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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY:

Guatemalan Migrant Men, Transnational Migration, and Family Relations

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This article examines how migration contributes to the plurality of masculinities among Guatemalan men, particularly among migrant men and their families. I argue that migration offers an opportunity to men, both migrant and nonmigrant, to reflect on their emotional relations with distinct family members, and show how, by engaging in this reflexivity, these men also have the opportunity to vent those emotions in a way that offsets some of the negative traits associated to a hegemonic masculinity, such as being unemotional, nonnurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate. This study contributes to transnational migration studies in three ways: (1) by examining the more personal and emotional side of transnational life, (2) by examining ways in which men step away from culturally expected hegemonic masculine identity, and (3) by providing an empirical study of subaltern masculinities, particularly among transnational immigrant men. Drawing on multi-sited, in-depth interviews conducted in Guatemala and California, my research contributes to our understanding of the emotional costs of transnational migration for migrants and their families, particularly for men, by examining the interplay among gender, family, and transnational migration.

Keywords: *transnational migration; transnational family; emotions; emotional cost; masculinity*

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In recent years, the question of masculinity in general, and particularly with respect to transnational communities, has attracted attention among international migration scholars (see Hoang and Yeoh 2011; Pribilsky 2012; Smith 2006; Thai 2008). Most of the studies have focused on Filipinos, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Indians, and, recently, Ecuadorians (Hoang and Yeoh 2011; Osella and Osella 2000; Parreñas 2005; Pribilsky 2012; Smith 2006; Thai 2008), leaving other transnational communities understudied. I investigate the case of a transnational community in Guatemala and examine how migration redefines the way masculinity is expressed, not only among migrant fathers but also among other family members. Particularly, I examine the ways in which migration becomes an opportunity for these Guatemalan transnational fathers to reflect on the type of relationships they have with their children and other family members. Most importantly, I investigate how the actions these men take as result of those emotions counteract some of the negative traits associated with a hegemonic masculinity, such as being unemotional, nonnurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Through the examination of men's emotional expressions—love, sacrifice, and fear—I contribute to the ongoing scholarly dialogue regarding men and masculinities among transnational communities. Yet, while my approach in this article coincides with studies of masculinity in relation to gender dynamics in the discussion of transnational migration, it differs by offering an intimate and comparative analysis of family dynamics where emotions are at the core of family arrangement decisions. In this regard, I intentionally pay closer attention to those emotions manifested by migrant and nonmigrant men, as their emotional dilemmas have been poorly acknowledged and scarcely documented in the transnational migration and gender literature. Thus, my research contributes to our understanding of the emotional costs of transnational migration for migrants and their families, particularly for men, by examining the interplay among gender, family, and transnational migration.

Drawing on multi-sited, ethnographic, qualitative data from 43 individuals living in Guatemala and California whom I interviewed in 2007, I focus on three particular families to illustrate larger themes, structures, and patterns that I identified in Guatemalan transnational families. Rather than drafting my analysis by weaving multiple stories about multiple respondents within each section, I perform an in-depth analysis of specific respondents to shed light on identified themes (Thai 2008). The stories and arrangements of these families provide substantial analytical clarity

for understanding the complexity of emotions, decisions, negotiations, expectations, and losses faced by all family members involved in the process of becoming transnational.

I begin with a brief overview of the interplay between emotions and masculinities, focusing on Latin America, and particularly Guatemala. I next focus on the intersection between migration and masculinities. To contextualize the place where this study was done, I introduce a research setting section, which briefly highlights some historical events, with particular emphasis on the migratory history of the rural community of Nuevo Amanecer, where most of the respondents come from. I then introduce the method and data section, followed by the results, where I closely examine the families' dilemmas, their ways of enduring those dilemmas, and the post-migration decision process of adapting to their new identity as transnational families. I conclude with a discussion and interpretation of the empirical data.

EMOTIONS AND MASCULINITIES

The ability to feel and, above all, show what we feel distinguishes humans from other species (Lutz and White 1986). From an evolutionary point of view, emotions have partially equipped humanity to adapt and, therefore, survive. Emotions, however, not only correspond to biological factors, but are also socially shaped by other social structures, such as culture and gender. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of the "positioned subject," which argues that each person is seen as occupying a position in society that affords a particular view of events, Rosaldo (1984) argues that the "positioned subject" is structured by such factors as age, gender, and status, which typically afford the individual a set of life experiences that "naturally" and universally produce certain kinds of feelings (see Lutz and White 1986, 11). In this context, both gender and culture determine not only what emotion can be shown to whom and in what contexts, but, most importantly, what set of emotions is entitled to what gender.

While some emotions, such as interdependence, social support, and sadness, are directly associated with femininity, assertive emotions, such as anger, pride, and independence, are not only supported but strongly praised in cultures characterized as masculine (Fernandez et al. 2000). In masculine cultures, men have traditionally internalized rigid emotional expressions and have been conditioned not to feel anything or, at least, not

to show those feelings. This socially conditioned relation toward emotions in boys and men is one of the most widespread characteristics that define what it means to be a man across cultures and, thus, how masculinity is achieved. Connell (1998) asserts that masculinity is anything men think and do, anything men think and do to be men, and, lastly, anything that women are not. The construction of masculinities is, thus, relational to its power location not only among genders, but also within the same gender—even among men there exist power hierarchies that disadvantage subaltern masculinities. By the mid-1980s, the analysis of the power structure within the study of men's gender shed light on the existence of what was referred to as "hegemonic masculinity." In contrast with other masculinities, particularly subordinated masculinities, hegemonic masculinity "embodies the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832).

Like any other type of socially constructed paradigm, the construction of masculinity reflects specific structures, such as class, ethnicity, and race. In the following section, I present a brief review of the study of masculinities in Latin America, paying particular attention to Guatemala.

MASCULINITIES IN LATIN AMERICA/GUATEMALA

In Latin America, it was not until the late 1980s that the study of "men as having gender and producing gender" began; however, most studies done at that time focused solely on women (Viveros Vigoya 2001, 237). By the 1990s, however, as a response to the economic, political, and social changes that swept Latin America after the end of decades of military regimes, studies centered on men and masculinity in relation to men's gender relations began to emerge. Initially, scholars tried to define what it means to be a man, particularly within the Latin American context.

The construction of masculinity in Latin America requires paying special attention to the intersection of different power structures, such as class, race, gender, and sexual identity. In this regard, some scholars argue not only that examining the intersectionality of "racial, ethnic, class, regional, institutional, and other categories in the society" (Fuller 2001, 318) in which men live is crucial, but also that developing a framework to analyze the overall changes in the society is necessary (Broughton 2008; Gutmann 1993; Valdés and Olavarría 1998) to assess the impacts of those

changes in relation to gender identities. Thus, while Gutmann (1993) analyzes the effects of the Mexican economic crisis of 1982 to understand changes in gender relations and masculine identity in Mexican society in the early 1980s, Fuller (2001) examines the intersection of discourse regarding masculinity and regional, class, and generational identities in Peru, particularly in the construction of masculinity among middle-class men.

In Guatemala, however, the study of masculinities has been poorly explored. The few studies on masculinities revolve mainly around men's role as fathers. Scholars (Barker 2005; Bastos 1998; Gilmore 1994) have found that in societies where patriarchal structure determines family dynamics, as in the case of Guatemala, parenthood is perhaps one of the most common ways in which men acquire their masculine identity. The study done by Bastos (1998) on Guatemalan urban households reveals that, while for some men their masculine identity is accomplished by providing economic means for their families, other men engage with socially recognized moral values, such as hard-working ethics and strong religious practices, as a way to achieve greater levels of authority over women and children in the home.

In contrast to Bastos's study, Schrader McMillan and Paul (2011) explore how Guatemalan men are able to distance themselves from embracing a "hegemonic masculinity" identity by rejecting the use of disciplinary violence toward their children. Drawing on Barker's (2005) concept of resistance, Schrader McMillan and Paul (2011) examine the case of three fathers who consciously step away from their violent family environments, predominantly with their own fathers, to embrace nonviolent family dynamics. By doing so, these men position themselves outside the hegemonic masculinity identity created in a highly unequal and violent setting such as Guatemala City.

Rather than a homogeneous, monolithic, and unchangeable masculinity identity, the acquisition of masculinity identity in Latin America is a complex and often contradictory social process (Mirande 1997). In this regard, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) indicate that masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body of an individual but, rather, that it responds to a socially constructed set of practices determined particularly by a specific social, cultural, and historical setting. Masculinity is then relational not only to femininity but also to factors of space, time, and socially constructed structures, such as class and race (Connell 1998; Fuller 2001; Hoang and Yeoh 2011). In the following section, I explore how migration has affected both gender relations and the construction of masculinities among transnational communities.

MASCULINITIES AND MIGRATION

Scholars (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Parreñas 2005) argue that as a global process, international migration strains regional and local gender orders, resulting in changes in local patterns of masculinity and femininity. How these gender orders change depends on particular regional and cultural characteristics, along with the intersection of other power structures such as class and race. Therefore, to examine the ways in which gender identities are redefined by global processes such as migration, scholars should look at the local level (Gutmann 2003), as well as employ a transnational framework to document changes across borders. In the literature of transnational migration, there are distinct lines of research trying to document the changes of gender identities and their relationships with different shapes of masculinity and femininity.

Spousal separation and its impact on family dynamics have attracted most of the attention among scholars of transnational migration. Initially, these studies focused on stay-at-home women and the psychoemotional ramifications of their plight. Scholars (Arnado 2010; Dreby 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Parreñas 2001; Sadiqi and Ennaji 2004; Salgado de Snyder 1993) have documented feelings of anguish, anxiety, depression, and guilt, and, sometimes, suicidal behavior among women as a result of their husbands' migration. By the 1990s, however, women were analyzed not only as wives who had been left behind but also as migrants as a result of the high demand for women from the third world to supply the international reproductive labor division (Parreñas 2001). Changes of motherhood practices among migrant women rapidly became one of the most examined fields at the turn of the twenty-first century, leading scholars to refer to those gender changes as "transnational motherhood" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 2006). By becoming transnational mothers, migrant women not only take economic responsibility as important as—or even more important than—their daily presence in the home (Raijman, Schammah-Gesser, and Kemp 2006) but also cross gender identities by becoming breadwinners (Parreñas 2005).

These studies, however, overemphasize the women-only approach, leaving changes of masculine identity either underrepresented or oversimplified by focusing only on men as economic providers. Studies in this category focus primarily on how male self-esteem has been jeopardized as the participation of women in transnational migration has been augmented. Gamburd's study on Sri Lankan migration reports that female migration has reconfigured male gender identities in an often uncomfortable fashion, so that "many men feel a loss of self-respect and dignity

when their wives become breadwinners” (Gamburd 2002, 190). In a similar vein, in her study of Filipino migrant women in Italy and the United States, Parreñas (2001) discusses how, by becoming the main breadwinners of their families, migrant women disarticulate one of the most well-established ways in which men acquire their masculine identity. Yet the male experiences and resulting changes of their masculine practices and identities have not been explored in enough detail.

In recent years, however, some scholars have started paying closer attention to those gender dynamics and the changes of masculine identities, not only within families but also across national borders. In his multi-sited ethnographic study, sociologist Hung Cam Thai (2008) analyzes gender practices developed by Vietnamese migrant males both in the United States and in Vietnam so as to access a highly competitive globalized marriage market. While in Vietnam, these men enhanced their social capital as they became migrants; however, their racial hierarchy in the United States put them at the bottom of the occupational ladder in the receptive society. In contrast to Thai’s case study, Smith (2006) documents different masculine identities within a Mexican transnational community in New York. Smith examines how Mexican migrant men in New York either strengthen their traditional gender practices as they embrace what Smith refers to as “ranchero masculinity” or blur this traditional ranchero masculinity by exercising a more egalitarian gender relation with their wives and other family members.

Other recent studies document, for instance, ways in which masculinities are being redefined when women migrate for work over extended periods of time (Hoang and Yeoh 2011). In their study of Vietnamese transnational families, Hoang and Yeoh examine the intersection of productive and reproductive work in regards to the role of men within the family. On a different tack, anthropologist Jason Pribilsky (2012) analyzes how the consumption patterns among Ecuadorian migrant men in a transnational community of New York face challenges as these men struggle to balance their masculine practices traditionally conducted in their community of origin with their budget restrictions and obligations in their new residential context. Finally, in a study of Mexican rural migrants, Broughton (2008) examines not only how these men negotiate masculine ideals and their gender practices in relation to their families but also how these practices are directly connected to economic, cultural, and social changes that have taken place over the last two and a half decades in Mexico as result of implementation of neoliberal policies. While these existing studies have focused on the interplay between transnational migration and gender relations in regard to masculine identities, the role

of emotions and, in particular, the way in which emotional bonds among migrant men and their families determine their family arrangements as they become transnational have not yet been examined. It is my aim to fill this gap in the literature.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Nuevo Amanecer (NA hereafter) is located in the tropical lowlands of northern Quiche in northeast Guatemala. The origins of NA go back to the mid-1960s when Maryknoll priests launched the Ixcán Grande Cooperative (IGC), a communal project, to inhabit this inhospitable jungle area. By the 1970s, NA became a community of proud landowners with a high level of organization that helped elevate the quality of life of all NA dwellers. However, by the early 1980s, this prosperity was interrupted by the bloody armed conflict between Guatemalan military and insurgent forces. This conflict reached a critical point when a “scorched earth”¹ campaign launched by the Guatemalan government, and supported by the U.S. government, was implemented. Initially, this campaign targeted the northwest highlands area where predominantly indigenous Maya people lived (Schrader McMillan and Paul 2011); however, the human rights violations soon expanded, affecting most Guatemalan regions, including NA. This campaign left a dismembered society with 150,000 civilians assassinated or “disappeared,” more than one million people displaced internally, some 200,000 people driven into exile, and more than 440 villages entirely destroyed (Robinson 2003). In the case of NA, members of the cooperative were assassinated and families massacred, leading the entire community into exile. In 1996, however, a peace accord was signed by all parties involved in the military conflict.

During these decades of violence, Guatemalan families engaged in transnational migration as a way of coping with the systematic violence that had plagued the country. Guatemalans predominantly migrated to the United States and Canada, establishing the bases for today’s migration influx. It is estimated that one and a half million Guatemalans live and work in these two countries, which represents almost 15 percent of the country’s total population (Taylor, Moran-Taylor, and Rodman Ruiz 2006). While some areas in Guatemala experienced high levels of transnational migration during the 1980s, others, like NA, joined the migratory process toward the end of the twentieth century. The upward tendency of transnational migration in NA brought about a variety of changes in regard to its family structure as well as gender identities.

METHODS AND DATA

I entered in contact with NA through Miguel Ugalde, coordinator of the Investigation Program of Migrations of the Institute of Economic and Social Research at Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City, who generously introduced me to this community. By the time I met Ugalde, his team had been conducting research on what sociologist Peggy Levitt (2001) refers to as “social remittances,”² (IDIES 2006) for several years and their cultural impacts in the community. I conducted my fieldwork in the summer of 2007. In November 2008, I returned to the field to do follow-up interviews with the same migrant families, as well as with a couple of migrants whom I had interviewed in California but who had returned to Guatemala. My activities involved face-to-face, open-ended interviews, participant observation, and multiple informal interviews with key informants in the sending community. While the interviews in Guatemala took place in two main locations—Guatemala City and NA—the California interviews were held in San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Modesto counties. Although I interviewed 43 participants, the primary data for this article draw exclusively from eight interviews with transnational family members and migrants from NA and Guatemala City.

The interviews, some of which were voice recorded with the informant’s permission, ranged from one and a half to three hours. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and were fully transcribed. The field notes, memos, and interview transcriptions were systematically arranged for further coding and analysis processes. The interviewees’ ages ranged from 19 to 62; four were men and four were women, including three married couples and two grandparents. Of the eight participants, five were interviewed in California and three in Guatemala. Three of the participants had urban backgrounds, and five had rural backgrounds. To supplement interview data in NA, I conducted participant observation in the only elementary school, in a convenience store where most migrants’ family members received phone calls from their migrant relatives, and in the only religious chapel in the community. In the receiving communities in California, I conducted participant observation by visiting the migrants in their workplaces and homes.

My dual position as an outsider/insider had a direct impact on how I related to the participants and, therefore, how they responded to the interviews. My outsider position was shaped by my being Mexican, having an urban background, and being college educated. These attributes made the informants hesitant to share their information about migrants in California, the result of the vulnerable status of their migrant relatives,

being undocumented in the United States. Despite explaining the purpose of my research and, especially, my academic affiliation, informants continued to be hesitant. Here my position as an insider helped. Being a migrant to the United States, a woman of color, and a Spanish native-speaker contributed to my developing a significant level of rapport and successfully conducting my research. One of the strategies that I spontaneously developed while I was conducting my interviews, and which helped me to gain participants' trust, was to offer to take pictures and/or videos of the family members living in Guatemala and bring that material to their relatives in California. Most of the participants had not seen their loved ones for several years; therefore, bringing pictures of them and of their community to the migrants was a way to symbolically connect them.

In the following section, I examine changes in family relations as they become transnational through the lens of masculine practices among migrant and nonmigrant men.

CHALLENGING RIGID MASCULINE TRAITS

In the past twenty years, men's difficulty in expressing emotions has been one of the most frequently discussed and controversial topics in the study of masculinities (Wong and Rochlen 2005). Until recently, the prevailing explanation for men's emotional inexpressiveness has been the gender-role socialization paradigm, which asserted that boys and men internalize cultural messages about what it means to be male. Recent studies, however, indicate that men's emotional expressiveness is more complicated than a reducible set of generalizations. In their recent study of men's emotional behavior, Wong and Rochlen conclude that "men's emotional behavior is not a stable property but a multidimensional construct with many causes, modes, and consequences" (2005, 62).

I now examine migration as an opportunity for migrant and nonmigrant men to challenge the inexpressive masculine identity by openly showing emotions socially associated with women. I begin by looking at decisive moments, such as the day they left for the United States or crossed the Mexico–U.S. border. These moments are important because they are pivotal situations in which men are expected to enact traditional masculine roles.³

It is very difficult; first of all, as the man of the house, one has to be so sure about what one is doing. . . one has to be conscious about the responsibility that comes when one separates from the family, above all, the pain of doing

that. I prepared myself by going to my father's house one day before I left; there I spent the entire day crying. I cried a lot, as much as I could; I tried to release all the pain that one might feel. The day I left, I woke up very early; I didn't want to do much noise to not wake up Flor [his wife]. I dressed up and went to see my little son. I softly kissed him on the forehead; I did not want to hug him because if he would wake up, I would not be able to leave. I don't know if Flor was awake but I didn't kiss her; it would be too painful see her crying, so I just left. My father waited for me outside. It was so painful; the first hours until we reached the border between Mexico and Guatemala, the pain was so intense. I wanted to cry but instead I thought about what one would face ahead.

Daniel⁴ is a Guatemalan migrant who, at the time of the interview in 2007, was in his late twenties. Daniel and his wife, Flor, and his father, Alfonso, were the only interviewees from an urban background. I made contact with Daniel through his father, whom I met in Guatemala City in the summer of 2007. During the interview, Danny, Daniel's son, was present. This was the first time Danny heard about the details of his father's trip to the United States. Rather than listening to an account of a fearless father for whom leaving was neither difficult nor painful, Danny heard a narrative of a father who openly expressed feelings of pain, fear, and love. Testimonials, such as the one shared by Daniel, become not only an opportunity for migrants and their children to preserve their family history, but also an occasion from which new gender practices may arise. Daniel and the other migrant and nonmigrant men interviewed for this study vividly and uninhibitedly shared not only their migration experiences but, most importantly, their intimate emotions arising from them. What made these men openly share their emotions about their families? What does this tell us about other migrant men from the past?

What has changed is the migration pattern. Even after 9/11, most migrants were engaged in circulatory migration that allowed them to travel back and forth to regularly visit their families in their countries of origin. This was practiced even if the migrants were undocumented, as the trip back to the United States, although difficult, was not very risky; migrants were able to go back to their countries as often as they felt the urge to do so. However, today, as the U.S.–Mexico border has been increasingly militarized and crossing the Mexican territory has become perilous; migrants already in the United States prolong their stays or, in extreme cases, decide to permanently stay in the United States. This new migration context translates into greater and deeper emotional burdens for the migrants and their families, as all endure longer periods of physical

separation. While all family members suffer the emotional cost of separation, migrant men endure a greater cost precisely because of their rigid and inhibited emotional expressiveness. This might explain greater levels of alcoholism and other drug-related issues among migrant men than among migrant women. The men in this study illustrate that, although the emotional cost of transnational migration is equally profound and devastating for both migrant men and women, their coping mechanisms differ along gender lines. In contrast to earlier migrant men, today's migrants endure harsher physical and emotional living conditions because of the current migration pattern. This leads migrant and nonmigrant men to embrace less rigid masculine models that might allow them to adjust to their new emotional circumstances.

By openly expressing their emotions, the men in this study engaged in what Barker (2005) refers to as resistance, which is the ability of some men to position themselves outside the hegemonic masculinity model. Like other men interviewed in this study, Daniel diverged from an extreme expression of hegemonic masculinity, first, by reflecting upon and getting in touch with his emotions, and, second, by openly expressing those feelings with his family. In the case of Daniel, his father Alfonso was a crucial figure in his construction of counterhegemonic masculine behavior. In the following comments, Alfonso poignantly expresses not only his fear about the risk and uncertainty that Daniel was about to face at the time of crossing the border, but, most importantly, his love for his son and his deep anguish over what Daniel was about to encounter—emotions quite often overlooked in migration studies in regard to migrant and nonmigrant men's experiences.

The most difficult part for me was to give my son to that people [smugglers]; in fact, my son and I prayed together before the coyote [smuggler] arrived. We [my son and I] did not know whether we would see each other again or not; that was the most difficult part. I did not know if I would see my son again [his eyes water]; it was so painful that I would not like to go through the same feeling again. I strongly hugged him and they [the smugglers] took him. It was so painful to see him leave.

In his early sixties, and making his living as cab driver in Guatemala City, this man, with watering eyes and a voice full of heartbreak, recalls the day he handed Daniel over to smugglers to cross the U.S.–Mexico border. This man's pain was also shared by his son, who was also affected by his father's anguish:

We cried together, we prayed. It was so sad because my father had a knot in his throat; he could not talk, he was so upset because he did not know

who the smugglers were. We both knew that there was no turning point, we had to move on.

Alfonso himself was able to legally cross the border, as he held an American visa. For five days, Alfonso waited in Los Angeles for news about the whereabouts of his son. Finally, on the fifth day, Alfonso got a call from the smugglers. The following narrative illustrates how Alfonso spent those days:

Those days were full of pain, sorrow, and anguish because I did not know where he was or who had him. Finally, around midnight, the phone rang, and there was the smuggler telling me that my son had arrived. As soon as I could, I got to where the smuggler had my son. I was allowed to see my son just through the bus window, but in order to release him, I had to pay the rest of what they charge for crossing the border. My son was a mere *mercancia* [commodity]. Finally, he was released; we hugged and we kissed each other. You should have seen him; he looked as if he was dead. He had thorns all over his clothes. My son did not say a single word; for days, he didn't want to talk about what happened.

Both Daniel and Alfonso engaged in a peculiar father–son relationship with love, respect, and gratefulness at its core. By interviewing Alfonso first in Guatemala City and then Daniel in California, I was able to see how much they loved each other and how, despite the physical distance, both were able to maintain a close and strong emotional bond. Alfonso expands on his relationship with his son:

If he [Daniel] cannot call, we call him because it is important to communicate. When a week passes without talking to him, and he calls, I get so excited, I would like to hug him, although one does that by phone. I tell him, “Look, son, I love you, I miss you, I want to be with you and your family, but we can't. I ask God to be able to continue going to see you.” This is a story full of love and faith; the father's love is what one feels.

The emotional expressiveness of these two men reveals that, for men, migration might create the opportunity to get in touch with deeper emotions that would be overlooked under normal circumstances as a result of the social association with feminine identities. In particular, the narratives of these men indicate that a father–son relationship can also have bonds of love and sacrifice normally associated only with mother–child relations. In the following section, I examine some of the ways these Guatemalan migrant men show their love and concern for their children.

EMOTIONAL COSTS OF TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION FOR MEN

Migration has reshaped the way in which men and women accomplish their gender identities. Studies of both migrant and stay-at-home women report that migration has brought about a set of opportunities for women to negotiate more egalitarian power relations within their families (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Parreñas 2005). However, in the case of men, migration studies have focused primarily either on how male self-esteem has been jeopardized as the participation of women in transnational migration has been augmented (Gamburd 2002) or on the changes of gender practices on the part of men when their wives became transnational migrants (Hoang and Yeoh 2011; Parreñas 2005). A few exceptions (i.e., Dreby 2010; Pinedo Turnovsky 2006; Pribilsky 2004) examined emotional costs on migrant men. During my interviews, I came across several instances where men expressed their concerns and emotions about being separated from their families. By reflecting on what it means to be apart, these men engaged in what scholars refer to as metacognition, “that is, to think about their thoughts and give direction to their thoughts and ideas” (Schrader McMillan and Paul 2011, 369).

Sometimes I have dreams that I’m there [NA] and that one of my children falls down in a precipice and I want to grab his hand, and then I wake up, and I wonder, my God what is happening there? When one is away, one thinks many things. I ask myself, are they telling me the truth? Or are they simply not telling me the truth to not make me worry. One is always thinking if the things are really fine there.

This quote was shared by Jose who, at the time of the interview, was in his early 40s. When I posed the questions about how he felt about being away from his children, Jose’s eyes got watery, and his voice broke when he shared the above quote. To my surprise, Jose openly confessed that this dream had become a recurrent experience, and he also confessed that one of his biggest fears is that an accident may happen to any one of his three children while he is away. Despite Jose’s anxiety and desire to be with his family, when I asked if he had thought about bringing his family over to the United States, he did not hesitate to negatively answer. For Jose, bringing the family would imply taking many risks, among them the possibility of an accident or the death of someone. Rather than bringing the entire family—three children and wife—Jose and his wife, Adela, thought about Adela’s migration. After months of discussions over the phone, Jose

convinced Adela to stay; his main reason for so doing being for his children's sake:

She [Adela] was about to come, and the plans were already made. However, I start feeling anguish and I told her, "it is good to have money and make more money, but remember that the most important thing is the family; if you come over, we don't know what it might happen to our children.' What about if one of our children dies while both of us are away? What about an accident—if something like that happens, I would kill myself. It would be so nice to be together, but it would be so difficult to be both away from the children. It was not that I did not want her to come, but if something happens there, both of us might feel guilty, and that is a feeling that I will not want to bear.

Like Jose, other migrant fathers indicated that bringing their families over to the United States was not an option. The main reason these fathers gave was their legal status in the United States and the risks involved in making the trip from Guatemala to the United States. Even if bringing the children to the United States were a possibility, for some migrants, as in the case of Alvaro, another migrant father, it would be an unfair act because the children might get used to the American lifestyle, and then, unexpectedly, the entire family could be deported as result of their undocumented status in the United States. However, despite the dire risks involved in making the long trip from Guatemala to the United States, other migrant men decided to do so as a way to show their love for their families, as in the case of Daniel.

One takes the risk to migrate for the love of the offspring, in order to give them a better life. I don't care if I don't get my papers, if I die without papers; what matters is that my children have better opportunities, a better life [crying]. I don't care if I have to go through the same again, risking everything again, as long as my son has the opportunity to achieve what we [my wife and I] did not achieve. My job has not finished yet; my job will finish when I see my son going to college and becoming a good man. That's why I do not go out so much because of the fear of getting deported.

This sheds light on the love and pain that migration brings to this father and reflects the situation that millions of mothers and fathers face as they become transnational parents. Like other migration studies where migrant mothers confirm that their main reason to migrate is to provide their children with better living conditions (Raijman, Schammah-Gesser, and Kemp 2006), this study confirms that, for some men, the same pattern

applies as well. Yet, what differs in this study is the examination of the profound love and level of sacrifice that some men may achieve when they reflect on what their families mean to them, particularly in regards to their emotional connections with their children. These quotes demonstrate that the emotional cost of transnational migration for men is a reality, which is poorly acknowledged and scarcely documented within migration studies. More importantly, these emotional expressions run wholly counter to hegemonic masculinities. In this context, distance brings the opportunity to reflect on what the family entails for them and, as a consequence, to give their thoughts and actions direction by either becoming transnational families or by bringing the family to the United States.

TRANSNATIONAL EMOTIONAL BONDS AND GRANDPARENTS

The studies on the role of grandparents in transnational families have mainly focused on how grandparents, mainly grandmothers, take care of their grandchildren while the parents are abroad (Dreby 2010; Moran-Taylor 2008). Yet, the role that some grandparents, particularly grandfathers, play in the actual family reunification process has been understudied. In this study, I interviewed four grandparents who took care of their grandchildren. The cases of Cata and Alfonso shed light on gender differences regarding the ways in which these grandparents participate in the migration process of their own children, their reasons to do so, and, therefore, the emotional burden they faced as a result of their children's migration.

Cata provided reproductive labor assistance by taking care of her son's children while both her son, Antonio, and her daughter-in-law, Rosa, were abroad. Incorporation of grandmothers into the transnational family arrangements began with the insertion of women into the new global division of labor that took place during the last decades of the twentieth century. However, Cata's decision to participate as care provider for her son's children was based mainly on her son's emotional need to ask his wife to join him in the United States.

We have been together for many years, so it is difficult to be away from the family; staying alone is difficult. More than economic reasons, I asked Rosa to come over because I did not want to take the risk of losing my family. I have seen too many cases in which many families break apart because either the husband or the wife finds somebody else, and looking at this, I decided to ask Rosa to come.

Recent transnational studies indicate that, increasingly, couples migrate together to maximize their household economic resources (Moran-Taylor 2008). Yet, for many other couples, migrating together is simply the only way to preserve their families. This is the case of Antonio and Rosa. After six months of having left Guatemala, Antonio asked Rosa to join him in California. Antonio openly manifests his emotional vulnerability by expressing how painful it is to be separated from the family. The migrant's vulnerability to being alone is a concern also shared by other family members, as in the case of Cata whose main reason to agree to take care of his son's children was her fear that Antonio might become an alcoholic or drug addict or find another woman and never come back to Guatemala. Initially, Rosa hesitated leaving for California; however, Cata's support by taking care of her children influenced Rosa's decision to migrate. In the case of NA, therefore, the extended family is still the primary support for coping with the new transnational family arrangements. While grandmothers become what I refer to as second-time mothers by taking care of their grandchildren while their parents are abroad, grandfathers also participate in activities such as bringing the family over to the United States, a service that otherwise has to be paid for by the migrants. This is the case of Alfonso who took his grandchild to the Mexico–U.S. border to cross it and reunite with his father in Los Angeles. After three years of being separated from his son, Daniel asked his father to bring Danny over to the United States. When Daniel asked his father for his help to bring his son, Alfonso faced a dilemma.

While Alfonso regretted seeing his grandchild deeply missing his father—at the time Daniel left Guatemala, Danny was 18 months old—bringing Danny to the United States could put him in a very risky situation where going to jail would be the least of the bad consequences that might occur. Alfonso's family, particularly his wife, pressured him to help Daniel. She audaciously reminded Alfonso how difficult it had been for him as a father to be separated from Daniel and how painful it would be if he would not be able to see Daniel for three years, the time Daniel and his son had been separated. Despite all the risks, Alfonso decided to bring Danny to the United States:

It was so hard to take my grandchild and leave him at the border. It took them [the grandchild and his mom] one week to cross and arrive in Los Angeles. My daughter-in-law and my grandchild traveled in a trailer from Texas to LA. My grandchild knew exactly what was going on; every time the trailer stopped, my daughter-in-law told him to be quiet, so my grandchild said, "If I talk or make noise I screwed up myself because I won't be able to see my daddy if they catch us."

Alfonso's decisive role in both Daniel's and Danny's migrations shows one way in which other family members participate to help in family reunifications, which demonstrates that migration is a family event which requires all its members' participation to cope with the challenges stemming from it. Alfonso's reflection on his profound love for Daniel was crucial in making the decision to bring Danny over to the United States, despite the risks involved. Through his reflection, Alfonso was able to take actions and, therefore, give direction to those emotions of love and sacrifice. This case shows how migration may become a factor of change for nonmigrant men in regards to their masculine roles within their families, and how, through migration, men become less rigid about expressing emotions traditionally assigned to women as a case of sacrifice.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to examine how migration contributes to the plurality of masculinities among Guatemalan men, particularly among migrant and nonmigrant men and their families. My main argument in this article is that migration offers an opportunity to men, both migrant and nonmigrant, to reflect on their emotional relations with distinct family members—and how, by engaging in this reflexivity, these men have the opportunity to give actions to those emotions in a way that contradicts some of the negative traits associated to a hegemonic masculinity, such as being unemotional, nonnurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). By looking at the interplay between transnational migration, gender identities, and family, this study contributes to migration studies in three ways.

First, the examination of emotions among migrant men and their families adds to recent scholarly efforts that inquire into the more personal and emotional side of transnational life (Thai 2008). In this study, the intimate testimonies of these men and their families unveil the ways in which these families, particularly men, cope with their emotions as a result of being separated from their loved ones. The emotions discussed in this study—fear, anxiety, nostalgia, love, and sacrifice—elucidate the complexity involved in the decision to migrate. For decades, the study of migration revolved around a series of neoclassic, macroeconomic theories, where migrants were perceived as rational individuals whose decisions to migrate were based predominantly on cost–benefit analysis, leaving aside the role of emotions at the pre- and post-migration stages. By looking into the emotional dimension of the migrants' lives, this study demonstrates that migration includes weighing not only economic benefits but also

family relations and the emotional bonds with other family members. It also demonstrates that regardless of gender and generational identity, the emotional costs of transnational migration are equally profound and devastating for all migrants and their families.

Secondly, through the glimpse of the lives of these families and, particularly, through the voices of these men, this study reveals that rather than being passive individuals subjugated to cultural structures, these men exercise an agency that allows them to step away from culturally expected masculine identities. In doing so, their behavior confirms what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue regarding conditions in which masculinity identity is accomplished by change over time as a result of intersectionality with other social factors. Here, migration becomes another determining factor of change within the construction of masculinities. In contrast to previous migrant men, today's migrants endure harsher physical and emotional living conditions because of the current migration pattern. This leads migrant and nonmigrant men to embrace less rigid masculine models that might allow them to adjust to their new emotional circumstances.

Third, this study helps fill the gap in empirical studies on subaltern masculinities, particularly among transnational and migrant men that some scholars (Thai 2008) have pointed out as necessary for a better analysis of the interplay of migration and masculinities. In the case of migrant men, despite many studies examining the loss of patriarchal privileges in relation to their female partners, most studies have overlooked the ways in which the construction of their male identities have been transformed. By focusing on working-class and peasant Guatemalan men, this study examines the ways in which these men adapt to their new family arrangements as they become transnational and, most importantly, how these arrangements lead to changes in the ways they accomplish their masculine identity.

In sum, this study contributes to better understanding the complexity of family decisions before a life event such as migration, where relational social roles such as masculinity and femininity are altered not only across borders, but also across generations. In this regard, this study indicates the need for further research into how younger generations of men will internalize the way of accomplishing their masculine identity within a distinct cultural context provided by their parents as they are born and raised in a migrant-receiving society, such as the United States. Finally, through the intimate narrative of these migrant men and their families, this study seeks to portray not only the human dilemma that these families faced by embracing migration as a way to live, but, most importantly, this study

also becomes a small tribute to the strength and dignity that these families, like millions of other migrants around the world, reveal in their search for a better life for themselves and their families.

NOTES

1. "Scorched earth" was a military strategy utilized by the Guatemalan government during the 1980s to destroy and terrify indigenous communities.
2. "Social remittances" are broadly defined as ideas, know-how, practices, and skills traveling back to the countries of origin through the back-and-forth flow of immigrants.
3. I translated all of the interviews used in this research from Spanish.
4. To protect the anonymity of my informants, I have used pseudonyms throughout. The name of the community was also changed.

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