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Michele Back

Department of Modern and Classical Languages, George Mason University

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‘They say I’m like that but they don’t know me’: transcultural discourses of masculinity

Michele Back*

Department of Modern and Classical Languages, George Mason University

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Although research on gender and discourse addresses monolingual and multilingual masculinities, few studies attempt to mesh the theoretical frameworks of these two areas of research. Moreover, performance of multilingual and multicultural masculinities is still under discussed and lacks researcher reflexivity. In this article, I argue that developing a transcultural perspective on masculinity reveals important complexities often forgotten in the dichotomized discourses of ‘hegemonic’ versus ‘alternative’ languages and masculinities. Using data from a nine-month, multisited ethnography of male Ecuadorian musicians, I show that, though most of these musicians spoke of their roles as men using heteronormative and hypermasculine cultural discourses, their daily interactions were performances and resistances to these discourses. Moreover, the musicians’ use of teasing, humor and self-deprecation allowed them to distinguish themselves from some discourses of masculinity. The result is a performance of what Kramsch and Whiteside termed ‘symbolic competences’ of transcultural masculinities. The musicians’ marginalized status as legal, but still culturally and racially othered migrants played a key role in how they performed the varied symbolic competences of masculinity surrounding them.

Keywords: cultural identity; gender identity; identity construction; indigenous languages; language use; multilinguals

Introduction

In 2007, I began nine months of ethnographic fieldwork with a group of Andean folkloric musicians working in the Pacific Northwest region of the USA. The band, which I call the Runa Takiks, was composed of 11 Ecuadorian men between the ages of 19 and 55, all from the northern Ecuadorian province of Otavalo, with the exception of one member from the capital city of Quito. The majority of the Runa Takiks identified as indigenous and spoke both Spanish and Quichua, an Ecuadorian indigenous language; two members identified as mestizo (mixed race/ethnicity) and spoke Spanish only. My fieldwork with the band included participant observation, interviews, and recording conversations during their set up, performances, and breaks. Given their grueling schedules of up to 10 hours of performance daily, I was often the only woman interacting with them for extended periods of time. Although the original intent of my study was to examine how the Runa Takiks used their multiple languages (Spanish, Quichua, and sometimes English) in a transnational context, the issue of gender discourses became more salient as I observed their daily lives.

*Email: mback@gmu.edu

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Gender issues were especially present whenever our topics of conversation wandered into the charged territory of intimacy – a frequent occurrence among 11 bored, heterosexual-identified men in the presence of one woman. A dynamic combination of double entendre and self-deprecating humor in these discussions guided my curiosity regarding what Kiesling (2007, 657) termed the ’cultural discourses of masculinity’ surrounding the Runa Takiks, and how they performed, resisted, and reframed certain discourses in their daily interactions. These discourses were formed by their status as marginalized, indigenous outsiders in a predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon region of the USA, as well as by the dire socioeconomic straits under which the band lived and worked. The discourses of masculinity employed by the Runa Takiks were also shaped by the histories and social contexts of their lives back home in Ecuador, which often clashed with the uncomfortable realities of poverty, loneliness, and indentured servitude of their lives in the USA.

As Ecuadorians who lived and worked abroad for half of the year, the Runa Takiks witnessed and engaged in what I term transcultural discourses of masculinity. Building upon Canagarajah’s (2013) notion of translilingual practices, I see transcultural discourses as transcending one or even multiple cultural discourses of masculinity, generating new discourses through contact and synergy. The unique ways that the Runa Takiks reflected upon and performed these discourses is what motivates this article. How did these individuals construct notions of masculinity in a transnational setting? How did their multilingualism in Quichua, Spanish, and English contribute to these constructions? How were these constructions performed in, and possibly altered by, the presence and participation of a lone female researcher?

The answers to these questions are relevant in three areas; for expanding discussions on gender in globalized contexts; for understanding the discursive needs and backgrounds of our participants; and for continuing to reflect on our roles as researchers in discourses of gender. First, though the study of both monolingual and multilingual masculinities has accelerated in recent years, there are still few studies pertaining to what Connell (2005, xxiv) termed ‘masculinity formation in transnational arenas,’ whether that formation takes place in a monolingual or multilingual context. In this article, I argue that exploring the synergies in both multi- and monolingual and cultural perspectives on masculinity reveals important complexities that are often forgotten in the current, often dichotomized theories of masculinity. The performance of multiple discourses indexes what Kramsch and Whiteside (2008) termed the ‘symbolic competence’ of these individuals in a transnational environment. As this symbolic competence can be difficult for outsiders to access, adopting a multicultural or transcultural perspective on masculinity expression has important implications for both researchers and newcomers to multilingual communities.

Second, findings from this research have important implications for transnational, multilingual, and multicultural participants of research in gender discourses. Given the theoretical frameworks outlined above, participant discourses are usually viewed in similar dichotomies, leading frequently to cultural misunderstandings at both the academic and daily interactional levels. Taking a transcultural approach to gender and other multicultural discourses is one step in promoting intercultural understanding at these levels.

Finally, both the theoretical frameworks surrounding monolingual and multilingual masculinities, as well as findings from previous research, are not always reflective of what we as researchers bring to the analysis. A critical and reflexive look at researcher notions of masculinities would help shed light on the complexities inherent in multilingual, multicultural masculine discourses. In the words of Shi-xu (2005, 43), it is important to theorize discourse not as cultural outsiders or insiders, but rather ‘in between cultures.’
interpret this observation as simultaneously taking into account the particularities of our participants’ cultural histories and resources, as well as acknowledging how our own cultural histories influence our interpretations. My hope is that this article will contribute to an ongoing discussion on researcher reflexivity as it pertains to accessing the unique discourses of our participants, as well as be a starting point for further research on multilingual and multicultural performances of gender.

Performing transcultural masculinities: theoretical framework

For several years, scholars in applied linguistics and other fields have problematized gender as ‘a set of practices [discursive and otherwise] through which many people construct and claim identities’ (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 205). The result is that ‘doing being male’ or ‘doing being female’ is an ongoing performance of varying cultural discourses, which change depending on the interaction. In Pavlenko’s (2001, 124) view, a socially constructed view of gender implies that scholars must pay attention not only to the negotiations of gender but also to the role of these negotiations on ‘individuals’ access to linguistic resources and possibilities of expression.’

Although Pavlenko and others (e.g. Pujolar 1997; Ferreira 2008) have examined the performance of gender in multilingual contexts, the bulk of work on masculinity is still in ‘predominantly monolingual or monocultural settings’ (Pauwels 2001, 150). Within these studies lies a great deal of emphasis on the adoption of certain hierarchies or hegemonies (e.g. Connell 1987, 2005). For example, Howson (2008, 111) defined hegemonic masculinities as characterized by ‘principles of heterosexuality, breadwinning, and aggression’ (his emphasis), which ostensibly manifest themselves in the discursive practices surrounding ideologies of homophobia, misogyny, and hypermasculinity. Though Beasley (2008), Wetherell and Edley (1999) and others have critiqued these notions as not necessarily applicable to all men, they continue to hold sway in many discussions of and surrounding men and masculinity. In this mindset, transnational masculine discourses are viewed as influenced by Western hegemonic concepts of masculinity, which in turn perpetuate these discourses in a circular fashion (Howson 2008).

Studies of multilingual masculinity, on the other hand, tend to discuss hegemonic discourses as nongender specific. Pavlenko (2001, 141) discussed how to use a community of practice framework to understand ‘the working of local hegemonic discourses of language and gender,’ without referring specifically to masculinity. Echeverria (2003) spoke of Spanish as a hegemonic language in Catalonia, rather than viewing it as hegemonic for a particular gender. Ferreira (2008), on the other hand, did discuss some perceptions of gender-related discourse, showing in her analysis of a discussion among Galician men that discourses traditionally conceived as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ could coexist among and within men in particular contexts.

Clearly, there are distinct definitions of hegemony operating within the research on monolingual and multilingual masculinities. Whereas Connell, Howson, and others used the concept of hegemony to tease out specific manifestations of monolingual masculinities, research on multilingual contexts portray hegemony as gender neutral, or conflated with concepts such as ‘traditional’ masculine discourses. It is important to note that within each of these notions lies the researchers’ own cultural experiences, histories and beliefs, which are then applied to their participants. For example, many researchers on masculinities identify as Western females – a cultural category that undoubtedly plays a role in their own interpretations of data.
To further encourage a reflective, 'in-between' view of multilingual masculinities, I turn to the theory of symbolic competence. Kramsch (2006, 251) argued that understanding cultures and communities implies understanding not only the surface level of discourse but also 'what they remember from the past, what they imagine and project onto the future, and how they position themselves in the present.' She defined this understanding as symbolic competence and, in another article (Kramsch and Whiteside 2008), illustrated how particular linguistic acts position interlocutors in different 'symbolic spaces' with particular cultural memories and social symbolic powers. Kramsch and Whiteside (2008, 666) argued that the use of these different codes, with their accompanying memories, is performative in nature, allowing multilingual individuals to 'create alternative realities and reframe the balance of symbolic power' in interaction.

The historical and contextual aspects of Kramsch and Whiteside's (2008) theory are particularly relevant with respect to the analysis of transcultural masculinities. Like language learners, and often as language learners, these individuals use different codes, symbols, and cultural memories to contest particular cultural discourses and reafﬁrm others, depending upon the context. These constructions are based on their own knowledge of cultural symbols and histories, as well as on the context of their interactions. The notion of symbolic competence thus parallels Shi-Xu's (2011, 211) observations that 're-visioning a culture's discourses from the viewpoint of their past practices [...] can yield insights into the otherwise unnoticed characteristics of its present or even future discourses.'

In a previous article (Back 2013), I discussed the difficulty of analyzing an abstract notion such as competence, and how it might be more appropriate to speak of symbolic performance when analyzing discourse. I argued that the work done by both linguistic anthropologists and scholars in gender studies allows us to perceive performance as a 'specially marked way of speaking' that opens itself up to audience scrutiny (Bauman 1987, 8). In analyzing these performances as adoptions of and resistance to certain types of symbolic competence, we can observe which cultural discourses of masculinity are accepted in a given context, and which are being resisted.

Data for this article comes from a nine-month, multisited ethnography that included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and recorded conversations. Although the bulk of my time was spent with the men in the band, I also spent a month in their home province of Otavalo interviewing, observing, and recording conversations among their wives and mothers. My analysis involved constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 1995, 2006). Charmaz's approach to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original conception emphasized how the interaction between the researcher and the informants 'produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines' (Charmaz 1995, 35). I used constructivist grounded theory to arrive at relevant themes and subthemes, such as gender, while constantly reflecting upon my own role as a participant observer among the men, and how my role as a white, academic female accustomed to Western cultural norms might have influenced (or not) the interactions around me.

In the following section, I introduce the focal participants of this study, outlining their beliefs about masculinity as expressed in interview data and more informal interactions. My goal in discussing the men's beliefs is to compare them with how they performed and contested some of these beliefs in interactions with each other, which I do in the subsequent section.
Performing perceptions of masculinity

Although the Runa Takiks comprised 11 men, in this article, I focus on five individuals – Alkurinchik, Alejandro, Domingo, Jerónimo, and Matías – who moved through several symbolic spaces in their discourses surrounding masculinity. Alkurinchik, age 37 at the time of the fieldwork, was a longtime member of the Runa Takiks. A native of the small town of Peguche, he was married with four children. He communicated a dire necessity to work abroad in order to provide for his family; in fact, ‘la necesidad me obligó’ (necessity obligated me) was both his and many other band members’ response when I asked why they decided to become musicians. During our interview, Alkurinchik mused that his eventual goal to ease off work would have to occur far in the future:

> Eh, quiero, quiero ponerme algo, un negocio pequeño solamente para vivir nada más. Ya no pensar en comprar eh, para mis hijos para mis hijos sino que ya pues sólo para vivir. Pero, quince años más de trabajar sería. Porque mi hijo el menor tiene dos años nada más y por él tengo que trabajar.

> I want to have something, a small business just to live off. Not think about buying anymore for my kids, for my kids, but just to live. But, it will be about fifteen more years of work, because my son, the youngest, is only two years old, and I have to work for him. (Emphasis added, interview, 21 July 2007)

Comments such as these pointed to the performance of a cultural discourse of man as a breadwinner, as discussed by Howson (2008). As implied in Alkurinchik’s statement, work was an obligation born out of the necessity to provide for their families. This is similar to findings by Fuller (2003, 138–143) who, in her interviews with Peruvian men, noted that ‘work is represented as the key dimension of adult, masculine identity’ and ‘entering the world of work [...] constitutes a prerequisite for establishing a family.’

Despite the difficulty of this necessity, several of the musicians claimed that it was more difficult to remain at home. Domingo, aged 43, was another veteran of the band who lived with his wife and five children in Otavalo when he was not working in Seattle. Domingo reflected negatively on the four years that he had to remain in Ecuador due to visa issues, and how it affected his children’s ‘respect’ for him:

> Los cuatro años que quedé en el Ecuador fue difícil ya que tenía el cariño de mis hijos mas no el respeto. Los cuatro años supe lo que es, tratar de ganarse ese, más que del cariño el respeto de mis hijos, cosa que difícil, entonces no quiero perder lo que me tocó aprender.

> The four years that I stayed in Ecuador were difficult, since I had the affection of my children but not the respect. Those four years I found out what it is, to try to earn that – more than the affection, the respect of my children, which was a difficult thing. So now I don’t want to lose what I had to learn how to get. (Interview, 21 July 2007)

The expressions of affection and respect are seemingly mutually exclusive and closely linked to Domingo’s inability to procure employment abroad. Once again, the act of breadwinning was linked closely to Domingo’s performance as a man. Absent of that work, he felt unable to gain the respect of his children, which he only regained once he was working abroad again. For musicians such as Domingo, the paradoxes of presence/absence and affection/respect again echoed Fuller’s (2003, 149) observations: ‘The father is a contradictory figure because his presence is defined as crucial, but the possibility of his absence is always latent’ due in part to ‘his integration into the public sphere [being] opposed to his paternal role.’ Thus, both Alkurinchik and Domingo tied the necessity of work to the notion of fatherhood and, indirectly, masculinity. This belief seemed to stem in part from their home cultures in Ecuador; although the women also worked, there was
an expectation that the men would leave the home and work abroad to earn the bulk of
the family income (see Kyle 2000; Meisch 2001; Wibbelsman 2009).

Often, the need to provide for one’s family, combined with the sadness of being far
from that family, forced some members to, as Allkurinchik once said, ‘close their hearts’ in
order to get through the working season. At times, this closing of the emotional valve was
combined with the cultural discourse of heteronormativity, which in turn corresponded to
performances of both the heterosexual philandering musician and aggressively hypersexual
Latino male. Kyle (2000, 142) noted that for Andean musicians such as the Runa
Takis, the ‘rite of passage’ of making music abroad usually included ‘North American
and European girlfriends (whom some have married).’ Many of the Runa Takis had
personal experience with this particular rite; two of the musicians had married women they
met in the USA. These involvements, and the musicians’ comments on them,
corresponded strongly with a discourse of heteronormativity. Again, there are parallels
to Fuller’s (2003, 147) observations regarding Peruvian male sexuality: ‘The men
conceived masculine sexuality as a natural tendency that could not be totally controlled
within marriage; if it were, it would run the risk of being feminized and thus emasculated.’

One discussion stands out as an almost deliberate symbolic performance of
heteronormativity. Alejandro, aged 42 at the time of my research, was a mestizo (mixed
indigenous and white) from Quito, where he lived with his wife and two children. During
a long wait between sets in a bookstore, Alejandro discussed how he was looking at
lluchas (Ecuadorean slang for women in various states of undress) in the bookstore’s
magazines. He then claimed that it would be disgusting if he looked at pictures of men in
the same state. When I demurred, Alejandro continued to insist on his point, saying that if
he saw one of the band members in such a state he would say ¡Qué asco! (how
disgusting!), but that the female form was naturally beautiful. He added that his view had
nothing to do with sexism; it was just the way things were. Another band member
(Baltasar) added, ‘los hombres somos así’ (we men are like that).

With this statement Baltasar coconstructed and affirmed Alejandro’s subject position
and performance of a heteronormative cultural discourse. This symbolic performance of
heteronormativity was constructed in part by the historical and cultural norms of the Runa
Takis (and, more generally, male Ecuadorians) as a particular community of practice. It
was also constructed by the context of the interaction, which was a casual conversation
between the band members and myself. Freed from the constraints of a formal (and
recorded) interview, both Alejandro and Baltasar felt able to express themselves more
freely regarding this particular cultural discourse. There was also the possibility that my
presence made it more important for these individuals to assert their heterosexual status.

Though heteronormative discourses were performed by many of the older musicians,
the younger members of the band sometimes contested these discourses. Matías, aged 19,
was a first-year member of the Runa Takis at the time of the study. As the son of a
veteran musician, he had a certain amount of prestige among the band members.
However, he was initially overwhelmed both by transnational life and some of the
discourses enacted by his older counterparts. In our interview (done jointly with another
young member of the band, Diego), Matias positioned himself in firm opposition to the
cultural discourses that surrounded his line of work:

Matías: Ah, he notado este año he notado no, con chicas, que dicen que todo músico es así,
dicen que conozco músicos que son así y tú eres igual. Me dicen así y eso no me gusta de –
Ah, I’ve noticed this year with girls, they say all musicians are like this, they say that I know
musicians that are like that and you are the same. They say this to me and I don’t like that –
Michele: Pero cómo son los músicos según las chicas?
*But what are musicians like according to the girls?*

Matías: A ver según ellas dicen que tengo mujeres por allá en cada país, que toman —
Well according to them they say that I have women over there in every country, that they drink—

Diego: — en cada presentación —
—at every gig —

Matías: Eso, que son mujeriegos. Tienen fama de ese y no me gusta que me digan que soy así. Dicen que soy así pero no me conocen por eso. Eso que no me gusta de decir que soy músico.

Exactly, that they’re womanizers. They’re famous for that and I don’t like them saying I’m like that. They say I’m like that but they don’t know me. That’s what I don’t like about saying that I’m a musician. (Interview, 25 July 2007)

In this interview, Matías reframed his own subject position vis-à-vis the womanizing musician by distinguishing himself from this discourse both contextually (‘They say I’m like that but they don’t know me’), as well as grammatically through a switch from first person (‘that I have women’) to third person (‘that they drink […] that they’re womanizers’). With this reframing, Matías showed how his own cultural memories as a member of a younger generation of Ecuadorians came into play in shaping his subject position as a single, male musician. Also important to keep in mind is the context of his statement; that is, in a formal interview with a US female researcher. As an interview participant, Matías may have felt the need to make a good impression from the perspective of the varied discourses of masculinity surrounding him in the US.

In these anecdotes from Allkurinchik, Domingo, Matías, and Alejandro, we see mainly performances of what have been termed ‘hegemonic’ masculine cultural discourses. These discourses appear to be simultaneously influenced by the globalizing influence of Western culture, the contextual aspects of speaking with a female researcher in formal and informal settings, and the particular histories of the Runa Takiks as Ecuadorians, as indigenous peoples, and as musicians. The fact that younger members such as Matías actively contested some stereotypes points to the importance of history and context for the performance of these discourses. At the same time, we should not discount the perception of inevitability and permanence of these discourses by many of these individuals, as seen in phrases such as Allkurinchik’s ‘necessity obligated me’ and Baltasar’s ‘we men are like that.’

However, daily interactions among the Runa Takiks showed a more complex performance of masculinities, which were often tinged with irony, humor, and self-deprecation. Sometimes these performances were marked by sarcastic displays of heteronormativity, while others reflected exasperation and frustration with their status in the USA. Below, I analyze conversations among the members that further illustrate the importance of context and language in performing transcultural masculinities, with a focus on the use of Quichua and Spanish in each of these interactions.

**Catcalls and curse words: transcultural masculinities in interaction**

Research on gender has indicated that displays of hypermasculinity are common ways of showing the cultural masculine discourse of verbal aggression. According to DeKlerk (1997, 148), Western males have an obligation to try out hypermasculine displays, such as slang and sexually oriented double entendre, in order to ‘conform to the expectations of society.’ Kanter (1977) wrote that the presence of a token female (e.g. myself as researcher) might lead to an exaggerated display of hegemonic masculinity, including
sexual innuendo and teasing. Examples of these displays during my fieldwork included when a musician told me to come and eat lunch with him and other members of the band ‘o vamos a estar celosos’ (or we’re going to be jealous), or when another musician opened his arms to me during a particularly cold day and asked if I wanted to ‘get warmer.’ In each of these cases, the men’s comments were performances of the stereotypically ‘hegemonic’ masculine cultural discourses of aggression and heterosexuality, as outlined by Howson (2008).

At other times, hypermasculine performances were more indirect and employed linguistic resources such as sexual innuendo. For example, the use of double entendre by the band members often turned my seemingly innocent comments into jokes. During one visit to a Vietnamese restaurant, I explained my proficiency with chopsticks by saying ‘Yo puedo con los palitos’ (I can deal with the little sticks). There was instantly a great deal of sniggering, laughter, and repetition of the word ‘palitos’ (little sticks) on the part of the band members. Domingo commented in Quichua, ‘Na sentimiento latino charin’ (she already has a Latino sentiment). Domingo’s comment implied both my presumed awareness of the implied sexual meaning and the Latino nature of this type of word play. During another lunch break, Jerónimo began comparing Peruvian corn (with which I was familiar, having a Peruvian husband) with Ecuadorian corn. He claimed that ‘el ecuatoriano es chiquito pero más rico’ (the Ecuadorian one is smaller but more delicious). As a chorus of snickers and hoots erupted around the restaurant table where we were seated, I quickly grasped that Jerónimo was not necessarily or exclusively discussing the merits of corn. This type of reframing is an important element of symbolic competence, and one that the band members were able to employ in both Spanish and Quichua.

However, it is important to note that both Jerónimo’s comment on corn and Domingo’s discussion of ‘palitos’ were also performances of self-deprecation. The wordplay in these comments not only indexed male anatomy but also its size. Jerónimo’s contrast of self-deprecation (small size) with positive evaluation (delicious) was a complex performance of the hypermasculine cultural discourse of sexual innuendo. The performance referenced Westernized notions of masculinity, as noted by Fuller’s (2003) indigenous and mestizo informants, who repeatedly reported that tall, Caucasian males were more attractive to women. Jerónimo, no doubt aware of this perception, humorously reframed the cultural discourse of ‘bigger is better’ with his own symbolic knowledge.

This reframing is also evident in the two conversations I analyze below. In the first excerpt, Alejandro and Domingo teased Jerónimo about what they jokingly perceived as a mishearing on Jerónimo’s part. Prior to this interaction, Alejandro had said ‘Thank you, ma’am’ in English to a passing female fan who had commented positively about the band. The transcript begins with Jerónimo mulling over the English word ‘ma’am.’

Excerpt 1: "Madurá"

1. Jeronimo: *mmmmma’am
2. Michele: ma’am, señora
   Mrs. (best approximation of ma’am in Spanish)
3. Jeronimo: AHHhh
4. Michele: señora es ma’am
   is
7.0 ((inaudible conversation))

5. Alejandro: vos qué estabas pensando que
you, what were you thinking, that

6. Alejandro: le estaba diciendo mamaCI=
I was saying to her little ma

7. Michele: =hhH[HHH

8. Alejandro: [ta:ah,
ma?

9. Michele: hhhHHHHhahahaha

(3.0)

10. Alejandro: ((singing)) madurA:A; madurA ya,
[get] mature, mature already

11. Domingo: ya estas, como VIEjo, madurA?=
you are already like an old man, grow up!

12. Alejandro: =estas rukuYAndo y
you are getting old and

13. sigues así,
you are still like that

14. Michele: ^rukuyan[dohhh]
getting old

15. Alejandro: [hhHHH]

(2.0)

16. Jerónimo: ^madurA.
[get] mature

(3.0)

17. Domingo: (estás como) VIEjo maduRAndote YA.
you're like an old man, maturing already


In bringing the word 'mamacita' into a discussion about 'ma’am,' Alejandro reframed a well-known masculine discourse of the Latin American male who, given his inherent appreciation of the female form, makes piropos (catcalls) at women passing by. The word mamacita, with all of its historical subtext as a catcall by Latin American males, was reframed in Alejandro's performance as a tactic of denaturalization (Bucholtz and Hall
portraying this discourse as ridiculous. The contrast with the polite English ‘ma’am,’ and Jerónimo’s supposedly salacious understanding of the term led to Alejandro and Domingo’s teasing of Jerónimo in lines 10, 11, 12 and 17. In this ribbing, Alejandro and Domingo linked the cultural notions of age and maturity to the cultural discourse of the *piropo,* implying that it should only be employed by younger men. Alejandro and Domingo also positioned themselves as more mature, polite individuals in their expressions of mock horror at Jerónimo’s supposed mishearing. In this way, they distinguished themselves from Jerónimo and urged him to become more ‘mature’ in correspondence with his chronological age.

Linguistically, Alejandro crossed into Quichua with his use of the verb ‘rakuyando.’ This verb is a combination of the Quichua verb *rakuyana* (to grow old) and the Spanish progressive suffix *-ando.* Because Alejandro, as a mestizo, did not frequently employ Quichua in his interactions with the band members, his use of the word was what Rampton (2009, 149) has termed a ‘non-habitual speech practice’ and, therefore, subject to resistance by the other, native Quichua – speaking band members.

I have discussed reactions to Alejandro’s language crossings in previous articles (Back 2011, 2013). For the purposes of this article, it is important to note that Domingo did not adopt Alejandro’s term ‘rakuyando’ but instead opted for a non-Quichua phrase, *como viejo* (like an old man), to describe Jerónimo. Both Alejandro and Domingo were native speakers of Spanish; however, Domingo was also fluent in Quichua. In his resistance to adopting the term ‘rakuyando,’ Domingo excluded Alejandro from using Quichua for the discursive practice of teasing, even though the language was frequently employed among the members of the Runa Takiks precisely for that purpose.

As Pauwels (2011, 163) noted, ‘demonstrating or displaying linguistic competence in the community language is a critical aspect of performing masculinity in the company of other bilingual men.’ In the case of the Runa Takiks, the community language was Quichua, and indigenous members of the band used the language for both teasing each other and leaving Alejandro on the periphery of their conversations. These practices corresponded to Marr and Pooley’s (2009, 58) findings on Quichua speakers in Peru, where insults in different varieties of Quechua are ‘perceived as bringing real power and advantage to the person who control [them].’

It should be noted that, among the Runa Takiks, both Spanish and Quichua conveyed ‘power and advantage’ in different contexts. For example, Spanish was often employed for expletives, even among the native Quichua speakers. I show this in an interaction between Alkurfrenchik and Jerónimo regarding restrictions on Internet usage. First, a bit of context: the Runa Takiks shared a one-bedroom, ground-level apartment attached to the bandleader’s house, so space and privacy were at a premium. Most of the members shared one desktop computer, which was one of their few means of keeping in touch with their families back home. Therefore, Internet usage was often an emotional subject, as seen by Jerónimo and Alkurfrenchik’s conversation.

Excerpt 2: “Hijo de Puta”

1. A: chuta aí, ai toca preguntar al jefe
   shoot, there, there’s where you have to ask the boss.

2. digamos, de qué tanto podemos abusar, (0.8)
   let’s say, about how much we can abuse [Internet privilege]
3. >QUInce, VEInte, TREInta, aHOra, dos, tres HOras,<
   fifteen, twenty, thirty, now, two, three hours

4. A: ai <toca preguntando a ver=>
   it's a matter of asking to see

5. J: =claro porque el jefe no dice directo,
   of course because the boss doesn't say directly

6. kaynaka nirka:a, >imatak ruran conectando
   he said before, what are you doing online.

7. trabaJAT: chun\< nirka kaynaka.
   work! that's what he said before

8. A: <katijun maka\< culiran (tagna) ŋukaka,
   he keeps fighting about it with me.

9. chay mushuk ( ) na ushunka,
   (for something I won't even do)

10. J: Hijo de puta ese,
    that one's a son of a whore

    I can't deal with it anymore

    (he's) a son of a whore.

13. J: (glances at me) no es malo no.
    that's not bad is it?

In this exchange, there are two notable code switches: one in line 6, when Jerónimo switched from Spanish to Quichua for the purposes of reported speech, and one in lines 10 and 12, when Jerónimo switched back to Spanish to call his boss an 'hijo de puta.' Evaldsson (2005) has looked at how masculine order can be produced through the practice of insulting, finding that insults are coconstructed and often reference group membership and ethnic identities. In South American Spanish, hijo de puta does not necessarily reference the alleged prostitution activities of the mother, but rather refers to a lower class of person who is capable of hitting well below the belt when attacking others. The phrase can also be used admirably by someone who has witnessed the alleged hijo de puta's trickery. Jerónimo's use of the term references the cultural history of the phrase, as he used it to both insult and express admiration.

However, both Allkurinichik and Jerónimo continued their conversation in Quichua after Jerónimo has reported what his boss said, and even after his epithet in Spanish. Their continued use of Quichua to complain about their boss connoted a more intimate tone. The association of Quichua with more emotional or intimate topics was referenced frequently in interviews and in conversations with my participants. Quichua was usually the preferred language for discussion about emotionally intense or sensitive topics.
Matias, for example, told me that when he wanted to have a more profound discussion with a friend, he did so in Quichua. I witnessed these switches during moments of intensity or passion, such as the conversation transcribed above. This intensity was broken in line 13 when Jerónimo became aware that I was listening to the conversation, as seen by his shift in gaze toward me and his question in Spanish ‘no es malo, ¿no?’ (That’s not bad, is it?).

The links between emotion-intimacy and Quichua is similar to what Günther (1997) and Ferreira (2008) found in their respective analyses of ‘complaint stories,’ which are usually perceived as feminine forms of discourse. As Ferreira (2008) outlined, these discourses can be made more acceptably ‘masculine’ by the code switch to a Spanish epithet, as well as emphatic speech style, as shown by increased tempo and volume. In Excerpt 2, Jerónimo and Allkurinchik adeptly employed the multiple symbolic resources and histories available to them; by using Quichua to discuss a sensitive topic, and combining this discussion with a Spanish expletive and increases in tempo and volume, they coconstructed a complaint story into something that fit with their own notions of masculine discourses.

The above examples show that, in interactions with each other, the Runa Takiks performed not only the discourses expressed through their interviews and other interactions with me but also drew upon other symbolic resources, such as age and multiple languages. As Pauwels (2011, 148) stated, ‘The consequences of transgressing normative masculinities or femininities tend to be different, not only according to culture but also depending on life stage.’ We saw a comfortable transgression reflected in Alejandro and Domingo’s mock horror regarding mamacita and the urging of Jerónimo to ‘mature.' Because Alejandro and Domingo were both middle-aged at the time, there was less pressure to perform in a heteronormative manner. At the same time, Jerónimo’s use of Spanish mirrored the interactions of other males in Spanish-minority language contact situations, where Spanish is indexed as more appropriate for innuendo, double entendre, and expletives. However, Quichua also played an important role in the construction of symbolic masculinities. The Runa Takiks’ use of Quichua to discuss more intimate and emotional topics, as well as to exclude Alejandro, alluded to a strong perception of Quichua as a community language among indigenous members of the group. This last observation shows the difficulty of accessing transcultural symbolic competences from a monocultural standpoint. In the concluding section, I discuss this difficulty in the context of the transcultural reality of these musicians.

Conclusions
As I mentioned above, the members of the Runa Takiks live in a difficult environment in the US Pacific Northwest. Although they have legal working visas, their lifestyle closely resembles the precarious state of most undocumented workers in the USA. Crammed into small quarters, scraping by on a minimal amount of money so that they can send back necessary funds to their families back home, their Internet time restricted and monitored—all are aspects of the indentured servitude faced by these individuals. Because of this reality, the Runa Takiks’ interview and conversational discourses of men as aggressively heterosexual breadwinners are challenged by the reality of their daily lives in the USA. They have no money to spend on themselves, let alone any interested woman, and often depend upon financial support from a female fan, whether for a meal and hotel room or a more permanent relationship. Many US and European women who have dated Andean
folk musicians have found themselves in the position of a provider, as described amply in Kyle (2000) and Meisch (2001).

Moreover, most of the musicians are small in stature and unmistakably indigenous with respect to their phenotype and physical features, especially when compared to most residents of the Pacific Northwest. The Runa Takiks' outward appearance, combined with their use of indigenous instruments, dress, and traditional long hair, conveys that of exotic, racialized, and perhaps even feminized other, which can be excellent for business when one is selling Andean folkloric music but difficult for daily life in the region.

It is likely, therefore, that the Runa Takiks' performance of some heteronormative and hypersexual discourses is a reaction to the marginalizing effects of their status as indigenous transnational musicians in the United States. Rather than, as Connell (1998, 17) said, 'reaffirm[ing] local gender orthodoxies and hierarchies,' these men are actively resisting these orthodoxies and hierarchies through their performances. Most of the men were acutely aware of the racial and linguistic prejudices surrounding them in Ecuador, the USA, and elsewhere, and combatted this with humor and resources such as double-entendre and Spanish epithets. Thus, what some analysts would perceive as a perpetuation of Western hegemonic cultural discourses is in fact a reaction to the musicians' status in a Western hegemonic environment. This reaction is tempered somewhat by humor and self-deprecation in the case of the older men, for whom it is less risky to perform these alternatives, and active resistance by younger men such as Matias.

I would like to illustrate this reaction with a final story from Domingo. While waiting to perform one day, Domingo and I were talking about female fans. I noted that I had overheard one woman making an appreciative comment about the musicians that day. He told me that when he was younger some of these fans would ask him to go back to their homes, to which he would shrug and say 'vamos' (let's go). However, one evening he had a conversation with a few of the musicians and a group of American women. During the conversation, the men were arguing about how many women they could get and which man was the most attractive, when one of the women interrupted, saying, 'nosotras somos las que escogemos' (We are the ones who choose). After that conversation Domingo resolved never to go home with another American woman. He would get their phone numbers, he said, but never give them his number. He said that he would tell them 'no pues, yo te llamo' (no, I'll call you) and explained to me 'era solo para practicar mi inglés' (it was only to practice my English).

In this story we can see how Domingo, confronted with a sexually assertive woman, constructed his reaction as resistant to the role of being 'chosen.' In taking back the power to choose a particular interaction, Domingo reframed the role of 'boy toy' that had come about as a result of his marginalized status as an exotic other. This reframing also served to reinforce masculine cultural discourses regarding the man as the decision-maker. Paraphrasing Pavlenko (2001), Domingo renegotiated his gender role in order to access the limited amount of power that was available to him in this context.

The Runa Takiks were fully engaged with and aware of their roles as fathers, husbands, musicians, and transnationals. Their marginalized status as legal but still culturally and racially othered migrants played a key role in how they performed the varied symbols and histories of masculinity that surrounded them. Their perceptions of how to 'be a man' mirrored some traditional, Westernized masculine cultural discourses, and were often in opposition to how they were perceived in the USA. Their responses to what could be called an emasculating environment included increased usage of hypermasculine discourses. However, the men also used self-deprecating humor and irony to poke fun at these discourses, which also showed their awareness of their
marginalized status. They also used their native language, Quichua, when emotional barriers were down and to reinforce a sense of community.

The Runa Takiks employed complex performances of masculine symbolic competences that acted as both affirmation of and resistance to the discourses of their environments at home and abroad. The analysis of this complexity requires a deep understanding of the symbols, histories, and contexts surrounding these individuals in their daily lives. Approaching these performances from the perspective of hegemonic or alternative masculine discourses offers only a partial glimpse into how the musicians ‘did being male’ on a daily basis. In fact, any approach from differing symbolic perspectives must be done with caution and reflexivity; in assuming a ‘one size fits all’ approach to multilingual masculinities, researchers of transnational, multilingual communities such as these may find themselves stymied or even excluded.

These findings are only a small part of how transnational masculinities can be constructed. Audio recordings of interviews and conversations prohibited me from analyzing extra-linguistic resources, such as gesture and gaze, which are also important for analyzing discourse. Furthermore, I was unable to observe the musicians in their home environments in Ecuador; future research in this area is crucial to more fully examine how these individuals construct their masculinities in different contexts. It is my hope that scholars of multilingual individuals will explore different populations engaged in a variety of transnational activities and continue to offer a reflexive and context-based approach to exploring translingual and transcultural discourses of gender. Only through this close examination can we truly begin to understand the complexity of masculinities in these environments.

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Notes on contributors
Michele Back is an Assistant Professor of Spanish Linguistics at George Mason University’s Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Prior to her appointment at George Mason she worked at the University of California, Riverside’s Department of Hispanic Studies and Center for Ideas and Society. Her research focuses on language, interaction and identity in multilingual, transnational and virtual contexts.

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