

Neo-Pentecostal Masculinities and Religion in the Public Sphere in Latin America

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Introduction

The traditional paradigms for sexual and gender identities began crumbling in the 1970s and 80s in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ The political and economic crises of those years manifested themselves in the daily life of families in the form of reconfigured

1. The sex-gender system is understood to be a “sociocultural construct...which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within a society” (Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1987], 5).

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societal roles, which ended up affecting the ways in which men and women related to one another.

In the current contexts, many men have begun to think deeply about their masculinities,² their sense of what it means to be a man, and how they see themselves within society. Aspects such as urban mobility, the astronomic growth of large cities, the demands of work, the time required to get from one place to another, wages inadequate for meeting life's basic needs, and the communities and social spaces in which they move are all topics of concern as men think through their unique identities. All of this has a great deal to do with how Latin American and Caribbean males are dealing with what many call the *crisis of masculinity*.³

In the religious realm, the situation is no different. With the reconfiguration of sexual identity and gender roles in the 1970s and 80s, the way masculinity is understood and lived out in the religious sphere also underwent a metamorphosis. In this article, we will focus on Neo-Pentecostal masculinities and the way being a Neo-Pentecostal man takes on a particular identity in the public sphere.

2. In this article, the words *masculinity* and *masculinities* are used synonymously, in effort to facilitate reader comprehension, though we prefer the plural concept *masculinities*, as it shows there are many ways of being male.

3. *Crisis of masculinity* here refers to an idea that showed up forcefully at the beginning of the twentieth century when first-wave feminism was at a pivotal moment. The demands of feminism went beyond a simple concession of the right to vote and were believed to pose a danger for the reigning hegemonic masculinity. Thus, the crisis of masculinity is seen as a clear resistance to changes demanded by society and to the subsequent necessary reconfiguration of gender roles (the traditional concept of what men and women are to do within society, as well as the differences between them in regard to their attitudes, identities, and behaviors) (see Juan Blanco López, "Hombres: La masculinidad como factor de riesgo. Una etnografía de la invisibilidad" [PhD diss., Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Seville, 2012], https://rio.upo.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10433/564/juan_blanco_tesis.pdf?sequence=1).