maintain the social hierarchies. Besse (1996:40) argues that central to Latin American political programs of modernization and political centralization was the gradual expansion of the notion of public interest to encompass realms that had previously been regarded as private. Latin American states justified their efforts in controlling intimate interpersonal relationships by reiterating that the family was the basis

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² One of the most famous examples is that of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, which started off as a small group in 1977 and grew to gain international recognition within and beyond the region for its role in both the fight for democracy and for human rights. The Mothers were women whose children had ‘disappeared’ under the military regime, and who not only wanted to know what had happened to their children, but to have them return alive (Gutmann 2003:11). In a context in which Christian family values were not only exalted but lent moral legitimacy to those in power. By confining their identities to the characteristics defined in marianismo, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo challenged the military government and the traditional ways in which women were perceived by society.
of the society. A redefinition of gender roles was seen critical for the functioning of the family, and therefore, of the state.

The states redefined gender roles by prescribing appropriate male and female sexual behavior, employment opportunities, public roles, familial responsibilities, and educational curricula. They even invaded the most private of relationships—that of the husband and the wife—and used professionals’ expertise to provide scientific explanations to gender questions. Women were the primary subjects for the reconstruction of the family and of the new nation. State policies helped to shape the destiny of women through educational and occupational opportunities given to them.

Women’s education was rudimentary and only encouraged due to maternal responsibilities for educating the future generation. Besse (1996) points out that around 1914-1940, Latin American governments discouraged wage labor among women because of poor wages and unfavorable working conditions. Low wages were justified since their contributions were secondary and complimentary to those of the men. Those women who worked outside the home were highly abused by male co-workers and did not benefit from state’s remunerations.

Moore (1998) argues that the states even created civil laws that declared that married women were allowed to work only with the consent of the husbands and for the improvement of the family, and they were not to earn more money than their husbands. Furthermore, women were discouraged from work since the jobs they performed in the workplace were an extension to their domestic roles. Given that working conditions were unpromising, women entered the work force only when their incomes were necessary for the well being of the family. The division of labor reserved some categories of work for
women and restricted them from entering others. Such segregation of jobs would help to maintain harmony between the sexes. Women who were independent, ambitious and unmarried were seen as anomalies and errors of nature. Meanwhile, men were responsible for providing the economic resources required to manage the household and thereby prevent the wife from leaving the home to seek employment. Men’s wages were increased while women’s wages were decreased, as a result women’s opportunity of improving their economic status was denied and were left in a vulnerable economic position.

**Gender, Race, and the Construction of the Nation**

Skidmore (1992) argued that by constructing racial and gender stereotypes historically in Latin America, the elites have been able to hold a belief in white superiority while denying the existence of a racial problem and adopting an “assimilationist” ideology, that states that Latin America is progressively “whitening” and that disproportionate Latin American poverty is a legacy of socioeconomic disadvantages and not a result of discrimination. Nascimento and Nascimento (2001) argue that after the abolition of slavery in Latin American countries, no measures were taken to integrate new African-descendents into their national economies or societies. Abolition brought panic to the ruling elites, who hurried to create public policies aimed at helping to white the nation. As Nascimento and Nascimento (2001) stated, to eradicate Afro-descendants in some Latin American countries (Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela), two policies were proposed. The first one stated that the state would subsidize European immigration and would exclude undesirable races such as blacks and indigenous people; and the second policy proposed mixed unions between Europeans with other racial groups to produce “whiter” offspring. With these new policies, jobs went to more
desirable Europeans whose arrival was subsidized by the State with the intention of contributing to the whitening/ *mestizaje* of Latin America. In Latin America, *mestizaje* refers to a combination of European, African or Native American ancestors; it is the process or state of race mixture. At the same time, Afro-descendant men were stigmatized not only as bad and unqualified workers but also as dangerous and disorderly and they were excluded from the new industrial labor market.

Latin American elites denied the existence of discrimination. So how did the elite explain the high correlation of color with social stratification? Skidmore (1992) points out that the elites argued that blacks were not victims of discrimination but of their disadvantaged socioeconomic background, such as: the legacy of deprivation under slavery; the resulting disadvantage vis-à-vis the European immigrants who streamed into Latin America after abolition; the liability of being concentrated in the poorest sectors, the countryside, of the poorest regions. These factors combined to weaken the Afro-descendants in the increasingly competitive capitalist economy. Wade (1997) alleges that the white elites created racist ideologies against non-whites to justify a social hierarchy where whites are on the top and blacks and Indians are on the bottom. In addition, the idea of improving the race through *mestizaje*, or whitening, dominated the production of gender ideas of femininity and masculinity. Stereotypes of people of color denied aspects of both the masculinity and femininity of men and women when these were contrasted with the stereotypes of the white man and woman.

**Stereotypes of Ethnic Men and Women**

Maria Oliart (1994) examines the association between the stereotypes exhibited about men and women of different races as a relationship that would help to accomplish several objectives of the emergent elite. On the one hand, stereotypes served the purpose
of projecting a “republic without citizens” by portraying Indians and blacks as inferior races, and thereby justifying their subordinate situation as irreparable. On the other hand, by constructing distinctive stereotypes for men and women of the same race, they strongly campaigned for exogamy and extensive racial mixture that would promote the whitening of the race. Finally, by establishing a hierarchy of races, members of society would value one another according to the perceived distances from the extremes—pure white, or pure black and Indian—creating a powerful device to hinder solidarity among people of color (Oliart 1994:82).

American historian Fox-Genovese (1988 cited by Oliart 1994:2) considered gender conventions as the most influential element among a society, for in telling people how to be man and woman, they also instruct them in how to relate to the rest of the society. These compelling paradigms direct fundamental human impulses into socially acceptable and useful channels and thereby serve the needs of individuals as well as society. Representations of manhood and womanhood produced by the elites, attributed differing characteristics to gender identities depending on race and social status. The stereotypes elites used to separate people according to class, gender, and race are important not because such representations could confound perceptions of reality, but because they exist to construct or reinforce the unequal social conditions within which subordinate groups are obliged to live and struggle.

Historians agreed that in the nineteenth hundreds, ideological control was crucial in the situation, and that racial prejudices were an important device for bolstering the weakened elite’s privileges and status (Oliart 1994:12). A set of representations contributed to build an ideology that assigned rigid places in society to Whites, Blacks
and Indians. The same representations and images, however, were ambiguous or silent about those people who resulted from the mixtures of races. Men and women of different races were talked about, described and defined through standard images. Yet the projected images were changed through time in order to assert a sense of control to explain the lack of it over the continuously changing social positions of those defined by the stereotypes.

As pointed out by Smith-Cordoba (1986) those interested in opening Latin American markets to other countries and promoting immigration had to campaign actively to explain the potential advantages to be derived from the presence of European merchants in those countries. The contents of such campaigns were influenced by contemporary ideas of racism, popular among local intellectuals and politicians; they generated a variety of expressions about the superiority of European and American men compared to local men.

On the other hand, in the eyes of Europeans, men from Latin America were charming and polite, but lazy and irresponsible; they were well informed about European fashion and with a remarkable taste for good food, but ignorant of regional political issues and evasive of their responsibilities to the country. These opinions were possibly influenced by their expectations of what a gentleman or head of family was supposed to be by European standards of the time. According to European standards, the main duties

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3 Oliart gives examples of an influential Peruvian writer, (Fuentes 1867) who discussed the modernization of the country and the transformation of the Peruvian national character. He also described Indians as uncanny and always poised to cheat. Also Indians were stereotyped in the structure of everyday conversation as stupid and savages, and at the same time they were referred by terms of endearment: little Indian, humble. They were feared and also patronized.
of the patriarch were to rule, guide and help his subordinates, receiving in exchange conscientious service, promptness, politeness, and deference.

Oliart (1994) suggests that in all Latin American countries, the state insisted that democracy and progress were impossible because of its “uncivilized” population (ethnic-racial), and defended the need for European immigration making it an issue of national restoration. Oliart points out that the process of construction of improved Latin American nationalities was threatened with total decadence due to the poor cultural and racial “results” inherited from “evil colonial times”. Europeans and North Americans bore the most appreciated phenotypes. They were perceived to possess an ability to work hard and were well suited to do any kind of work. Those qualities were not presented as something that could be learned or imitated, but as inherent features of a superior race. The presence of the “sturdy and hard working Europeans and North Americans” was sought so that they could accomplish the tasks that local men could not accomplish alone, such as improving the race by the process of mestizaje. This improvement of the race would lead the countries into democracy and modernization, and would discipline free black and Indian men.

In the nineteenth hundreds, European immigrants rapidly became artisans and merchants, comprising the group with the highest social mobility in the second half of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries. In contrast to blacks that were restricted to a confined range of occupations, European immigrants enjoyed wide possibilities for social mobility despite their lack of capital or education.

As described by Smith-Cordoba (1986:35), the projections of Afro-descendant people did not represent men and women of different groups as uniform or harmonious.
Stereotypes were gendered and represented black and Indian men as unsuited even for women of their own race. Black men were usually portrayed as slovenly workers, as criminals if unemployed. They were never referred to in positive terms. As the years of slavery retreated, images of black men became consistently more negative, repeatedly representing them as frightening criminals, and as most dangerous. As for the qualities of black men, black servants were perceived as stupid and less skilled than Indians; however, Indians were not as sturdy or suited for hard work as the blacks, nor were they as compliant or submissive. Black men were also viewed as amusing in their stupidity and ignorance, harmless and humiliated, and most of all, deeply inferior. Staples (1982) states that black men were depicted as sexually uncontrollable and predatory.

Harris (1994) noted that descriptions of male Indians do little to favor their masculinity, presenting them as sexless or even feminine. Indian males were perceived as ignorant, stupid, arrogant, abusive, and dirty. In addition, they were portrayed as irresponsible fathers who abandoned their children and as unsuitable husbands because they are incapable of loving. Harris states that even those who wrote in favor of the Indian man unintentionally reinforced notions of fear and distance.

Harvey (1994) noted that because Indians stubbornly refused to break their ties with their land, they were seen as an obstacle to modernization. Indian peasants were represented as dirty because their hygiene practices were different from those proposed in modern urban areas; they were described as unloving toward their sons and daughters because in rural areas children labored at a young age; they were also seen as lazy because in the countryside time was measured by a different rhythm than in the modern city. However, female Indians appeared as more acceptable citizens than male Indians.
The characteristics used to describe Indian women stressed their braveness, endurance, and ability to work, especially when compared with the cowardliness and irresponsibility attributed to Indian men.

Harvey (1994) argued that they were cast as beasts of burden with few needs and usually described as careless and dirty. He also pointed out to another recurrent theme about female Indians that questioned their fidelity toward Indian men, given the presumption that these men were unsuitable mates. Indian femininity was reduced to the reproductive capacity, ignoring all other aspects including physical attractiveness. The Indian woman was considered as the least desirable mother. Oliart (1994) stated that Indian females were referred to as cheap cattle that should not be allowed to mate or they would “ruin the breed.”

Oliart (1994) also points out that black women were portrayed as nursemaids or nannies that took care of the children of the upper and middle classes. Black women of Latin America were the main caregivers of white children.

Oliart (1994) notes that the stereotype of the black and mulatto woman as an object of open sexual desire for white men was strongly present, in contrast with the denial of female Indian attractiveness and the sublimation of white woman’s sexuality. Another depiction of black women is that of the rebellious and loud dweller of the slums. Oliart argues that stereotypes of black men and women indicate that blacks faced many pressures aimed at keeping them in their place. They worked in a restricted range of jobs; they were distrusted, under permanent suspicion, and classified as sensual and vicious. However, black men and women were viewed with sympathy and praised as good and humble servants, but criticized and feared when they sought social independence.
Conclusion

Race and gender are characterizations present everywhere; they are evident in the
distribution of resources and power. They have permeated all social identities, cultural
forms, and systems of signification. Latin American societies have established the
standard model of masculinity and femininity. The hegemonic model of masculinity
guarantees the power of men over women and over other men (ethnic men). Despite any
variations of race, social class, age, and sexual orientation, to be a man means not to be
like a woman. Accordingly, some scholars have suggested that Latin American men and
women constitute hegemonic groups whose symbolic representation of masculinity and
femininity merge in the concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*. These stereotypes
offered the fantasy of a masculine community sharing several traits: an unwillingness to
work, difficulty in assuming parental duties, a fondness for leisure and lack of
responsibility all of which were considered a fault among the poor (and ethnic-racial),
whereas it became an adornment for young men of the elite. For instance, young men
drank in bars, participated in popular familiar parties, visited prostitutes, and got involved
in short affairs with pretty mulatto women; and were praised for it. But when non-elite
men (non-decent people) imitated the behavior of the elite, they were negatively judged.

Perhaps what can be drawn from research is that no group is monolithic and that
there are a variety of modalities of masculinities and femininities that are different and
often contradictory. It is important to recognize multiple masculinities and femininities
and also understand the relationships that exist among them and note that gender
identities and class or ethnic-racial identities are acquired simultaneously and generate
social practices marked by these multiple identities (Viveros 2003:37). It is also
important to recognize that *machismo* and *marianismo* are not universal Latin American
traits, but they are common features of Latin American culture and certainly not rare among Latin American men and women.
CHAPTER 3
PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK AFRICANS IN LATIN AMERICA

This chapter traces the beginnings of racial discrimination of blacks in Latin America and in Colombia in particular. It gives a description and analysis of the perceptions of white/mestizo society on people of Afro-descent and their cultures and traces the origins of some racial and gender stereotypes about Afro-descendant men in general and about Afro-Colombian men in particular. This chapter is divided in the following sections: a) justification of slavery; b) perceptions of the black slaves in the new world; c) the black slave as indispensable laborer; d) perceptions and images of blacks in contemporary Colombia.

Justifications of Slavery

Justifications for slavery used by European elites came from thinkers such as Eanes de Zurara and Pacheco Pereira who believed that black Africans were racially inferior creatures. They took this notion from the “natural slave” theory of Aristotle that stated that some men were born free and others were born to be slaves. The Spanish Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, known as the “protector of the Indians,” reported that if the colony was to survive, black slave labor was a necessity (Brout 1976:25). This necessity was due to factors concerning the indigenous that could not adjust to the Spanish labor demands and to population depletion among Indians from overwork, influenza, and smallpox. It was commonly reported that the Indians appeared to be “very frail,” and blacks appeared to be “very strong,” with one black able do the work of four Indians. From this type of thinking, myths about blacks were born that are still present. Few
measures have been taken to integrate African-descendants’ into the national economies and societies, since they were thought to have inherited characteristics that impede them from learning national cultural values.

Stereotypes of blacks in Latin America have their roots before the discovery of the Americas. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that soldiers or fighting men taken in just wars were legally subjugated. He also believed it was clear that while “some men [were] by nature free, so others [were] by nature slaves.” Thus, in 1489, Pedro Dias, a Lisbon resident, sold a black woman and her daughter to a woman in Barcelona, signing a letter to the effect that the two were “captives taken in just war.” Conceivably, the mother could have been a combatant in some sort of African conflict, but it is exceedingly unlikely that the child was (Brout 1976:35). Obviously, the separation of the two could have resulted in terrible suffering on the part of the offspring, but this fact was hardly a moral justification for selling the girl as a slave. The shallowness of the “just war” explanation as applied to African slaves apparently troubled some people. Other Portuguese thinkers seized upon Aristotle’s natural slave argument and gave it a religious justification. The chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara, who himself had been a participant in a pre-1448 slave raid, was perhaps the first to blaze this trail. To justify his capture and enslavement of blacks, he argued that Noah had blessed two of his sons but cursed the third, Ham, and condemned his offspring, Canaan, to be “a servant of servants” De Zurara interpreted that Noah had cursed Ham so that his race would be subject to all other races of the world. Zurara referred to the ten blacks brought to Portugal after his raid in 1442 by Antão Gonçalves as “descendants of Cannan.”
Eanes de Zurara in 1448 observed that “blacks had no understanding of good but only knew how to live in bestial sloth” (Brout 1976:43). Such people were innately servile, therefore, the morally superior Christian/European did not have scruples about enslaving them. Moreover, by Christianizing the abominable blacks, the Europeans were granting them the greatest favor possible: spiritual salvation (Brout 1976: 45). The justifications for the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans lay in papal documents issued by Pope Calixtus III (1456). These documents established that the Lisbon crusade to the western coast of Africa was beneficial because pagans could be Christianized and their souls could be saved.

Brout (1976) pointed out that the urge to denigrate sub-Saharan peoples is also etched in the work of Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1533). He regarded the natives of Sierra Leone as idolaters and condemned them as having “all the badness of bad men.” Furthermore, his conclusion mimics that of Eanes de Zurara: the black man is so depraved; hence by enslaving him and bringing him into contact with a superior culture, the Portuguese were really helping him advance to higher goals. The belief in black inferiority was shared by a relatively large segment of the Portuguese society of the 1480s.

Like Eanes de Zurara and Pacheco Pereira, many Spaniards came to believe that the black African was a racially inferior creature. The “natural slave” theory of Aristotle and the contention that blacks were descendants of Canaan both had their adherents in the realm of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Brout (1976) argues that the official justification that the Spanish gave for buying slaves being sold provided by the Portuguese was that blacks were prisoners taken en buena guerra, (“just war”).
The overall attitudes toward black people in Spain were reflected in the theatrical works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in the celebrated Lope de Vega *Los Peligros de ausencia* (1562) story where mulatto slaves were singled out and condemned as unscrupulous people, prone to betray their masters because of their biological heritage. In the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain, the adjective *Negro* (black) was often a synonym for evil.

In addition, blacks were considered as evil and inferior and condemned to slavery. By the early 1490s, the Spanish population was composed of a variety of peoples such as Moors and Jews. The different segments of the Spanish population were dissimilar in appearance, culturally diverse, and attached to their regional customs. Hence King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella selected the only possible unifying principle, religion. Therefore, in 1492 and 1502, Queen Isabella issued two edicts that forced Moors and Jews in Castile to convert to Roman Catholicism or face exile. Those who defied these decrees or who publicly converted but clandestinely persisted in practicing non-Catholic rites, became fair game for persecution in this period known as the Inquisition.

Ultimately, to the white Christians of Spain, captives from Africa and/or their descendants were believed to be loyal to their masters, superstitious and lighthearted, of low mentality, and distinctly in need of white supervision. As originally used, *ladino* referred to a Christianized African slave who spoke Spanish or had some knowledge of Spanish culture. Subsequently the term came to include any descendant of African slaves born in the New World and eventually any Hispanicized [black] (Brout 1976:53). In the words of the Spanish author Hipolito Sancho de Sopranis, blacks were possessed of an “ungovernable character,” and while indulgently tolerated by authorities, they were
always to be considered a “weak and destitute” element in the population. These prejudices have their foundations on the belief that the shortcomings of blacks were “proper” of their race (Baquero 1991:16). Baquero (1991) points out that even the emancipated black or mulatto in Spain played the role of a jackal, tolerated because of circumstance, and condemned to be content with the crumbs that society chose to throw his or her way.

Perceptions of Black Slaves in the New World

Throughout the colonization of the Americas, the Spanish Conquerors brought along the black slaves and perpetuated stereotypes about black people. An unknown number of black and mulatto servants were in Governor Nicolas Ovando’s ship when it landed at Hispaniola in April 1502. However, within a year of his landing, Ovando had requested that Queen Isabella prevent the further dispatch of ladinos to the New World. He reported that the character and appearance of black slaves already on the island of Hispaniola were a source of scandal to the Indians. As soon as the issue of discontinuing the shipment of ladinos to Hispaniola was settled, new circumstances forced a reversal of the request. Ovando admitted to the King that he was having a difficult time making the Indians work the gold mines and adapt to plantation agriculture. In 1505, King Ferdinand dispatched more than 360 black slaves who were pressed into service in the mines of Buenaventura (Colombia) and Concepción (Chile). King Ferdinand’s decision to ship more ladino slaves was undoubtedly influenced by his awareness that the Indians were still not adjusting to the Spanish labor demands; in addition, the ravages of overwork, influenza, and smallpox were annually depleting the indigenous population. Thus, in 1511, Governor Nicolás Ovando wrote that the Indians appeared to be “very frail,” and that “one black could do the work of four Indians.” In this fashion, another myth was
born. The necessity for black laborers in Hispaniola took a moral tone. Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who had received the title of “Protector of the Indians,” declared in 1517 that unless the indigenous people received some relief, they would soon disappear from Hispaniola. In order to remedy the situation, he proposed that each white resident should receive a *licencia* (license), referred to a royal authorization allowing an individual to take slaves (up to twelve blacks) to a particular region of the Indies (Brout 1976:32).

What caused the increase of black slave labor was the inability of the Indians to perform the aggregate of manual labor tasks that the Spaniards demanded. For the Spanish there could not be any doubt of the continuance and well being of the colonial society. From the Spanish and Portuguese viewpoint, the African slave trade was legal, moral, and necessary.

In addition, scholars of the XIX century began to proclaim that “human races” existed, and that they had invariable negative characteristics that came from the blood. Herbert Spencer, the father of sociology, adhered to this vision. He also noted in his writings that human races improved whenever they functioned by working in tasks for which they were equipped by nature. He also stated that the socio-cultural transformation is a slow process that is linked to the evolution of the human body (Friedemann and Jaime Arocha 1986:104). For example, in Colombia in 1981, a geography book for high school students, established that: ... “the Black, native of African Guinea, was generally muscular, of high stature: 6.0 feet in average, with low and wide head, melancholic, devoid of initiative, lazy, and indolent” (Smith-Cordoba 2000:38).
Until this day, in Colombia and Latin America, blacks are still defined as lazy. It is ironic that a non-Afro-descendant after an arduous day of work would say “I have worked like a black”

**The Black Slave as Indispensable Laborer**

The *ladinos* who accompanied Governor Nicolás Ovando to Hispaniola in 1502 were probably all house slaves. In the new world, they were used in the mines. Africans were also pressed into service in the silver and gold mines. As agrarian toilers, the slaves produced the crops that made the *haciendas*, large agrarian estates and *latifundios*, valuable. *Latinfundios* were great landed estates with primitive agriculture and labor often in a state of partial servitude. They raised the grapes and olives that made various areas prosperous. In the sugar-cane fields of Mexico and Colombia, Perú, and the Antilles, thousands spent their lives. For instance, the daily agricultural regimen in the plantations was probably the most arduous. The slaves awakened about 5:00 am, and consumed two meals with brief intermission and worked until 9:00 at night, and during the harvest season they continued until after midnight. In colonial Spanish America, these blacks performed every kind of labor that the Spanish desired. Indians also came to regard blacks as the natural executor of heavy physical labor. From the point of view of the Spaniards: Indians, Africans, dark skin and degrading work were synonyms.

**Perceptions of Blacks in Colombia**

Wade (1993) points out that black people of Colombia descend from those individuals who arrived with the first conquerors and from the thousands of Africans who officially disembarked in Cartagena (1533) as part of the slave trade in the 16th century. They were also contraband in other places like Buenaventura, Chirambira, Gorgona and
Barbacoas on the Pacific coast. And Rio Hacha, Santa Marta, Tolú and the Darien on the Atlantic coast.

At the present time, groups with African ancestry are found in the regions of the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and in sites of the Andean valleys as follows: (1) The Caribbean region: the departments of Guajira, Magdalena, Atlantico, Bolivar, Córdoba, Cesar, Sucre and Antioquia. (2) The Pacific coast: The department of Chocó and the coastal zones of Valley of Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. (3) Andean valleys of the Cauca and Magdalena rivers, including some of its affluents and the cross-sectional valley of Rio Patía. (4) And San Andrés and Providencia in the Caribbean islands (Rovira de Córdoba, Darcio Córdoba 2000:25).

Rovira de Córdoba (2000) points out that estimates of the number of African slaves brought to the Americas range from nine million to twenty million. Friedemann (1995) points out that it was estimated that 200,000 slaves were imported to what is known today as Colombia, Panamá, and Ecuador. Germán Colmenares concluded that of these 200,000 slaves more than half, about 120,000 slaves settled in present-day Colombia. The 1964 Colombian census (Colombian Atlas of Economy) notes that 30 percent of the Colombian population is black and mulata, designates a human of mixed blood, in this case, a person of Caucasian and African descent.

In Colombia, the Abolition Law of May of 1851 stated that all the slaves were to be free as of January 1, 1852. But there was much controversy to enact this law. After abolition there was both continuity and change. As stated by Friedemann (1980), no measures were taken to integrate African-Colombians into the national economy or society. The low status of blackness and indianness was still marked. As one of the many
European travelers of this period, Gaspar Mollien traveled through Colombia in 1822. Passing along the Cauca Valley, he noted: “The muleteers, proud of being white, are ashamed to go on foot, so it is difficult to distinguish the rich from the poor” (Wade 1993:9). Thus, after emancipation in 1852, social and biological whitening of Afro-Colombians seemed to be the only alternative open to the black individual to obtain real emancipation and access to civil rights granted by law, but which were denied in social practice. Wade (1993) points out that throughout this period, there was also concern for how to characterize the national identities: Latin American elites struggled with the problem of how to understand and represent their emerging nations. Latin American elites felt that modernity and progress were being achieved by European nations that had negligible or no populations of blacks and Indians, or in the United States where strict barriers separated whites from blacks and Indians. In Colombia, as in other Latin American nations, the vast majority of the population was nonwhite.

The outcomes varied in different countries, but a central feature was the attempt to compromise between the conflicting aspects of the dilemma, the clearly mixed nature of the population versus the clearly white connotations of progress and modernity. Models of modernity and progress were not abandoned, rather, racial mixture and black and Indian populations were harnessed to them, to provide a distinctly Latin American response to the dilemma. Wade (1993:11) states that blacks and especially Indians were romanticized as part of a more or less glorious past, but the future held for them paternalistic guidance towards integration, which also ideally meant race mixture and perhaps the eventual erasure of blackness and indianness from the nation. He points out that the mestizo was idealized as of bi-ethnic or tri-ethnic origin, but the image held up
was always at the lighter end of the *mestizo* spectrum. The idea was the whitening of the population through race mixture, and this could be helped by immigration policies attracting European immigrants and keeping out blacks. This is the ideology of *blanqueamiento* or whitening, seen in a nationalist context and as one aspect of the coexistence of *mestizaje* and discrimination. Nascimento and Larkin Nascimento (2001) point out that abolition brought panic to the ruling elites because the black population was growing. The elites constructed public policies aimed at eliminating traces of the black stain and at purifying the nation’s racial stock. The strategies to achieve these objectives were: (1) to encourage massive state-subsidized European immigration while excluding undesirable races and (2) allowing marriage of whites and blacks to whiten the population. Wade (1993:13) points out that people in power felt that it was important to inviting Europeans to find homes in Colombia, with the idea that their descendants would improve the moral and physical properties of the Colombians. New liberal immigration laws promulgated in 1823 were designed to encourage white immigration in order to outnumber black people and defuse the threat of race warfare.

However, a more deep-seated concern was with progress. Blacks were not seen as good material for the developing nation. As pointed out by Wade. (Wade1993:13)

A race which spent its days in such indolence is not that which is called to make the country progress . . . savage stupidity of the black race, its *bozal* insolence, its appalling laziness and its scandalous shamelessness.

Others of the political and intellectual elite expressed themselves in similar terms. José María Samper (Quoted in Wade 1993:13-14), a parliamentarian of nineteenth-century Colombia wrote that the blacks of the coastal region were primitive men, coarse, brutish, indolent, and semi-savage. They were insolent, stupid, coward, ignorant, childish and
corrupt. In contrast he wrote that the men of the highland as European, active, intelligent, white and elegant, often blond, poetic, spiritual, and well mannered.

Laziness and indolence were crucial elements in the perception of black people, and these were critical failings in the new national order. Marco Fidel Suárez, president and influential essayist, wrote in 1882 an essay entitled “Progress” which is a perfect example of the new liberal morality that penetrated Colombia from Europe. He stated that work was the indispensable condition of progress and civilization and that progress did not exist among black people. He also argued that blacks could not be free because freedom is only achieved by means of work (Wade 1993:14).

These implications saw a whiter future as the only real solution, the goal was that the diversity of races would end, because the white race would absorb and destroy the Indian, and the black. Wade (1993) suggests that the Colombian racial heritage was seen as uninspiring by the elites because of the mixture of Spaniards, Indians and blacks. The latter two flows of heritage were seen as marks of complete inferiority. And the Spanish heritage was seen as the only guiding lines to construct the Colombian character. Even in recent times condemnation of blackness was still evident in publications:

In a 1953 book on the geography of the Cauca region, Miguel Antonio Arroyo writes that “the black has not been able to free himself of the moral deficiency of improvidence,” and since the Indian is introverted and indifferent, it is vital to engineer a “better direction for the mixtures, starting centrally from white towards red and from white towards black...so that the descendants remain influenced by the dominant characteristics of the European stock”... the black is well adapted to tropical climates and arduous labor, but without stimulus he gives himself over to laziness, almost vegetative, he is melancholy with a disposition to music and indolence (Wade 1993:17).

Theories of race tended to class Indians and especially blacks as biologically inferior. Smith-Cordoba (1986) points out that elites often espoused these theories but also tended to elude their negative implications by playing down biological determinism,
emphasizing environment and the impact of education, while at the same time agreeing on the inferiority of blacks and Indians and consigning them to the past and to backwardness. The ideologies of western sciences considered black people as a tool for physical work and never as a carrier of culture, they were seen as incapable of producing, or even assimilating, high forms of human culture. Once again, the only fundamental solution was white immigration. However, Mosquera (1998) points out that, intellectuals such as Juan Luis de Lannoy and Gustavo Perez have declared Afro-Colombians as “more sensual” and “more superstitious” than the nation’s Indian inhabitants.

Blacks are seen as primitive but also therefore as possessed of some special powers, especially magical, sexual, musical and rhythmic powers traditionally defined by the Catholic Church as corrupt but which still hold a certain fascination. Since medieval times the demonization of the African people and culture has dominated European imageries. Anthropologist Greta Friedemann (1994) argues that the church viewed African religion and ritual, as well as resistance actions against slavery, as evil. She argues that the devil is a cultural figure that among Afro-Colombians represents ancestral memories of Africa.

The character of the Afro-Colombian devil differs from the European devil. It is a trickster and a patron of resistance against Christianity and the slavery system (Friedemann 1994:100). As described by Maya (1998) anybody who whipped or mistreated them (black slaves) was called a “witch,” but the character behind the “witch” changes according to the situation. For instance, women who wanted to become full witches had to agree to do wrongs by destroying the property of the owner and killing the allies of the slavery system and the Afro-Colombian devil referred to the organizer of a
maroon movement (a resistance movement) who would give the slaves instructions on
how to sabotage the slavery structure (Friedemann 1994:1002). Wade (1993:23) argues
that while blacks bear on their shoulder the load of white and mestizo discrimination, they
also bear stereotypes about powers that stem from their own original cultures.

**Images of Blackness in Contemporary Colombia**

The perceptions of mestizos and whites of non Afro-Colombians found in the
literature, describe expressions of negative images and stereotypes of Afro-Colombians,
seen as a category and seen as typically “black” people and ideas about the inferiority of
black people (Mosquera 1998:70). Smith-Córdoba (1980) argues that in Colombia the
lighter a child is born, the prettier she or he is thought to be. Smith-Córdoba points out
that the terms “black” and “ugly” are usually paired terms. Wade (1993: 245) points out
that blacks are portrayed in the social literature as coming from a poor, neglected region
that is at the bottom of the social scales of race, region and power.

Wade suggests that there is a dominant ideology that underlies images of race and
region: the white regions are wealthier, more powerful, and healthier and therefore “more
civilized” and “superior;” the black regions, and especially the Pacific coast considered
the blackest region, are seen as poor, underdeveloped, and “primitive.” Therefore, Afro-
Colombians are seen by the elites as uncultured, and lacking proper manners and urban
sophistication. They are thought to be lazy: they like to get up late, they do not like to
work, and they have little initiative. They are believed to enjoy a good time, they are
believed to be always happy and they are thought like to dance. Blacks are also portrayed
in Colombian literature as vulgar, rude, coarse, primitive, unpleasant and untrustworthy.
Phrases such as: “If a black does not shit on the way in, he/she will do it on the way out”
and “just had to be a black” (Negro tenía que ser), reinforce these images (Wade 1993:}
234). As Wade (1993) and Smith-Córdoba (1986) point out: there is a conditional acceptance of Afro-Colombians who adapt to the mores of the non-black world. Interesting here is the suggestion that adaptation includes forgetting completely about color and race as an issue. Any sensitivity about it is classed as showing signs of being acomplejado, full of complexes. The term acomplejado is a term typically used by Colombians, about a black person who is thought to be ashamed of being black. In this context, blanqueamiento is a process that involves adapting one’s behavior and assimilating models identified as non-black. This is a mechanism that diffuses Afro-Colombian solidarity and far from being indicative of the absence of racial prejudice, is its principal manifestation in Latin American society (Wade 1993:298).

Viveros (2002) argues that all over Colombia the idea believed, although not necessarily publicly expressed is, that black women were “hot,” and that black men were sexually virile. She also argues that the supposed sexual powers assign to Afro-Colombian men may be a source of envy, but they can lead to accusations of immorality, especially against the women, and a disorganized family life can result, since the men are said to want to pursue more women instead of staying with their wives. Wade (1993) suggests that in Colombia, relative to the interior of the country, areas such as the Pacific and Atlantic coastal regions have rather high rates of illegitimacy, consensual unions, series of consecutive unions, and polygyny. Scholarly studies (Gutiérrez de Pineda 1975; Friedemann 1974,1985; Pareja 1981; Barreto Reyes 1991) have related this to historical and contemporary factors such as patterns of spatial mobility and the weak influence of the church. Viveros (2002) points out that physicality and sexuality are also linked through dance because beautiful bodies that are prodigiously dexterous are also experts at
dancing. Wade (1993:247) points out how Afro-Colombian dances are depicted as dances that are replete with “erotic movement” and “obscene words” by the Colombian elite. A 1936 novel, *Risaralda* by Carrasquilla, describes a Pacific coastal dance, *currulao*:

She shakes as if offering herself for pleasure, as if urging avidly to be possessed. He, in turn, quivering with desire, moves in the excited unrestrained way of the buck...Her sensuous movements cause her savage and desirable breast to undulate like spinning tops, their tips lewdly firm in a phallic-like erection, inviting and exciting the male to his own erection (Wade 1993:247).

Wade (1993) concludes that white society has an ambivalent relationship to blacks in which they are seen as politically and morally inferior but at the same time possessed special powers. There is a connection constructed by a culture fascinated by the sexual powers attributed to Afro-Colombians, and similarly it is, reconstructed by the Afro-Colombian men and women in their understanding of how the whites have understood them.

In spite of these perceptions about Afro-Colombians, historically, the elites have been able to hold the belief in white superiority and at the same time deny the existence of racial problems. As Skidmore (1992) argues, the elites have held the belief that Afro-Colombian poverty is a legacy of socioeconomic disadvantage and not a result of discrimination. The Colombian government attempted to preserve the official picture of equality and harmony by envisaging a future in which blacks and Indians were not only absorbed but also erased from the national panorama, giving rise to a whitened *mestizo* nation.

Therefore, Wade (1997) has suggested that the structure of the Colombian racial order can be visualized as a triangle whose uppermost point is white and whose bottom corners are black and Indian. The white apex is associated with power, wealth, civilization, nationhood, urbanity, education, and culture. By contrast, blacks and Indians
are seen from above as primitive, dependent, uneducated, rural, and inferior. Smith-Córdoba (1986) points out that the lifestyle, material standard of living, education, manners, speech, and family structure of whites are recognized as having high values in the national hierarchies of prestige. Wade (1997) points out that further images are constructed around the ideas of an “abnormal” family structure with an “irresponsible” father and around the blacks’ supposed love of music, dancing, and celebration. Indian culture is seen as refractory to progress and development. He also argues that these images are consequence of the fact that triangular racial order overlaps strongly with a basic class order that, beginning with colonialism; slavery and the exploitation of Indian labor has structured race in this hierarchical fashion.

Class and race are not coterminous, since there are lower-class whites, as well as some middle-class blacks, but their historical coincidence has been enough to create the basic hierarchy of the racial order (Wade 1993:20). The essential process that connects whites, blacks, and Indians is mestizaje, both culturally and physically, where the cultural forms derived from the white world are given greater value. As described by Wade (1993:21):

More generally, everyone accepts that whites are on top and that blackness or indiannes can be an obstacle to social advancement; in this sense the potential value of blanqueamiento has the status of self-evidence.

Brout (1976) points out that some conclusions have been reached about race relations in Colombia: first, that the presence of Black blood constituted a severe social and economic handicap; second, the upper strata of society is entirely dominated by white aristocrats; third, that in legal disputes involving blacks and whites, the decision invariably favors the white; fourth, many black and mulatto women prefer to be mistresses of white men rather than marry dark-skinned males because of the prestige
value involved, and the feeling that one’s own children will be lighter, and enjoy greater
economic and social opportunities and; fifth, the assimilation of white cultural values is
such that children lacking straight hair and possessing pronounced black features are
deemed *maluco* (sickly) and *feo* (ugly) by their own parents. Nevertheless, Colombia has
been presented by the elites as a nation where the diverse races have become one big,
happy family (Brout 1976:105).

However it is crucial to realize, that these ideologies are not simply constructions
limited to the elite or foisted by them onto other classes. Wade (1993) suggests that they
derive from the elite’s encounter with the world as they experience it and from their
interest in shaping that world. In sum, Indians and blacks are seen as different from the
rest of the society. Indians are protected and studied or treated like animals such as
mules, beasts of burden. Afro-Colombians are caught between because of the ideologies
of *blanqueamiento* which prefer the lighter side of the spectrum and discriminates against
blacks and because of the ideas of national homogeneity that rhetorically includes blacks
as equals but at the same time deny them specific status (Wade 1993:37).

Friedemann (1995) points out that the contributions of Afro-Colombians in the
cultural, socio-political, and economic developments of Colombia have been denied.
Such denial leads to a perception of invisibility of blacks and their contributions and to
discrimination. Notwithstanding, some Colombian intellectuals such as Nina Friedemann
Smith-Cordoba (1980, 1986, 1989), and Adriana Maya (1998) have made an effort to
make visible the history, society and cultures of black Colombians in the fields of
education and the sciences.
Conclusion

In conclusion, the general attitude adopted by many Colombian intellectuals during the 19th century towards black people was unflattering. A European philosophical tone and literary style was used for describing and analyzing the psychological and physical makeup of blacks. In general, blacks were described by the elites and intellectuals, as stupid and lazy, amoral, fetishistic, and as more sensual and more superstitious than the rest of the population. However, the sexual powers attributed to black men were a source of envy to non-blacks. Justifications for their slavery were given based on their physical strength and the idea that some men were by nature free and others were by nature slaves. Scholars of the 19th century proclaimed the existence of “human races” and that the negative characteristics of the black race came from the blood. In the perceptions of the Colombian elite in the 16th and 17th centuries blacks were portrayed as biologically and intellectually inferior and as lacking the traits needed for progress and civilization. For instance, work was seen as the indispensable condition to progress and civilization but progress did not exist among black people. Models of modernity and progress were adapted where whitening of the population was perceives as the main strategy to achieve them. The general perceptions of the Colombians elites on Afro-Colombians were negative, where black was associated with “bad” and “ugly” and white was associated with “beauty” and “good”. Many literary works from influential Colombian intellectuals portrayed blacks with images of immorality and inferiority. Although these literary works were written more than three decades ago, the attitudes manifested in them have not disappeared.
CHAPTER 4
COMPARISONS OF AFRO-COLOMBIANS AND NON AFRO-COLOMBIANS IN CALI, COLOMBIA

The main objective of this chapter is to describe and analyze the living conditions of Afro-Colombians in comparison to the living conditions of non-Afro-Colombians in the city of Cali. Cali was chosen because it has the highest concentration of Afro-Colombians among all major urban centers of Colombia. Because of the extent of this work and the large quantity of detailed ethnographic information on each individual ethnic group, the use of aggregated data for Indians, mestizos, and whites in one category, non-Afro-Colombians was necessary. This chapter gives a description and comparison of the spatial distribution and spatial segregation based on race in Cali; inequalities in size of household, access to public services and possession of goods, levels of education of the two groups, income distribution, rates of employment and unemployment, and occupational distribution.

Colombia and its Territory

Colombia occupies the northwestern end of South America. Colombia stretches over approximately 1,140,000 sq. km. It is the only country in South America with coasts on both the Pacific (1350 km long) and the Atlantic (over 1600 km). Three Andean ranges run north and south through the western half of the country (about 45 percent of the total territory.) The eastern part is lowland, which can be generally divided into two regions: a huge open savannah on the north and the Amazon in the south (approximately 400,000 sq. km) (Rovira de Córdoba et al. 2000:25) (figure 1).
In 1538, the Spaniards established the colony of New Granada, the area name until 1861. After a 14-year struggle, in which Simón Bolivar’s troops won the battle of Boyacá in Colombia on the seventh of August of 1819, independence was attained in 1824. Bolivar united Colombia, Venezuela, Panamá, and Ecuador in the Republic of Greater Colombia (1810-1830), but lost Venezuela and Ecuador to separatists.

Figure 1. Colombia’s geographical location in South America. Source: www.studyabroad.com/content/portals/maps/colombia_map.html.

Colombia was one of the three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 (the others being Ecuador and Venezuela). A 40-year insurgent campaign to overthrow the Colombian Government escalated during the 1990s, undergirded in part by funds from the drug trade. Although the violence is deadly and large swaths of the countryside are under guerrilla influence, the movement lacks popular
support necessary to overthrow the government. An anti-insurgent army of paramilitaries has grown to be several thousand strong in recent years, challenging the insurgents for control of territory and illicit industries such as the drug trade and the government’s ability to exert its dominion over rural areas. While Bogotá (the capital) continues to negotiate a settlement, neighboring countries worry about the violence spilling over their borders (The World Fact Book 2002:1). Colombia’s economy suffered from weak domestic demand, austere government budgets, and difficult security situation. The total population below the poverty line is 55 percent and the unemployment rate is 17 percent (The World Fact Book 2002:4).

In 1993, Colombia’s total population was 33,109,804 of which 502,343 were Afro-Colombian (DANE 2000:36). Seventy one percent of its population is urban. Colombia’s population is divided in different ethnic groups. As described in Table 1, Colombia’s mestizo population is approximately, 52 percent, 20 percent white, 14 percent mulatto, 7 percent black, 4 percent Amerindian, and 3 percent zambo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mestizo</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mulatto</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Amerindian</th>
<th>Zambo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DANE 2000:36

**Demographic Aspects of Afro-Colombians**

After Brazil and United States, Colombia has the largest black population in the Americas. According to Social Watch (1997), the social status of the Afro-Colombian population reveals its low standard of living based on ethnic and racial discrimination. And the percentage of unsatisfied basic needs such as housing, education, employment,
health, etc., in the Afro-Colombian communities stands at 86 percent, nearly double the average for whites and mestizos. Inequality is also evident in terms of education, with 35 percent of illiteracy for Afro-Colombians versus 14 percent of illiteracy for non Afro-Colombians. Discrimination is also found in housing. Afro-Colombian households suffer from crowdedness and their homes are often found in areas of frequent erosion, flooding, and crowdedness. Basic public services such as water, reaches 16 percent of the Afro-Colombian households, compared to 70 percent for the national average.

Colombia is a highly regionalized country (figure 2), and for historical reasons race also has regional dimensions. According to DANE (2000:52), the Afro-Colombian population is distributed as follows: In the Department of Atlantico, 10 percent of its population is Afro-Colombian, in Santa Fé de Bogotá 2.2 percent, in Antioquia 3.4 percent, in Valle del Cauca 2.5 percent, in Cauca 20.7 percent, in Chocó 60.7 percent, and in Bolivar 63.3 percent (DANE 2000:51). There are oppositions between the “black” coast, the “white mestizo” interior and the “Indian” of the Amazon lowlands (Wade 1993:53-54). Wade (1993) argues that mestizaje, racial mixture, especially between European and indigenous, has not occurred uniformly over the different regions of Colombia. Within Colombia, the Andean highlands held relatively large and densely settled Chibcha chiefdoms, while the lowlands generally had sparser and lesser-specialized cultural groups. Under the colonial regime, the Indian population as a whole disintegrated both through mortality and through the cultural assimilation of Indians into the rank of libres (freed people). By 1778, almost half of those who remained within the census classification of Indian were in the eastern highland provinces of Santa Fé de Bogotá and Tunja. Nearly seventy thousand indigenous people formed less than 20
percent of the local population, compared with 40 percent of freed people and 37 percent of whites. Although the highlands held the largest concentration of Indians, significant communities of this ethnic category were counted elsewhere, notably in the lowlands Caribbean region, in the plains of the Amazon basin, and in the Pacific littoral. Wade (1993:54) points out that slaves concentrated in regions where Indian labor was problematic, especially in the gold mines where Indians were generally considered less productive than African slaves and less resistant to the rigors of the work. Slaves were concentrated primarily in the gold mines of the Pacific coast region. There were also large numbers of slaves in the gold mines of Antioquia, although they were more dispersed here, and the Caribbean coastal region had a significant concentration of slaves, about a third of which clustered in the slave port of Cartagena and its environs. Whites settled overwhelmingly in the eastern highland provinces of Tunja, Santa Fé de Bogotá, and in the city of Cartagena, in the provinces of Antioquia, Popayán and the Atlantic coast. Thus, different regions emerged with varying proportions of each racial group. In general terms, the Andean highlands held the majority of whites and Indians, the Amazon plains and jungles were dominated by Indians, and the coasts had a strong black element with considerable numbers of Indians (Wade 1993:54-56).

Historically, blacks have concentrated in four major departments of western Colombia (Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and Nariño) Cali, capital city of Valle del Cauca attracts many migrant groups, in particular groups from the Pacific coast. Blacks concentrated in these regions due to the demand of labor in the fields and in the mines (Maya 1994:45). The Pacific coast, which has high concentrations of black population, is one of Colombia’s poorest regions. For at least three decades, Afro-Colombians have
migrated from the Pacific coast to the major urban centers such as Medellín, Bogotá, and Cali. Approximately 21,000 people of African origin migrated from the Pacific coast to other parts of the country (Barbary et al 2000:17). Wade (1993:62) states that migration of Afro-Colombians out of their regions and communities to the more economically active areas is due to search of work, simply to survive or with hopes of advancement. Also, migration out of the Pacific region has been multidirectional, destinations including Ecuador, Panamá, the Caribbean coastal region, and the interior of the country (Wade 1993:62). He also argues that Afro-Colombians have left areas classified from the center’s perspective as primitive and peripheral, and have penetrated into the nation’s territorial and cultural heartland.

![Map of Colombia](https://www.mapzones.com/world/south_america/colombia/mapindex.php)

Figure 2. The five geographical regions of Colombia.

Based on a 1993 census, seven percent of Cali’s population is Afro-Colombian, but this number does not represent the real racial composition of Cali. The question of race in the 1993 census of Cali was misinterpreted. Barbary et al (2000) points out that the
majority of Afro-descendants did not mark themselves as “Afro-Colombian” since they did not think of themselves as members of an ethnic group. The 1999 census rephrased the question of race and the number of people who marked “Afro-Colombian” as their race or ethnic group increased by 30 percent. Wade (1993) argues that there is ambiguity about who is classed as or identifies himself or herself as black, Indian, white, mestizo, because the categorization of people as black, Indian, white, or mixed is, like any ethnic categorization, subject to variation according to circumstance and interest: in the Colombian context, the institutionalization of race mixture has increased the manipulability inherent in the process of classification and made categories such as black or Indian much more problematic than in say, North America (Wade 1993:22).

**Geographic Distribution by Race: Afro-Colombians and Non-Afro-Colombians**

Cali is divided in four urban zones, which are segmented in twenty-one “comunas” or neighborhoods. The four urban zones are: a) The Zone of the Mountain Slopes or Ladera, this is an old residential site situated in eroded hills and has high levels of poverty; b) The Eastern Zone (Zona Oriental), located on the banks of the Cauca river is the second area with the highest levels of urban poverty; c) The Central-Eastern Zone (Oriente Central), is formed by middle-class neighborhoods; and d) The Zone of the Corridor (Corredor) composed of middle and upper-class neighborhoods (figure 3).

Based on the findings of the World Bank, 37.2 percent of Cali’s households are Afro-Colombian, or 542,000 people out of 1,980,000 inhabitants (Barbary et al 2000:17). The variations in the distribution of households are important for determining geographical segregation in Cali. 45 percent of Cali’s households are located in the Eastern Zone of which 48 percent are Afro-Colombian households; 24 percent of the city’s households located in the Central-Eastern zone of which 38 percent are Afro-Colombian households;
28 percent of Cali’s households are in the Mountain Slopes, of which 8 percent corresponds to Afro-Colombian households; and finally 20 percent of Cali’s households are located in the Corridor zone of which 28 percent are Afro-Colombian households (table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of households according to type of household (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Eastern zone</th>
<th>Central-east zone</th>
<th>Ladera</th>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Colombian</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Afro-Colombian</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Urrea, Quintín and Ramirez 2000:17.
This information suggests that the distribution of households follows a racial hierarchy that systematically associates the poorest urban zones with Afro-Colombian people. Fifty two percent of Cali’s total population lives in low-class neighborhoods of which 74 percent is Afro-Colombian. Only 7.5 percent of Cali’s Afro-Colombians reside in middle and upper class neighborhoods. Residence of Afro-Colombians in the lower socio-economic strata is higher than for non-Afro-Colombians. Sociologist Fernando Urrea et al (2000) argues that segregated areas with over-representation of a population with similar social and racial characteristics highlights social-racial discrimination of the people who reside in those areas. Nevertheless, the socio-spatial relationship of the Afro-Colombian to the city is not simply a result of their primary condition as poor immigrants, most of who have little education or city experience. Wade (1993) suggests that it is also due for the reproduction of Afro-Colombian culture. He states that Afro-Colombians form ethnic enclaves in some of the neighborhoods where they live. This is a common occurrence. Wade suggests that these enclaves are points of congregation and exchange of information, and they can also act as places where Afro-Colombian culture is reproduced, albeit in forms that would appear altered to an Afro-Colombian from his/her original region. In this sense, these enclaves are foci where a new urban from of Afro-Colombian culture is being elaborated (Wade 1993:212). However, generally speaking the greater the concentration of Afro-Colombians, the poorer the area.

Non Afro-Colombian residents usually stigmatize urban neighborhoods where Afro-Colombians reside. Afro-Colombians are viewed as dangerous, immoral, crowded, disorganized, poor, and dirty. The media plays an important role in propagating these images to outsiders. Residents disagree with these portrayals by emphasizing that their
neighborhoods are tranquil and nice to live in. Also, the behavior of Afro-Colombians, and especially young afro-Colombian males, is defined as deviant and their presence as socially and morally threatening to the non-black urban community.

Furthermore, the connections migrants have prior to migrating to the city are important since it is usually through relatives, co-ethnics friends, and neighbors as well as from people from the migrant’s place of origin, that connections are made. Afro-Colombians get housing from a relative or from someone they have connections with, until they find a job.

**Social Inequality According to Social-Racial Characteristics**

The median size of household in the two populations indicates that Afro-Colombian households are slightly larger (5 persons) than those of whites (4 persons). A survey conducted in May of 1998 found that the median size (4 persons) of Afro-Colombian households was similar to that of non-Afro-Colombians (5 persons). Although, households were similar in size, the number of people who reside in the households is different. How crowded a household is could be defined by the number of individual people divided by the number of rooms that are available to sleep in. Households with high “crowdedness” may be defined as those with 3 or more people per room, and those of medium “crowdedness” as two or fewer people per room. The data show that Afro-Colombian households are twice as crowded as non Afro-Colombian households, with 29 percent of the Afro-Colombian households in the high “crowdedness” levels versus 15 percent of non Afro-Colombian households in the same categories. It was found by (Urrea et al 2000:25) that the average size of households according to geographic zone was similar for both, Afro-Colombian and non-Afro-Colombian households with a mean of four people per household. Crowdedness is also
due to the size of the home. Afro-Colombian households have a smaller physical area compared to the area of the homes of non Afro-Colombians. This may suggest that non Afro-Colombian families or individuals have greater access to larger homes and resources for buying a bigger home. Afro-Colombians are a poorer group and can spend less on housing than can others of similar age and education. Wade (1993) suggests that it may be that housing itself is a better indicator of economic status than declarations about income. He also points out that it could be suggested that Afro-Colombians attach less importance to housing or have different housing preferences and thus appear as a more poorly housed group. The data show that Afro-Colombians live in slightly worse, or more insecure housing than other immigrants, even when some other intervening variables are controlled for such as time in the neighborhood, age, and education. Wade states that it is unclear how much of this is due to lack of capital or income and how much to discrimination in the housing market, or certain preferences on their part. He concludes that the major factor is lack of disposable resources.

**Access to Public Services and Household Possessions**

Seventy percent of Afro-Colombian households have private water supply compared to 77 percent of non Afro-Colombian households. However it is in the low and middle socioeconomic strata that show greater differential between the two populations with 10.9 percent for non Afro-Colombian households and 6.4 percent for Afro-Colombian households. Access to telephone services is greater for non-Afro-Colombian households (66 percent) than for Afro-Colombian households (53.5 percent). A greater differential is observed in the middle-low and middle class groups with 33 percent of Afro-Colombian households with access to telephone services compared to 51 percent for non-Afro-Colombian households. In general, non-Afro-Colombian households have a
slightly greater access to home furniture, especially to refrigerators. Eighty percent of Afro-Colombian households have a refrigerator compared to 88 percent for non Afro-Colombian households. Again, a greater differential is observed in the middle-low class group with 72 percent of Afro-Colombian households with access to a refrigerator compared to 90 percent for non Afro-Colombian households.

The data show that Afro-Colombian households are below non-Afro-Colombian households in terms of access to services and furniture possession. Afro-Colombians live in smaller houses compared to non-Afro-Colombians. Urrea et al (2000) argues that geographical and racial segregation and other characteristics such as region of origin; time of residence in Cali, level of education, income, and capacity to integrate into the labor market may contribute to explain the differences between these two groups.

**Education and Employment**

In terms of education, the data show that the median is similar for both types of households, although, education levels (higher or lower) depend on two variables: zone of residency and gender of the head of household. Table three shows that in general, female-headed households tend to have a lower level of education for both Afro-Colombian and non-Afro-Colombian households. Each zone of residency shows different results. The Eastern and Ladera zones have the lowest levels of education with a mean of 9 for both Afro-Colombian and non Afro-Colombian households compared to the Central Eastern and Corridor with a mean of 12. Afro-Colombian households of the Eastern zones headed by males have a relatively higher level of education with 9.6 compared to female-headed households with 9. Whereas, for non-Afro-Colombian households, the level of education for female-headed households is higher with 9.4 percent, than male-headed households with 9.3 percent. In the Ladera zone, Afro-Colombian households
headed by females are better off than households headed by Afro-Colombian and non-Afro-Colombian males and females with 9.9 percent. In the Central-Eastern, Afro-Colombian households headed by males have higher with 10.7 percent compared to female-headed households with 9.8. For non-Afro-Colombian households, those headed by women have higher levels of education with 10.8 compared to male-headed households with 10.7. In the Corridor, households headed by non-afro-Colombian males have higher levels of education compared to the other types of households. In general, households headed by females have slightly lower level of education than men (table 3).

Table 3. Level of education in years by head of household and geographic zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic zone</th>
<th>Type of household</th>
<th>Head of household</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td>Level of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Afro-Col</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Afro-Col</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladera</td>
<td>Afro-Col</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Afro-Col</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central-Eastern</td>
<td>Afro-Col</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Afro-Col</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor</td>
<td>Afro-Col</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Afro-Col</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Afro-Col</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Afro-Col</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Urrea et al 2000:31.

In general, the 1993 Colombian Census estimated that the rates of illiteracy for the Afro-Colombian communities are significantly superior to the national average. Approximately, 31.3 percent of the Afro-Colombian population is illiterate. In the department of Valle del Cauca, the total rate of illiteracy (people of five years and older)
is 46.3 percent, and 12.2 percent in urban areas (Cali), and 46.3 percent of illiteracy in the rural areas. Illiteracy for women is 16 percent compared to 15 percent for men.

An approximation to the conditions of social inequality between Afro-Colombians and non-Afro-Colombians shows, that Afro-Colombians annual income is of 500 dollars compared to 1500 dollars for non-Afro-Colombians (Angulo 1999:15). By analyzing the rates of employment and unemployment by type of household, it can be observed that the rate of employment and unemployment are relatively similar for both household types. However, unemployment rates for Afro-Colombians are slightly higher with forty-nine percent compared to forty-five for non-Afro-Colombians (Urrea et al 2000:34).

Although there is a similar pattern of employment rates between Afro-Colombians and non Afro-Colombians, a differential pattern in the occupational opportunities is observed. Including gender as a variable, there is a slightly greater participation of Afro-Colombian women in professional and technical professions with 12 percent, compared to Afro-Colombian men with 9 percent. By contrast, there is greater concentration of Afro-Colombian women in non-skilled jobs, such as in domestic services with 25 percent compared to 14 percent for non-Afro-Colombian women. Also, Afro-Colombian women are underrepresented in teaching occupations with 3 percent compared to 6 percent for non Afro-Colombian women. Afro-Colombian men are slightly represented in occupations such as craftsmen (18 percent) and construction workers (17 percent) compared to non-Afro-Colombians, 13 and 13 percent respectively (table 4). These numbers reveal that there are greater differences between men and women in occupational distribution than differences between Afro-Colombians and non-Afro-Colombians in general.
Wade (1997) suggests that in the case of Afro-Colombians, women are perceived automatically as servants and men as construction workers. These jobs are seen as “natural” for Afro-Colombians. Manual labor is thought to be appropriate for Afro-Colombians since it does not require the intelligence usually found in white men. Jobs that require “thinking” and “attractive” appearance are reserved for non-Afro-Colombians. Non Afro-Colombians concentrate in administrative, sales and public service jobs. The case of the “Almacenes Éxito” supermarket perfectly illustrates job segmentation. “Almacenes Éxito” only hires mestizo and white personnel in customer service positions, since “buena apariencia,” attractiveness is of extreme importance, while mulattos and dark-colored people are consistently hired for cleaning and cooking jobs. These guidelines reinforce the notion that black is ugly and undesirable, while white is beautiful and desirable.

There is an ethnic concentration of poverty and of inequality. Patrinos (1999) suggests that, in general, for the same amount of productive characteristics, an economic minority receives lower returns for each productive-enhancing characteristic such as education, training and experience. The personnel hired to do the cleaning and cooking of many factories and businesses, are required to have a level of education (primary and secondary education) and social status (middle-low). Most Afro-Colombians have jobs with low rates of pay and limited opportunities for advancement. Individuals in the secondary labor market are locked into that sector and barriers exist to their moving into the high wage, high productivity, and primary labor market. The hypothesis here is that a minority group -in this case Afro-Colombians- receive lower earnings and have higher incidence of poverty because they are relegated into the secondary sector of the economy.
Occupational structure in Cali by ethnicity according to household type indicates that there is labor segregation especially in non-skilled jobs, such as in domestic services. Fuller (2003) points out that men from lower-class sectors generally have jobs that require physical strength and geographical mobility. Middle-class men, by contrast, have managerial positions.

Table 4. Occupational distribution by gender and race (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Afro-Colombian</th>
<th>Non Afro-Colombian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic service</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacture</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, painter</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction worker</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Urrea et al 2000:35.

A significant variation is found in professionals such as educators and technicians where there is a sector of Afro-Colombians -the majority of whom are women- though they still under-represented.

Discussion

It has been suggested by Patrinos (1999:8) that the overall differential is due to “class” components (family background, education and occupation), rather than ethnic differences. In other words, equalizing human capital and family backgrounds of individuals would result in virtual elimination of ethnic socio-economic inequalities. He also suggests that:
A positive relationship between educational attainments across generations reflects the intergenerational transmission of human wealth. In the case of indigenous people, if their parents had low levels of schooling and other forms of human capital, then this will be reflected in their level of human capital attainment. Lower stocks of human capital will be converted into lower relative earnings and a higher incidence of poverty. A similar hypothesis would be that differences are due to class background rather than discrimination against minority groups. That is, the great differences between ethnic groups could be due to the natural working of economic forces, rather than discrimination. According to this hypothesis, an individual’s socioeconomic background in terms of family income and father’s and mother’s education and occupation are more important factors in determining present socioeconomic conditions than is ethnicity (Patrinos 1999:8).

Geschwender (1978) argues that race relations are rooted in basic exploitative processes, and prejudice was essentially a defensive weapon designed to preserve status and prestige. It is in the interest of the elites (whites) to maintain their social-economic advantage. Wade (1997) organized the racial order of Colombia in a pyramidal structure with whites in the highest level, associated with power, wealth, civilization, education, and governance. The lower levels are reserved for indigenous and Afro-Colombians. These two groups are associated with, inferiority, ignorance, poverty and they are perceived as rebellious in the progress to “civilization.” Kelley (1988) and Smith-Córdoba (1986) suggest that after reaching a certain level of whitening, then and only then, lies the possibility of equalizing human capital, and the virtual elimination of ethnic socio-economic inequalities. Smith-Cordoba (1986) stated that to gain access to a world of opportunities it is necessary to avoid what is considered culturally and physically black. Upward mobility for black people is often accompanied by cultural adaptation and in many cases, marriage to a lighter-skinned person. This is because upward mobility generally brings a black person into greater contact with the non-black world. In this sense, black adaptation is structured by the chances of economic advancement (Wade 1993:6-7).
The data described above suggest that, in general, Afro-Colombians are among the poorest and are subject to all kinds of discrimination (housing, services, material possessions, education, geographical segregation). *Mulattos* and *mestizos* are intermediate in the socio-economic ladder. However, not all poor people are black. There are also *mestizos* and whites in this category; discrimination in Colombia is mainly based on race. However, other ideological rationales such as gender, age, education and profession are used to discriminate and segregate people.

**Conclusion**

Based on the data presented, the indicators show the tendency for white/*mestizo* people to have slightly better living conditions such as a slightly higher income, more material possessions, better quality of housing, slightly higher levels of education, and better jobs than Afro-Colombians. Despite the small differences found in the data, and that the numbers show no statistical significance, it could be suggested that the overall status of Afro-Colombians is slightly lower than the social status of non-Afro-Colombians and that the differences found are due to racial discrimination.
CHAPTER 5
GENDER RELATIONS IN CHARCO AZUL, CALI, COLOMBIA.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Marginal Masculinity in the Neighborhood of Charco Azul, Cali, Colombia

This chapter compares the beliefs and practices in the construction of masculinity between two distinct Colombian social and racial groups: young Afro-Colombian men, of lower-class, single, and unemployed; and white/mestizo adult men of the city of Armenia, of middle-class, employed, and married. The objective is to highlight the similarities about their perceptions and practices on what it means to be a man. The question is whether or not Afro-Colombian men conform to the Latin American template of masculinity, machismo. This chapter is divided in the following sections: First, I describe the research methods used to collect the data (primary and secondary data). Second, I describe and analyze the data collected (field notes) from Charco Azul, Cali. Third, the data for men of Armenia, gathered from the work of Mara Viveros (2001) is analyzed. Finally, I consider a brief description of the concept of domestic violence and its implications in the construction of masculinity.

Research Methods and Data

My field research took place in Charco Azul, Cali, Colombia. The data were obtained from interviews of sixteen men and ten women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. For understanding masculinities in Latin America it is crucial to include women in the study of masculinity. Gutmann (2003) shows the importance of women to the construction, performances, and practices associated with men and manhood in the
region. The data collected and analyzed concerning women’s perception on masculinity came from one discussion session, and individual interviews in Charco Azul, Cali. Most of the interviewees were born in an urban environment and reside in the neighborhood of Charco Azul. The city of Cali, and in particular Charco Azul, was chosen because it has the highest concentration of Afro-Colombian population among the major urban centers of Colombia. Charco Azul is characterized by a significant number of Afro-Colombian residents.

The city of Armenia, capital city of Quindío, is one of the most prosperous departments of Colombia. Its residents are mainly descendants of the Antioqueños, who define themselves as non-black and hold the ideology of racial purity (Viveros 2002:135). An important characteristic of Armenia is the size of the family. Traditionally, a quindiana family is large in size (between 6 to 10 children). There is a high demand for labor in farming and especially in the growing of coffee. Children contribute in the growing of crops and girls help in domestic chores. Most of the men interviewed from Armenia are of middle-class, employed, and married and single. The data analyzed for men of Armenia were mainly taken from two main works of Mara Viveros (2001) on Men and Gender Identities and De Quebradores y Cumplidores (2002). The men she interviews are white and mestizo men of middle-class between the ages of thirty and forty. The names of the subjects are not identified. The work of Viveros was chosen because it is one of the few anthropological works on Colombia that takes into account the themes of gender and race. An urban sample was chosen because in recent decades Colombian society has become more urbanized with changes in the size of families, levels of education, and feminine participation in the public sphere. Their populations
have also been in contact with ideas from the outside world through tourism, migration, and the media which provide information about the discourses of masculinity and femininity, alternative sexualities that have contributed to the redefinition of gender relations elsewhere, and new representations of the characteristics of each gender (Fuller 2003:135).

**Masculinities: Men of Charco Azul and Armenia**

Charco Azul is located in the eastern side of Cali in the district of Agua Blanca. The neighborhood is divided in two areas, a developed area and a non-developed area. The developed area has building structures made of concrete and the streets are paved; the building structures of the non-developed area are made of wood, tin, and the pathways or streets are unpaved dirt roads (photos 5, 6, 7; and figure 4 for location of Cali).

Two focus group sessions were held, one with men and one with women. A total of sixteen men between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four were interviewed. They are heterosexuals and single, with the exception of one individual who was living in free union with a woman at the time of the interview. All were Afro-Colombian with the exception of one mestizo. Half attended school and half did not attend school. Two people have graduated. Four of the sixteen men interviewed were employed in the informal sector of the economy and the other twelve were unemployed. Twelve of the men interviewed mentioned that they were not members of a gang, and only four mentioned that they were. This may suggest that they did not want to tell me because belonging to a gang group is illegal and negatively perceived by society. Finally, nine of the men interviewed mentioned that soccer was their hobby while the other seven stated music, dancing and drawing as a hobby (appendix C). Ten single, heterosexual women
between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two were interviewed. One of them was living in free union. All were Afro-Colombian and one was mulatto. Almost all were in school but one had graduated and was not attending school. Most of the woman interviewed stated that they did not belong to a gang. All of them mentioned dancing, such as salsa, merengue, currulao, and hip-hop as a hobby. None were employed at the time of the interview (appendix D). The numbers presented here are small due to the short time spent in the field (three weeks) and lack of resources.

Figure 4. Sites of study: Cali and Armenia.
Source: www.colombiareport.org/colombiafacts.htm.
A first session was held in the morning with the men. Most of the women preferred to meet in the afternoon because during the mornings they had household chores to do. The focus group sessions and most of the interviews were held in Spanish and at the Development Center (Centro de Desarrollo) of Charco Azul. The same questions were asked to both men and women with the exception of few extra questions asked to women (see appendix A and B for questionnaires). The women’s session was carried in a more organized fashion (one woman talking at a time), and sometimes the subjects were hesitant to talk, whereas two or three men talked or shouted at the same time. It seem that the man who wanted to be heard and in charge was the loudest. Participants for the interviews were chosen from the focal group sessions. The criteria used to choose the participants for the interviews were their willingness and interest to discuss particular issues. Most of the interviews with men were taken by two of my research assistants, Hernán Herrera and Andrés Felipe Benitez. I participated in two of the interviews with men1 and interviewed all the women.

Besides my work in the neighborhood, I also visited two of the nightclubs, named “the Bronx” and “Sonrythm” that are frequented by young black men and women in Cali. Here I observed the social behavior of men and women in this social setting. Nightclubs provide a good source of information since young Afro-Colombian men and women gather here every weekend for dancing and drinking. As such they are an important aspect in the construction of masculine identity. Also, part of the research was secondary

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1 My presence during the interviews seemed to create a silent effect or change in attitude towards the subject being discussed. I observed that these males would change the wording, for instance, instead of using “culiar”, which translates to “fuck” in English, they would say “tener sexo” which means, “to have sex”. Also, when discussing gender roles and relations they seemed to make an effort to say what they thought I wanted to hear.
data from the work of Mara Viveros on Masculinities and Regional Diversity in Colombia. One of the groups of men she studied is a mestizo/white, middle-class group of men from the city of Armenia, Colombia. Armenia is the capital city of the Department of Quindío, which is located in the central-western side of Colombia (figure 4). All of the men interviewed are either mestizo or white and members of the middle-class.

The analysis of the narratives shows that males identify themselves as members of a gendered community. They have internalized a discourse of what it means to “be a man”. All of the men interviewed felt that a penis was sufficient to distinguish them from women. And that being born a man was a blessing. They were taught by their parents and by their peers that being a male was important and they had to be proud of that. José, age 15, from Charco Azul stated: “I am thankful to God because I am a man”. However, they argued that men should not act as if they were superior to women. They thought that women were physically and morally weak. Juan, age 23, stated:

“God made men to take care of women and the most vulnerable. He [God] made women to accompany men in their journey. We, the men should protect and guide women and the family. Men should take all important and final decisions . . . with the consent of women, of course, but the final decision is on the hands of the men because they can think better than women can.”

Even though for the interviewees, to “be a man” has its origin in biological characteristics; they felt that they were incomplete because to be “real men” they needed to reach adulthood (though work and marriage). José, age 15, described his manhood in the following terms:

“ What makes me a man? Well, you know, I have a penis and that makes me a man. I am also physically stronger than a woman. Even though there are women that are very strong, in general, men are stronger” (fieldnotes 2002).

Olavarria and Valdés (1998) state that an individual man comes to be a complete/real man when he endures some stages, develops particular attributes, and
Figure 5. Dirt road in Charco Azul.
Source: Author 2002.

Figure 6. Houses in Charco Azul.
Source: Author 2002.
attains specific roles. Most of the men interviewed explained the need to pass from childhood and a series of experiences and tests to reach adulthood. They all agreed that a “complete” or a real man should possess many attributes such as: “A man should be responsible, mature, strong, and respectful” . . . “A man is the chief of the home, the provider, and he is responsible for the well-being of those who are under his protection” (fieldnotes 2002). Carlos, age 19, stated that:

“God created men to guide and to head the household.” A man is someone who is independent and free. A man should always give the impression that he is certain of his actions. “To always wear the pants and never let a woman take over.” A man has to be strong, never be fearful or convey his feelings or cry.” (field notes 2002)

However, some agreed that a man who cries is still a man because he has feelings like any other human being, but he should never let other people see him cry because that is a sign of weakness. Juan, age 23, stated: “Yeah, a man can cry but when he is alone and no one is around to see him cry . . . a man should be strong enough and not cry, leave that for women, they can cry.” (fieldnotes 2002) Most men agreed that a man should be
able to confront all risky situations in the street and at home, given that it is a man’s job
to handle those situations. Pedro, age 17, stated:

“A man is capable of taking over many responsibilities, he has responsibilities at
home, at the work place and at the streets . . . the man belongs to the streets, to his
job . . . if he is not capable of taking on a responsibility he is considered weak. If
there is a problem to solve at home, the man should fix it, that is his job, he is
responsible to keep the house save and in good condition.” (field notes 2002)

All men interviewed considered the home as tedious to him and argued that women
belong to the home. As John described: “the streets are very dangerous for women, they
can get raped, insulted, robbed, they should stay home for their own protection.”

Besides these attributes, they considered that a real man should be fair and wise.
Most men agreed that a man should always act properly, and not be a liar or a thief.
Jorge, age 24, stated: “a man should have dignity and respect for himself and for others,
especially for his family, friends and the most vulnerable. A good man has to be a good
husband, brother, friend, and son.” (fieldnotes 2002) Most men of Charco Azul
considered loyalty as the most valuable characteristic. A man who does not comply with
these principles is perceived as being poco hombre (less of a man). Being super macho
was negatively perceived among the interviewed. Most of the men interviewed thought of
macho as a negative trait. Andrés, age 17 described a macho as:

“A macho has no respect for anybody, he is abusive and controlling to women and
to weak people . . . he wants to take advantage of every situation, he thinks of
himself as the most important and most valuable of all men.” (fieldnotes 2002)

A Macho man is perceived as a man who has an unfit life such as a drug addict and
a criminal. They all rejected the idea of describing themselves as being machos.

In Armenia, the men interviewed agreed on the characteristics men should possess,
such as responsibility for the well-being of others, and respect for women and the most
vulnerable. They also thought of fidelity as a valuable trait in men. However, the capacity
of a man to guide and head the household was most valuable to them. As one interviewee put it: “the man must be the provider of the household, he should be able to support his family if he wants the respect of others” (Viveros 2001:88). Most considered responsibility as the most important aspect in a man. As one subject describes it: “a man needs to take responsibility on all the social realms, at home, at work and in society . . . he needs to be a good father, husband, and good worker.” (Viveros 2001:89) For both men interviewed in Charco Azul and Armenia, work was crucial for the construction of their masculine identity. Work is associated with independence and competency; it introduces young men to adulthood. According to these men, work is the key dimension of masculine identity. Work is also represented as a masculine space because through work men accumulate the social and productive capital that represents their primary contributions to their families, thus allowing them to gain recognition from their peers and guarantee their gender dominance (Fuller 2003:150). An Armenian man stated:

“Work is crucial in the life of a man because it provides independence and autonomy… it also provides money and with money a man can support a family and/or can have many women if he wants . . . without money a man can do nothing” (Viveros 2001:89).

Work is associated with responsibility and as the means through which a man can start a family. Some Armenian men stated that work is what defines a man’s masculinity and the principal mean of personal satisfaction. An Armenian man states: “I am a man because I work.” (Viveros 2001:91)

Fuller also argues that work is the sphere of gender relations that has undergone the most dramatic changes during the last decades. All of the men interviewed by her have been influenced by new discourses that question male predominance and show themselves to be relatively open to the idea of equality of the genders, especially when it
comes to education and jobs. A major factor that brought new discourses is the feminization of labor and unemployment rates. Unemployment rates in Colombia are above 20 percent. Most men interviewed comment that women are taking most of the jobs and that overall is easier for women to find jobs. Pineda (2000) suggests that 60 percent of jobs created are taken by women, and as a result of the feminization of labor, many men have been displaced from their jobs and the rates of male unemployment have increased; as a result, some men have joined their wife’s micro-businesses as means for their personal survival and their families. During this process, the traditional model of masculinity has been challenged, and new forms of masculinity have emerged, and new forms of power relations have appeared as well. Some of the women interviewed in Charco Azul, reported that their male peers agreed with them working because of the financial need. Most of the men interviewed in Armenia, in contrast, strongly believed that work was the responsibility of men and that women should stay at home and take care of the children. Most of the men interviewed from Charco Azul agreed that work was important in their masculine identities; however, work is not perceived as what makes an individual a man. As Andrés described it: “Work does not make me a man, but it does make me a responsible man, someone who is capable of doing anything, someone who is tough.” (fieldnotes 2002) For most men in Armenia, being unemployed was the worst thing that could happen to a man. As one subject describes:

“This being unemployed has a negative impact on a man because he loses his independence and autonomy and also loses social recognition...he loses his masculinity.” (Viveros 2001:99)

Fercho, age 22, of Charco Azul stated that work was crucial for his masculine identity. However, he emphasized that the type of job he performs is more important. Fercho said:
“It is really important for many of us to have the capability of working in a rough environment and to perform tasks jobs such as stealing . . . many of us work in the streets selling food or fruits, we have to be alert all the time because the streets are dangerous (fieldnotes 2002).

Most men of Charco Azul constantly expressed feelings of frustration either in the search of a job or at the work place. Most of them felt that they were discriminated against because of their skin color and because they were residents of Charco Azul. As Mario, age 15, put it:

“People think that we do not want to work, that is not true. It is not that I don’t want to work, it is that is difficult to find a job this days, and on top of that people are discriminatory and racist, they don’t want to hire an Afro-Colombian man from Charco Azul…they all think we are thieves. Maybe some of us do steal, but they (non-Afro-Colombians) don’t have the right to say that we all do, there are good people here in Charco Azul that don’t get into that stuff. If we steal is because we go hungry and our families too . . . we know that it is wrong but we have no other choice…there are no jobs or we won’t get hired (fieldnotes 2002).

All men from Charco Azul consider that a man who performs risky jobs is tough and a man who has character. In this setting, these men create their manhood around violent conditions and masculinity is described and valued in terms of how tough and how strong a man is. Moreover, work was perceived as the only means through which men acquire money and respect. In contrast, most men of Armenia stated that their working experiences were enjoyable and positive. Generally, these men have better jobs than Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul. They found through work a way to achieve many responsibilities and to personal satisfaction. Although most men from the two studied groups examined here expressed feelings of acceptance about women working, many emphasized the fact that the situation was temporal and out of place. Jorge, age 24, from Charco Azul pointed out that: “As soon as I start working, things will go back to normal” (fieldnotes 2002), that is to say, going back to the norms that subordinate women to men. Fuller (2003) argues that although most men agreed that women have the same
responsibility to work as men do and thought that men and women should contribute to the economy of the household, there are indications that the attitudes of many men have not changed, especially men from the low-class neighborhoods. For instance, men from low-class sectors generally have jobs that require physical strength and geographical mobility. Both of these are associated with masculinity. In general, the greatest division of labor by gender can be found in the lower-class sectors of society. Middle-class men, by contrast, identify masculinity with the capacity to command and with authority, characteristics that, according to them, are necessary for management positions.

All men interviewed stated that men must go through different stages before reaching manhood. As described by Fuller (2003) each age group emphasizes different aspects of their masculinities. Young adults for example, put emphasis on solidarity and competition among men, and the importance of being accepted in the recognized masculine spaces, to affirm their masculinity. For instance, a group of young men drinking in a bar, bet to the one man who can drink more and it is expected that each man would pay for a round of drinks for everybody and/or pay for the drinks of a friend who has no money. Mature men, by contrast, put emphasis on marriage duties and conflicts, on paternity, and the responsibility they have with society. Adulthood and responsibility are seemed as a prerequisite for establishing a family. Marriage inaugurates adult life. From the domestic point of view, most men of Charco Azul and Armenia defined themselves as the persons mainly responsible for the family. A man from Armenia days:

“Marriage constitutes one of the elements in the adult life of a man. After a man proves that he can work, then marriage and having children is the next step. To form your own family shows that a man is independent and has a sense of responsibility.” (Viveros 2000:103)
In the culture of Armenia, fathering children proves a man’s virility, and a man gains recognition from society. Also, there is a strong feeling that a man needs the company of a woman and that he cannot be on his own. As described by one man interviewed: “God created women to always accompany men.” (Viveros 2001:107) Men of Charco Azul and Armenia stated that the women they were to married had to be understanding, honest, and good mothers (Fuller 2003:150).

Fuller (1997) also points out that domestic values collide with masculine values. This implies that there is a constant and unresolved tension between virile, public aspects of masculinity and its domestic version. For instance, both groups of men conceived of masculine sexuality as a natural tendency that cannot be controlled within marriage.

Mario, age 15, from Charco Azul stated:

“As a man I have the right to be with a woman or to go drinking with my friends, because if I don’t, then people would laugh at me and say that I am not a man, that my wife bosses me around.” (fieldnotes 2002)

Men of Charco Azul and Armenia, pointed out that if their sexualities were controlled, then they run the risk of being feminized. On the other hand, control over the sexuality of the spouse and authority over her and over the whole family is a key component of masculine identity (Fuller 2003:147). Juan said that: “One of the main characteristics of a real man lies in his capacity to conquer women sexually and to control their sexualities. . . the woman I have as a wife I love, but the one I have sex with is my lover.” (fieldnotes 2002) According to the narratives of the men of both groups, paternity consecrates adulthood and masculinity.

A man of Armenia said: “Through parenthood a man exercises his masculinity such as responsibility, guidance, loyalty and independence.” (Viveros 2002:250) For all the men interviewed, the manner in which the capacity to have children is translated into
fatherhood in its public and domestic dimension is responsibility (Fuller 2003:149). Most men from both groups agreed that to be a father is not to procreate but rather to assume social responsibilities. The father figure was defined as the one who determines the destiny of his children. Most men strongly believe that fathers who are present and provide for their families guarantee future success for their children, whereas those who abandon their families condemn their children to poverty.

In my sample, most of the men interviewed mentioned that their fathers had abandoned them in early age. In general, Charco Azul has high levels of fatherless households and as a consequence, most men interviewed displayed hostility towards their fathers. For example, Francis, age 22, said about his absent father: “He is not a man, he has no character, no respect for anybody, he is a nobody.” (fieldnotes 2002) However, they attached a high value to paternity. As Andrés states: “I have a daughter and I want to be a good father to her, I want to be there when she needs me and I want to give her everything she deserves.” (fieldnotes 2002). All men agreed that spending time with the family and especially with the children was important. Affection was mentioned too.

Men from both groups revealed that sexuality was an essential component to their masculinities, because a man who conquers women gains the respect of his peers. All of them stated that their male friends introduced them to sex. A man from Armenia states: “I remember the first time I had sex. My friends took me to a brothel and I had sex with a prostitute . . . I think I did fine the first time.” (Viveros 2001:66) A man who is sexually active is considered more masculine than those who are not sexually active. Juan of Charco Azul said that: “the más caballo (big horse) is the man who has sex with all the women he wants.” (fieldnotes 2002) Some of the men of Armenia mentioned that they
had parental orientation in regards to sexuality. However, most of them stated that their first sexual relation was with a prostitute. They mentioned that going to a brothel to initiate a man’s sex life was a regional tradition. Men of Armenia refer to sexual workers as “lady,” “beautiful girl,” or “dear.” Men of Charco Azul were introduced to sexuality by their friends. However, the women they had the first intimate relationship were friends of the neighborhood or someone of their social class and age.

Nevertheless, being the más caballo/hypersexual is an attribute most men would like to achieve and it is a trait that is admired. Some men argued that having affection for the person they are having sex with was important and that affection made a big difference in the quality of the sexual relation. As described by a subject of Armenia: “Sex without love is simple, it is like a business transaction, you have sex, you pay for it, and then you leave.” (Viveros 2001:67) There was one man of Armenia who did not consider his sexuality as an important aspect of his masculinity. By contrast, all men interviewed mentioned that a woman that sleeps around with many men is considered a perra, whore or prostitute (“female dog” or “bitch.”) Men of Charco Azul classify woman in two groups: “good” and “bad” women. As Roberto, age 20, illustrates: “for a serious relationship I choose a decent girl, a girl who belongs to her home, and doesn’t sleep around. For sex, I look for an easy woman.” (fieldnotes 2002) Easy woman refers to a woman that has sexual relationships with many men. Fuller (1998) argues that men see their masculinities threatened when other men try to conquer their wives and girlfriends. Thus, men seek as wives or companions those women who adhere to the traditional model of femininity while they maintain extra marital relations with other women to safeguard their masculinities. Men demand sexual devotion on the part of women, while
they can be sexually promiscuous. Most of the women interviewed argued that all the men of the neighborhood were promiscuous. Sandra, age 18, of Charco Azul stated: “There are no good men in Charco Azul. They don’t have any principles or personal goals; they are also unfaithful.” (fieldnotes 2002) All women agreed that fidelity was one of the characteristics they valued in men because they considered men to be naturally sexual, and because of their nature it was much harder for men to be loyal to only one woman.

Thus, most of the women interviewed agreed that white men were more loyal and treated women better than Afro-Colombian men (men of Charco Azul) and were physically more attractive and better fathers. These women stated that white men were más cariñosos (loving) whereas Afro-Colombian men were less sentimental and were forward. However, these women thought that Afro-Colombian men were better lovers than white and mestizo men. As Catalina, age 20, put it: “I don’t like a man that does not give me good sex . . . I get bored.” (fieldnotes 2002) Most of the women interviewed agreed that women should enjoy sex as much as men do and that they should reach orgasms as often as men do. Also, all men of Charco Azul thought that they were better lovers than white men because Afro-Colombian men’s bodies were stronger and had better dexterity. Seen from another perspective, beauty is associated with delicacy, softness, and fine features. This is a feminine trait because it is associated with harmony and softness. As stated by Fuller (2003:141):

“A handsome man is a man who is attractive, who takes care of his appearance, who looks after his body.” He’d be a man who is handsome and has bearing. But a man cannot be good looking”. By putting this quality to light-skinned men, working-class men recognize the existence of racial hierarchies but invert them by claiming the virile attributes for themselves and feminizing the men of the dominant race. Men from the lower-class sectors, and those with Indian or black
ethnic racial features, can claim to be more masculine than the men of the dominant racial or ethnic groups. The attractiveness lies in their bodies, in the very essence of their masculinity, whereas the attractiveness of men of other races resides in their beauty, a quality symbolically associated with femininity.

Sexuality can be displayed in different scenarios where men can show their corporeal abilities. Playing sports was crucial in the lives of all men interviewed. As one man of Armenia stated: “Physical strength is all we care about in school, for instance, in a race, the first man to finish gains the admiration and respect of the others.” (Viveros 2001:63) All men agreed that men have to be competitive and aggressive and sports allow them to display both. They also stated that a man that is a good athlete is never alone. To belong to a group such as a sports team, and/or a gang is an important feature in a man’s life, for it is through it that he develops and reinforces his masculinity. As Juan, age 23, put it: “If you belong to a team or a gang, you feel important because you are never alone, your friends are always with you.” (fieldnotes 2002) In gangs, hierarchies exist based on the individuals’ masculine traits, such as who are the strongest, the best athletes, the more competitive, and the best leaders. Also, masculinity is measured on how good a drinker and a dancer a man is. All men from Charco Azul thought that through drinking a man can show how strong he is and through dancing he could show his dexterity and in this manner present himself as good sexual partner. Thus, the nightclub is the best place to display how good of a dancer and a drinker a man is. Also, going to a nightclub implies that a man has money to spend and that gives him status. As Miguel, age 20, said: “it is important to have money so you can pay for the cover, for the drinks and maybe for the hotel room . . . Also, it is very important to be a good dancer because girls like good dancers . . . besides, when you finally get a girl to dance with you, she falls in love with
you because you move good through the music and may be she would give you sex that night.” (Hip-Hop song: Conciencia Africana) (fieldnotes 2002)

All men interviewed stated that another way of affirming masculinity was by rejecting homosexuality. A man of Armenia recalls: “Here in Armenia we are aggressive and violent towards homosexuals, we call them names, we insult them, we chase them to beat them, the more we insult them, the more macho we feel.” (Viveros 2001:75) Willy, age 18, of Charco Azul adds: “Homosexuality is not normal, it is wrong . . . I accept a woman who is lesbian but not a man because women are weak, docile, men are not supposed to be docile.” (fieldnotes 2002) Men from Charco Azul and Armenia agreed that violence against homosexuals and other men was accepted. There were contradictory feelings and attitudes on violence towards women. The following section gives a brief description of domestic violence in Charco Azul. There was no information about domestic violence in the statements of men of Armenia.

**Domestic Violence as a Tool for the Construction and Maintenance of Masculinity**

Alterations in the traditional gender roles have been taken by many men as threats to their masculinities, as a result, deepening the differences between men and women and worsening the relationships between them. William (1998:119) argues that men construct their masculinities in accord with their position in societal structures and, therefore, their access to power and resources. For many men, any challenge to the status quo in the home is taken personally as a confrontation. In seeking to sustain the specific type of hegemonic masculinity, these men develop an intense emotional dependency on the family/household, demanding nurturance, services, and control (William 1998:138). For instance, battering in this sense is a resource for affirming “maleness.” Research shows that lower-working-class men are more likely than middle-class men to develop a type of
masculinity that centers on ultimate control of the household through the use of violence. Thus, low-income and working-class wives are approximately twice as likely as middle-class wives to experience wife beating. Moreover, among couples in which the husband is unemployed or employed part-time, the level of husband-to-wife violence is three times as high as the level among couples in which the husband is fully employed (William 1998:148). Tinsman (1999) suggests that the principal reason for aggression is male sexual jealousy. In her work, many women complained that men used force to police their wives’ interactions with other men and to insist that a wife’s primarily obligation was to serve her husband in the home. Men in turn, justified violence as an appropriate punishment for their wives’ transgression from the feminine duties of marriage and cohabitation. Many men interpreted women’s flirtation, conversations, and informal meetings with other men as infidelity. Tinsman argues that these men presumed that their access would be total and unrivaled and that such men saw marriage and cohabitation as entitling them to sexual ownership for their wives. Physical force was legitimated as justifiable preventing female deviance from the conjugal contract (Tinsman 1999:271).

Violence has been an endemic feature of Colombia’s history. Violence is a major element in the management of social relations and conflicts. In this context a man’s identity is frequently protected and asserted through violence. Wade (2002) argues that physical violence towards women can emerge as part of a man’s reaction to the protest and criticisms of a wife/partner who is blocking the fulfillment of his desires and especially, his participation in the prestige world of men. Most of the women interviewed in the neighborhood of Charco Azul declared that they had been victims of violence by
Figure 8. Group of men from Charco Azul at Night-Club Sonrythm. 
Source: Author 2002.

Figure 9. Group of women from Charco Azul at Night-Club Sonrythm. 
Source: Author 2002.
their boyfriends. Milena, age 23, reported that her boyfriend beat her up in several occasions, “my boyfriend beats me up because he thinks that I am having affairs with other men” (fieldnotes 2002). María, age 22, also reported that her boyfriend beat her up and raped her because he felt that she was not obeying his orders: “One night we were arguing and he took a knife and attempted to hurt me.” (fieldnotes 2002) There were also reports of women being raped by men of the neighborhood in the year 2000. All of the women interviewed stated that they did not respect men who were violent towards women. They referred to those men as “guaches,” “dirty,” and of “low-class.”

Even though all the women interviewed strongly disagreed with domestic violence; some of them believed that sometimes a man had to beat the woman up because as they put it: “he is a man and the woman owes him respect.” This attitude illustrates that they have internalized the traditional model of power relations where women are considered to be under the authority and control of men. William (1998:148) stated that rape is an extension of violence perpetrated on the victim. The beating/rape of women represents punishment and degradation for challenging authority and, thus, the traditional division of labor and power. Jealousy and suspicion were the most common motives for girlfriend beatings in the statements of the participants. When I asked the women of Charco Azul what they did when their boyfriends beat them up, some replied:

“Well, when he beat me up the first time I did not do anything, I just cried, but when it happened again I fought back, I confronted him. I was not going to let him mess me up again.” (fieldnotes 2002)

Mónica, age 14, stated that after the beating, her boyfriend apologized and promised not to do it again. However, the beatings and confrontations were constantly repeated.

Furthermore, the attitudes of men of Charco Azul towards violence were not any different from those of women. When asked what their thoughts were on the men who
use violence towards women, most agreed that it was wrong because men are physically stronger than women and could hurt them: Mario, age 15, said: “I believe that a man who beats a woman is less of a man because he is taking advantage of his physical strength, he knows that a woman is weak and cannot defend herself . . . I don’t respect a man that beats women up.” (fieldnotes 2002) However, they also agreed that there were circumstances in which a man had no other option but to beat a woman. For instance, if the actions of a woman threatened his manhood (hombría) then, it was suitable and necessary to proceed in a violent manner: José stated: “when I see a man beating his woman up, I don’t go for her protection because that man is protecting his pride, his manhood, he knows why he is doing it.” (fieldnotes 2002)

Conclusion

In general, most men interviewed from Charco Azul and the group of men interviewed from Armenia shared similar definitions and practices of masculinity. They associated masculinity with the ability of a man to be a good athlete, a good competitor, a good dancer and drinker, and a good lover. By displaying physical strength men prove to other men that they are strong, competitive and capable of carrying many responsibilities. A man’s physical strength and body dexterity was considered to be sexually desirable. Most of the women interviewed strongly agreed that Afro-Colombian men were better sexual partners than white and mestizo men. In the women’s perceptions, Afro-Colombian men were physically stronger and had better dexterity, and thus, they were considered better in sex. By contrast, Afro-Colombian women perceived white men more desirable as husbands because they were loyal and loving. Both Afro-Colombian men and women agreed that white men were physically more attractive (white skin, light eyes,
fine facial features). However, this beauty was associated with femininity because men are not supposed to be beautiful but strong.

The way in which men from Armenia and men from Charco Azul initiated their sexual lives was experienced differently. Men of Armenia were introduced to sex through their friends; however, their families provided some sexual orientation and education. Most of the men interviewed mentioned that their first sexual experience was with a prostitute in a brothel. The sexual initiation of young men in a brothel was considered a traditional custom of the region. By contrast, Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul were introduced to sexuality through their friends and most had no parental guidance. Most men of Charco Azul initiated their sex lives with women of their neighborhood.

Nevertheless, attributes such as responsibility, loyalty, moral strength, dedication, and respect were highly valued by all men of both groups. For instance, paternity consecrates adulthood and masculinity and a man that is a good father is considered to have all the attributes just mentioned. Although most of the men from Charco Azul stated that their fathers have left them when they were small, they mentioned that a man should take care of his children and provide them with love and respect.

Another important aspect in the lives of the men interviewed was work. For most men, work was considered to provide men not only with the economic means to support a family but also with pride and respect. Through work, men gain social recognition and status. Most men of Armenia considered that masculinity was mainly associated with a man’s capacity to work. As many of them put it, a man is the provider of the household and through work he obtains the means necessary to support his family. They considered that a man that does not work has nothing to offer to society. By contrast, men of Charco
Azul saw work as an important aspect in the life of a man. However, they did not associate masculinity with work. As Carlos, age 19, put it: “Work does not make you a man . . . there are women working and that does not mean they are men. I am a man even if I do not work.” (field notes 2002) Unemployment rate in Colombia is 20 percent or higher and most of Afro-Colombian men from Charco Azul find it difficult to find jobs. They are discriminated against because of their skin color or because they live in Charco Azul. Most of men from Charco Azul had negative experiences when searching for a job and/or had a difficult time keeping the job.

In general, most men from both groups shared their perceptions and practices in what it means to be a man, and as Viveros (2002) described, the existing differences found between the two groups of men studied can be attributed to differences in regional cultures, class, social status, or stage in the life course, which lead to different emphases on particular qualities or themes.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Some social scientists and political figures have argued that most Afro-Colombian men have not accepted the value systems of white middle-class, male culture, in spite of efforts by society to inculcate them in the middle-class value system. The prevailing view about blacks found in the works of some intellectuals portrays images of psychological and physical inferiority (Wade 1993:13). For instance, in Colombia, many literary works presented the attitudes and the perceptions of the elites towards Afro-Colombians and Afro-Colombian men in particular. Afro-Colombian men have been portrayed as hyper-masculine, hypersexual, and have deviant behaviors in opposition to white/mestizo men. Such generalizations have led to the stigmatization of an entire group of men. The negative images of Afro-Colombian men have led them to social and racial subordination. Thus, the questions are whether or not young Afro-Colombian men conform to machismo, the Latin American template of masculinity, and whether or not adult men of Armenia conform to machismo. The comparisons between the perceptions and practices of masculinity between two groups of men with different demographic characteristics: white/mestizo adult men from Armenia, and employed; and young men from Charco Azul, unemployed, and single have been used to answer these questions.

The importance of this work is that is one of the few in Colombian social works that takes as a point of analyses the concepts of race and gender. There is much more that needs to be studied about the social aspects of Afro-Colombians, and in particular about Afro-Colombians and gender relations. The importance of this work is that it contributes
to a series of social and anthropological works that take race, gender, and class as points of analyses.

In Colombia, discrimination towards Afro-Colombians has been firm and subtle and has taken a variety of forms from the time of the arrival of the European. In general, the attitudes adopted by many Colombian intellectuals and the elites toward Afro-Colombians was unflattering from early colonization and which continues up to the present. The philosophical tone and literary style for describing and analyzing the psychological and physical makeup of the Afro-Colombian seems to have been established by European thinkers, whose influence remained pervasive well into the twentieth century (Wade 1993:14). The perceptions of the elites and the intellectuals are found in some literary works such as novels and scholarly works where Afro-Colombians were portrayed as happy, amoral, without esthetic notions, fetishistic, affectionate, and liars. In Colombia, the adjective *Negro* or black has been often used as a synonym for evil. The behaviors of Afro-Colombian men have been depicted as deviant and as diverging from the patriarchal model of masculinity. Oliart (1994) argued that the cultural construction of races derives in great part from the construction of separate and distinct gender identities, where ethnic men are described both as feminine, or hyper-masculine. Bonvillain (1995) pointed out that people in every culture maintain and transmit ideas about the roles that women and men should perform, the rights they have in relation to each other, and the values associated with their activities. She also argued that gender models are all social constructs that are developed and sustained specifically within each culture. Gender constructs make use of sexual differences between males and females, but they are not constrained in a predetermined manner by these sexual
differences. If they were, roles performed and values attached to women’s and men’s behavior would be identical in all societies (Bonvillain 1995:1). For instance, in Latin America, the hegemonic model of masculinity is based on ideas of the patriarchal system. The patriarchal system stated that in order to be considered masculine, an individual should not possess feminine attributes. That is, masculinity is defined as superior to femininity. The main axis of power relations in the patriarchal system is that of subordination of women. The findings show that men of Armenia and Charco Azul strongly believe that men are the persons to guide and head a household. Men from both groups argued that even though women were more or less equal to men, they (men) should take initiative and make the final decisions in the household. These men also mentioned that God had provided them with physical and psychological strength to protect, guide, and control the lives of others (women and children).

The patriarchal system has defined masculinity in terms of a man who never does anything that remotely suggests femininity, a man who must be always in control and not show his emotions. Men of Charco Azul and Armenia commented that by rejecting homosexuality they confirmed their masculinities. Most of the men interviewed agreed that homosexuality in men was not acceptable because men are supposed to be strong and not weak. By contrast, most men agreed that homosexuality in women was more acceptable because women are weak.

Fuller (1997) has suggested that masculinity is configured in three ways: the natural, the domestic, and the public. The natural realm corresponds to differences in sexual organs, reproductive roles, and physical strength. The public realm is associated with work and politics. The findings show that men of Charco Azul and Armenia
perceived work as a fundamental aspect in the lives of men. Men of Armenia associated work with masculinity because according to them, through work, men gain social recognition and status. Most of these men commented that their work experiences have been positive and enjoyable. By contrast, men of Charco Azul argued that an individual does not need to work to be considered a man. Most of the men from Charco Azul stated that their work experiences had been negative and frustrating due to racial discrimination. They mentioned that people would not hire them because they were black and lived in Charco Azul. This neighborhood is highly stigmatized and its residents are perceived as thieves and criminals. Charco Azul has a social and racial component where the majority of the residents are lower-class Afro-Colombians. The findings demonstrate that in general, Afro-Colombians live in slightly worse conditions than non-Afro-Colombians. Even though the differences found in the data between the two groups were small, the differences could be linked to racial discrimination by whites/mestizos.

The domestic realm is associated with the family (marriage and paternity). Marriage is perceived as an important step to reach adulthood. Likewise conjugal life provides sexual security and the opportunity to demonstrate to other men that an individual is sexually active and is capable of exerting protection and authority. The findings show that men from both groups, even the men who were not married, considered marriage an important aspect in their lives because marriage provided them with social status. According to these men, a man who is married is a man who is responsible and capable of supporting a family. Also, a man who is married is considered to be sexually active and in control of his wife’s sexuality. Thus, men who are sexually active are considered more masculine than those who are not. As family can provide men
with sexual security and authority, it can also injure a man’s masculinity. If a man does not have the authority at home, and does not have the control of the wife’s sexuality, he is threatened with losing his masculine condition. These men argued that men were sexual beings, and therefore, it was difficult to control the sexuality of men. By contrast, these men described the sexuality of women as controllable. They claimed sexual devotion from their girlfriends and wives while they (men) could continue with their sexual adventures. Parenthood was perceived as a fundamental aspect in the lives of all men. As a father a man can exercise all of the attributes associated to masculinity such as responsibility, adulthood, guidance, mental and physical strength, leadership, and through it validates a man’s masculinity and gains social recognition. Even though, most men of Charco Azul had absent fathers, they considered fatherhood as a responsibility a man should take seriously, and provide love and respect to his children.

The patriarchal system advocates that men should ignore women, however, it proposes that men should seek women only as complimentary companions. Young men of Charco Azul and adult men of Armenia described two different types of women, “good women” and “bad women.” The difference lies in the type of relationship men had with these women. For example, a man of Armenia stated that a man chooses a “good” woman as his wife, and a “bad” woman as his lover. Men of Charco Azul made a similar distinction of women. However, men prefer to relate with other men and that is particularly prominent during the period of adolescent. Both men of Charco Azul and Armenia commented that belonging to a sports team or a gang was crucial in the formation of their masculine identities. Men of Armenia stated that their friends introduced them to their first sexual experience, such as going to a brothel together to
have their first sexual relation with a prostitute. These men stated that men feel important when they have the company of other men.

It has been suggested that masculinity is constructed not only in opposition to femininity but also in contrast to the masculinity of black and rich men. The first group is considered by whites/mestizos as dangerous and associated with what is animal, whereas the second is perceived as more feminine because rich men are seen as more interested in themselves and more subject to restrictions imposed by their wives. In the statements of Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul, they revealed that white/mestizo men were do not differ from Afro-Colombian men. However, Afro-Colombian men claimed that Afro-Colombian men are better sexual partners. Afro-Colombian women of Charco Azul reinforced this idea by stating that white/mestizo men were loving and caring, whereas, Afro-Colombian men were better in sex.

The general perceptions of whites/mestizos found in the literature towards Afro-Colombians are sometimes contradictory. On the one hand, Afro-Colombians and their cultures are seem as primitive, underdeveloped, and unmoral. On the other hand, Afro-Colombians are perceived as powerful and superior in music, dancing, and sex. The assumption that being macho is an important Latin American cultural value, especially among ethnic men, is seriously called into question by the findings of this work. In general, young Afro-Colombian men of Charco Azul and adult men of Armenia shared most of the perceptions and practices in what it constitutes to be a man according to the Latin American template of masculinity. Thus, both, young Afro-Colombian men and adult men of Armenia conform to the Latin American template of masculinity. However, these men expressed feelings of disagreement towards the patriarchal discourse of
masculinity. They have questioned the roles they have internalized from this template of masculinity and some have tried to modify specific masculine conducts. They all agreed that women can perform and achieve the same goals as men and that *machismo* is old fashion.

In Latin American societies-multicultural with an array of social classes, it has become necessary to think about the various ways in which masculine identities are constructed in various social sectors, ethnic groups, and socio-cultural contexts. What these findings suggests is that each man, based on his race, class, sexual orientation, etc, defines masculinity according to his economic and social possibilities. Hence, there is not only one form of masculinity or one experience of being a man. The different experiences of men, their power and privileges, are based on a variety of positions and social relations.
APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH MEN

1. Describe what a man is.

2. How one becomes a man?

3. Is there only one-way of being a man? Could be that there are many ways of being a man? Could be that there are many different types of men?

4. What it means to be macho or very macho?

5. What does it mean to be a machista?

6. What is and who is a real man to you?

7. How does the man act at the home? What happens when the woman is the one who supports the family financially?

8. Who is a good father, a good son, brother, husband, boyfriend?

9. Who is an exceptional father to you?

10. What does it mean to be a man in the work place? Are there any jobs that are only for men and for women? What happens when a man performs a job that is considered a woman’s job? What happens when a women performs a job that is thought to be a man’s job?

11. What does it mean to be a man when partying? In a romantic relationship? In a sexual relationship? Is there only one way of being a man in sex, in a romantic relationship?

12. What does it mean to be a man in the school?

13. Who is considered a macho in a gang/parche?
14. Who is not considered a man?

15. Should men show their feelings, such as crying?

16. Do you perceive any differences between non Afro-Colombian men and Afro-Colombian men? What about men of other neighborhoods?

17. Is it different to be an Afro-Colombian man or a non Afro-Colombian man?

18. What is the type of man that you admire? Why?

19. What is the worst thing a man can do?
APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN

1. What is a man?

2. What does a man do to a woman in a friendship; in a romantic relationship; in marriage?

3. What type of man do you look for as husband, as boyfriend, as a friend, to have fun?

4. How do men behave in the neighborhood? How do they behave within themselves and with women?

5. Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence? What type of violence?

6. Who is not considered to be a man? Describe. Are homosexuals men?

7. There are women who say “I rather have guy-friends than girl-friends.” What do you think? Are homosexual men better friends than heterosexual men and women?

8. Why do some women prefer to date male members of a gang?

9. How do you like your friend, husband, and boyfriend to dress?

10. Who has control in the relationship?

11. What things are different between men and women?

12. What type of music you listen to? Is this the same type men listen to?

13. Is there such thing as “bad” women and “good” women as men classify them?

14. What type of man treats a woman as a “whore”? What do you think of him?
15. Can a woman have many boyfriends, lovers? Why? Why can men have more than one lover or girlfriend?

16. Have you ever been raped? Do you know of someone who has been raped?

17. If you get pregnant, would you have the child? Do you take precautions when having sex?

18. What does it mean when a guy-friend becomes a dad? Is it the same as becoming a mom? Do you think your male friends are responsible in sex?

19. What are your thoughts about abortion? Where do you get an abortion? Why to have one? Why not?

20. Does your brother, father, husband, helps in the household chores? What types of household chores do they do? Why is it important or not that men help in household chores?

21. Are there any jobs or task that are only for men or women? What do you think of a man that performs a job/task that is considered a woman’s job?

22. What is a machista?

23. Who is a real man to you?
APPENDIX C
PERSONAL INFORMATION OF MEN INTERVIEWED IN CHARCO AZUL, CALI, 2002.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
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<th>School</th>
<th>Gang Member</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Hobby</th>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>Afro-Col</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>Drawing</td>
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APPENDIX D
PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR WOMEN INTERVIEWED IN CHARCO AZUL, CALI, 2002.

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REFERENCES


Oliart, María. 1994. Images of Gender and Race: The View from Above in Nineteenth Century Lima. Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lina Margarita Restrepo was born in Medellín, Colombia. She is the daughter of Pedro León Restrepo and Margarita Restrepo. After completing her work at West Orange High School in Winter Garden, Florida, she entered the University of Florida in 1995, and graduated with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts in Latin American literature and anthropology. From 1999 until 2001, she worked as a Library Technical Assistant at the Levin College of Law of the University of Florida. In 2001, she entered the graduate program at the University of Florida in Latin American Studies with a concentration in anthropology.