Mirande (1997) Chapter 1: Latino Men and Masculinity - An Overview

Mirande, Alfredo.


Mirande 1997 Latino Men and Masculinity Overview.pdf

Mirande suggests the idea of gender dynamics in Latin America as aggressive males and subordinates women does not correctly portray Mexican/Latino masculinity (Mirande 1997).

He refers to a book by Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (1992) (add to References cited below), which concluded that men’s voices are portrayed as universal, while women voices are muted. Gilligan also considers that women are ignored not only due to developmental psychology, but to society itself (Mirande 1997).

He then mentions Robin West’s discussion of “economic man” and “literary woman”(provide reference for West 1989). It tackles the assumption that while men are rational and incapable of empathy, women are able to feel the pain and pleasures of others because they are naturally empathetic. West disagrees and considers that both males and females can have dual motives, egoistic and/or altruistic (Mirande 1997).

Mirande draws parallels from the economic man in economics and law and the “reasonable man” in law, further emphasizing that this idea of analytical, irrational (do you mean “rational” here?) males does not correspond with the idea of Mexican men (Mirande 1997).

“If masculinity was defined as being cold, analytical, rational, and dispassionate and femininity as being warm, impulsive, emotional, and passionate, Latino men, it seemed, were essentially more feminine than masculine” (Mirande 1997:13). Providing an example, he establishes that his father was the most affectionate of his parents (Mirande 1997).

Mirande uses the Mirande Sex Role Inventory (MSRI) to measure masculinity because he believes that psychologist Sandra Bem’s Bem Sex Inventory cannot be applied to “the nuance and complexity of Mexican/Latino cultures” (Mirande 1997:14).

Moreover, he mentions sociologist Scott Coltrane whose study (cite study) found that male dominance was greatly influenced by “patterns of child rearing and property control”, supporting Matthew Gutman’s idea that domestic violence in Mexico was affected by concern with power relations (Gutmann 2007). Mirande mentions Gutman’s ethnographic study, noting that it portrayed as men as diverse. Also, recent research findings supporting the idea that Latino men are multidimensional, contrary to what the traditional model would suggest is stressed (Mirande 1997).

Mirande discusses the process of the research and reports that the respondents were eager to participate. As he argues the view that a researcher should not research his own community because the results would be biased, he makes the perceptive point that this only seems to be a dilemma when the results support the side of the oppressed (Mirande 1997). I’m glad you pointed this out!

He concludes the article by raising excellent questions that challenge the erroneous notion that the Anglo men is universal while Latino, African-American, Asian or American Indian men are depicted as “sub-populations or specialized groups” (Mirande 1997:28) that are to be measured against generalizations and findings on Anglo men (Mirande 1997)