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**'I dared to tell': Young Paraguayan men's navigation of contrasting  
normative masculinities and their romantic relationships**

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**‘I dared to tell’: Young Paraguayan men’s navigation of contrasting  
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B.S. in Political Science and Spanish  
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2006

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An abstract of  
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Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University  
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2011

Abstract

## **‘I dared to tell’: Young Paraguayan men’s navigation of contrasting normative masculinities and their romantic relationships**

By Paul J. Fleming

**Background:** As emerging adults, adolescents try to create their gender identity for their peers and community. Romantic and sexual relationships are a way that young men can define themselves and their masculine identity. However, young men’s resulting sexual decisions can affect their successful transition into the man they want to be, as well as STI and HIV rates, and rates of adolescent pregnancies. Peer groups and families play a big role in shaping young men’s perceptions of normative behavior. Men can use their health-related behaviors to construct their masculinity. Behaviors that can be negative for young men’s health actually can be normative and help improve their social status and negotiation of power.

**Methods:** In the Bañado Sur neighborhood in Asuncion, Paraguay, five focus groups were conducted with young male peer groups ranging in age from 14 to 19. The peer groups were asked about normative behaviors for young men in their neighborhood and about romantic and sexual relationship dynamics. Half the members from each peer group were selected to participate in individual interviews that examined the same topics but from an individual perspective. The qualitative data were analyzed to understand dynamics between relationship behaviors and masculine identity for young men in the neighborhood.

**Results:** Two different types of masculine norms were described (‘provider’ and ‘macho man’) as well as two different types of romantic relationships (‘casual’ and ‘formal’). The language used to describe each spectrum of behaviors was very similar and represented the connection between masculine norms and romantic relationships. In addition, the perceived norms for the neighborhood were much more ‘macho man’ than the reported behaviors of the young men.

**Conclusions:** Perceived norms cannot change unless young men are willing to speak out about their ‘non-normative’ behaviors. Because of the risk for teasing, few young men are willing to do this. This provides an evidence base for needing more information on actual attitudes and behaviors of young men (compared to the prevailing thought about those attitudes and behaviors). In addition, interventions should give young men a space to speak out about ‘non-normative’ behaviors in order to begin changing norms.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research Questions .....	4
1.2 Specific aims.....	4
1.3 Significance .....	5
<b>Review of the Literature .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Masculinity, sexual health and relationship behaviors of men .....	6
2.2 Social environment and interaction of adolescent boys.....	11
2.3 Latino masculinity and the Paraguay context .....	14
2.4 Summary .....	19
<b>Methods .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Overview.....	20
3.2 Ethical Considerations.....	20
3.3 Study Site.....	21
3.4 Study Population .....	24
3.5 Data Collection Methods.....	24
3.6 Participant Recruitment .....	25
3.7 Data Collection Process.....	26
3.8 Data Analysis.....	28
3.9 Data Quality and Limitations.....	29
<b>Results .....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1 Masculinity and its influences in the Bañado Sur.....	31
4.1.1 Young men’s conceptualization of masculine behavior .....	32
4.1.2 Which male prototype? .....	34
4.1.3 Who influences the young men? .....	35
4.1.4 Who do the young men listen to? .....	37
4.1.5 How are the young men’s gender norms influenced? .....	40
4.2 Masculine behavioral norms and the young men’s behaviors .....	42
4.2.1 Relationships .....	42
4.2.2 Sex and condom use .....	50
4.2.3 Drinking, smoking and drugs.....	59
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>63</b>

5.1 Misperception of the norms .....	63
5.2 Perceived norms and behavioral theory .....	69
5.3 Potential responses for the community .....	71
5.4 Implications for future research.....	73
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Appendix 3.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Appendix 4.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix 5.....</b>	<b>91</b>

## Introduction

Throughout the world, public health practitioners have tried to ameliorate the negative impact that traditional gender roles for females have on the lives of women and girls[1]. Only recently have public health practitioners and researchers begun to address how the traditional gender roles for males can negatively affect the lives of men, women, boys and girls [1-3]. Traditional gender roles for men vary by culture but can often promote aggressive behaviors, multiple sexual partners, violence, and avoidance of emotions[4, 5]. In public health terms this can increase risk factors for STI, intimate partner violence, and unsafe pregnancies [2, 6]

Many studies in the U.S. and Europe have explored the relationship between gender roles, masculinity and males' behaviors [7-9]. For example, in Ireland young boys supported existing gender norms for fear of being teased[7]. A qualitative study on adolescent young men in the U.S. discovered that the young men's sexual activities were more related to positive social reinforcement from their peers than to the pleasure gained from sex[10]. One study in Brazil looked quantitatively at how attitudes towards traditional gender roles shaped risky sex and violent behaviors[11]. Young men who supported traditional gender roles for men and women were more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior and use violence towards a female partner[11].

An area that has been explored in the social science literature in the U.S. is the social environment of adolescent male peers. Young men often use who and how they date as a way to define their masculinity for their male peer group[12]. Rhoades found that male peer groups can influence partner selection and type of relationship, especially in early adolescence[13]. Kimmel noted that adolescent male peer groups often use name-calling and insults as a way to ensure their peers act within the prescribed gender roles for their society[14].



Specifically in the Latin American context, a traditional culture of *machismo* is influential in maintaining strict gender roles for men [5, 6, 15]. Adolescent males who grow up within this context often seek to live up to this masculine standard by performing certain behaviors that society deems as masculine[6]. As adolescence is a period of identity formation, young men look towards the behaviors of men and women in their society to identify appropriate gendered behavior[4]. There are fewer studies of adolescent peer groups and masculinities influences in the Latin American context.

One relevant study in Mexico looked at young men's conceptions of manhood and their sexual relationships[6]. The study found that the young men felt that sexual activity was necessary in order to fit into their peer group and that participants that adhered to more traditional gender norms were less communicative with their female partners[6]. They also found a connection between the participants' frustration with a lack of economic opportunities and increased aggression[6]. Barker corroborates this idea in his book that looks at studies of young men across the world[2]. He concludes that low socioeconomic status predisposed young men to be aggressive due to a perceived (or real) lack of control over their life[2]. Barker demonstrates through his study of Brazilian young men that male participants that were unable to demonstrate their masculinity through something positive like performance at a job or taking care of their family, alternatively demonstrated their masculinity through shows of force, aggression or violence[2].

An ethnographic study conducted in rural Mexico found that men negotiated their masculine identity through their actions and behaviors with other men and through their romantic relationships[16]. Therefore, it was found, certain codes of behavior were different among men, than they were among the community at large[16]. This emphasizes the idea that male's behaviors can be performed for their male peer group.

Latin American examples of masculinity, such as studies of Mexico, are important to understand regional differences in constructions of masculinity. This study will use Paraguay as a case study in order to understand the unique country and population specific factors contributing to masculine identity construction, and to compare that to global notions of masculinity. There is only one study done in Paraguay to examine the attitudes and behaviors of men[17]. This study found that there were two types of masculinity in Paraguay, one more traditional where the man holds all the power, and one more progressive where the man shares some of the household decision making with his female partner[17]. There was still an emphasis on heterosexuality, working outside the home, and some men mentioned the importance of (emotional and physical) strength and being sexually involved with multiple women[17]. While this study did look at some of the characteristics of masculinity in Paraguay, it did not look at the resulting behaviors influenced by these gender norms.

Other research around sexuality and sexual behaviors in Paraguay have focused largely on women[18]. The women's reported behaviors and ideas around gender norms point to a need to better understand men's behaviors[18]. One sexual and reproductive health needs assessment does look at in-school adolescents, both male and female, in Asunción. This emphasized a culture of casual dating among the adolescents as well as inconsistent use of contraceptives[19]. The young men in the study did hint at gender roles in certain cases, but the purpose of the study was not a thorough examination of these roles and their influence[19]. In addition, neither of these studies focused on the marginalized neighborhoods of Asunción characterized by the extreme poverty of their residents.

There is a need to further examine the types of gender norms that exist for men in Paraguay, and also how this influences their sexual and relationship behaviors. It is important to understand how young

*P.J. Fleming*

men in general negotiate their transition into adulthood and manhood through societal gender norms, influences by their parents and peers, and their own beliefs on the type of person they would like to become. Specifically, men's sexual and relationship behaviors are understudied in Paraguay and the marginalized communities in the floodplain are largely ignored in both social programs and research. This qualitative study examines the complicated intersection of romantic relationships, male gender norms, social and geographic environment, and influence of peers and family and help inform future policy and programmatic initiatives to improve the health and well-being of adolescents in this marginalized neighborhood.

## 1.1 Research Questions

Specific research questions:

1. How and when do young men form casual and formal relationships with women and how do these relationships develop over time?
2. How are relationship behaviors shaped and defined by the geographic spaces (including homosocial and heterosocial spaces) that young men and young women occupy within and outside of their community?
3. How are young men's relationship/sexual behaviors influenced by different groups and/or individuals in their social environment?

## 1.2 Specific aims

1. To understand how young men define masculinity in their neighborhood and among their peer groups
2. To assess the connection between types of sexual relationships (casual and formal) in young people and constructions of masculinity and how this influences the formation of

*P.J. Fleming*

- these relationships
3. To identify how homosocial and heterosocial spaces influence relationship formation and decision-making

### **1.3 Significance**

This information learned from this study will be used to formulate policies and programs to address the unique needs of young men in this neighborhood. These interventions could include anything from explicitly sexual health related interventions, as well as working with young men's peer groups. Since the local faith-based organization already works with youth, as well as coordinates advocacy around policy issues, the results from this study will allow this organization to better inform and carry out their programs. These interventions will be more appropriate and effective due to this study and have the potential to improve the sexual health, relationships and transitions to adulthood of both young men and women in this neighborhood.

## Review of the Literature

### 2.1 Masculinity, sexual health and relationship behaviors of men

Sexual and reproductive health is important to the wellbeing of young men and young women throughout the world. In Latin America, delineated as both a geographical region and by cultural similarities, adolescents have been coming of age in a shifting sexual and reproductive health landscape due the region's changing cultural norms and the emergence of new sexually transmitted illnesses. The consequences of unsafe sexual activity such as HIV infection (in 2008, there were 170,000 new cases of HIV in Latin America[20]) and unintended pregnancies (one study shows that an estimated 58% of all pregnancies in Latin America & the Caribbean are unintended-- defined as pregnancies ending in abortion, miscarriage, mistimed birth, and unwanted birth[21]) can negatively impact the healthy transition to adulthood by Latin American adolescent and young adult populations. Health behaviors such as condom use and reducing the number of sexual partners have the potential to drastically lower the incidence of undesired consequences of sex. However, these health behaviors in sexual relationships are influenced by a host of cultural, social, and biological influences. This review of the literature will focus on the social and cultural influences. Contextual relationship dynamics, one of the resulting factors from these social and cultural influences, can help shape how decisions are made within a relationship.

Many studies have shown that men hold a disproportionate amount of power in heterosexual relationships [22-24]. To date, the majority of public health studies on this topic have been conducted on the effect this has had on women. The predominant theory on this topic is the Theory of Gender and Power, developed by Robert Connell, which provides a framework for how unequal power balances can affect the health and well-being of women[24, 25]. Wingood and DiClemente applied this theory to the challenges of HIV-prevention efforts with women [22, 26].

*P.J. Fleming*

In general, this theory has been applied to explain sexual health issues and gender-based violence in women. This uneven power dynamic between men and women can mean that men make the sexual decisions in a relationship, or more callously, can use their coercive power to sexually assault or rape a female partner [24, 26]. And while this theory does help explain negative consequences for women's relationships and health, there is much less literature on how these relationship dynamics affect men's health, relationships, and sexual decision-making. Men's behaviors such as using condoms, having multiple sexual partners, or sexual aggression have been shown to be social constructs, not biologically predetermined, influenced by their upbringing and social environment [3, 7, 27].

Rarely has the concept of the Theory of Gender and Power been applied to males specifically. But yet, the power structures defined in this theory have an effect on the behaviors and resulting health of men[3]. Analyzing the effect on women may be prioritized since sometimes their lack of power and control in relationships can make them as the passive and innocent victims of any negative consequences (HIV infection, subjection to violence, unintended pregnancy, etc.) [22, 28]. However, since men (and women) are socially conditioned to behave in ways that create and support this unequal power structure, it is important to understand what the gender norms are for men, and how they are created.

The literature on hegemonic masculinity describes the idea that there is an ideal set of male behaviors that men must follow (culturally dependent although most cultures, including Latin America, emphasize heterosexuality and dominance by men in the society) [3, 5, 29]. According to R.W. Connell's seminal book *Masculinities*, hegemonic masculinity is the "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the

*P.J. Fleming*

subordination of women”[4]. This ideal masculine behavior is generally considered normative by a community; it acts to place non-hegemonic types of masculinity (behavior prototypes of men that are decidedly non-normative by the society) and femininity in subordination of the hegemonic masculinity [4, 29]. While research shows that masculinity is integrated into every facet of men’s lives, notions of masculinity are strongly related to men’s relationships with women, such as their power and dominance in these relationships [3, 15]. Some researchers have theorized and demonstrated that constructions of masculinity have a significant effect on men’s sexual behaviors [3, 27]. In addition, many of the hegemonic masculine identities that exist in different Latin American communities have been shown to be on the more rigid side of the masculinity continuum in terms of gender roles and inequality [5]. It should be noted that multiple masculine prototypes exist in each community, but one is usually seen as the dominant form [4].

Health, gender, and relationships are all very closely linked. Examining the intersection of these topics from a men and masculinities perspective, the most influential article that has been written is Will Courtenay’s paper on the Theory of Gender and Health[3]. In this paper he discusses how constructs of masculinity represent themselves in everyday decision-making, which includes health decision-making[3]. He also contends that men use their health behaviors (broadly defined) as a way of posturing among their peers[3]. Posturing can be defined as one’s performance of their gender, which will then be evaluated and defined by members of their community in order to determine one’s gender identity [30]. Behaviors such as avoiding “seeking help” from a clinic or pursuing multiple sexual partners are two examples of how posturing for a social environment could potentially increase a man’s social status, but would negatively affect their health [3, 31, 32]. Sometimes the health decisions that result in negative consequences for a man can be negatively affect the sexual partner or offspring of the man, such as HIV or STI infections.[3]. Therefore,

*P.J. Fleming*

when looking at men and their gendered behaviors, it is not solely an issue of men's health, but rather the health of men, women, boys and girls.

While this area is not a common research field, there are some examples of projects across the world that have explored this area. One qualitative study, conducted in Ireland, looks at young men and their willingness to constantly affirm and support hegemonic masculinity in order to avoid being teased by their peers[7]. This study demonstrated the power of the male peer group to influence its members to subscribe to hegemonic masculinity, lest they be teased. The young men's sexual behaviors in this study were shown to be driven by a desire to not be perceived as homosexual, and a desire to be perceived as having sexual prowess [7]. In this article, focus group data indicated that adherence to hegemonic masculine traits was a predictor of having multiple sexual partners[7]. While this is a specific example in a specific location, it does emphasize a need to better understand ways that masculinity and peer groups influence relationships behaviors.

Recently, some researchers have tried to pinpoint what specifically about masculinity causes men to partake in risky health behaviors. Levant et al. found that U.S. college men who were conflicted about their adherence to traditional masculinity (described as unequal gender norms in relationships) were more likely to participate in risky health behaviors (including sexual health behaviors)[33]. However, Levant et al. also found that among college men, those who overall "endorsed" traditional masculinity had fewer risky health behaviors [33]. This can largely be explained by the fact that those who are not certain in their gender identity (type of masculinity) would be more apt to perform behaviors adhering to hegemonic masculinity in order to "fit-in" or be perceived as "masculine" by their community [3, 30]. This notion is especially important, and needs to be explored further, for young adult or adolescent male populations who are still transitioning from boyhood to manhood and forming their masculinity identity[2].



The concept of masculinity and social norms can sometime be difficult to quantify. However, researchers Pulerwitz and Barker developed the “Gender Equitable Men Scale” to measure gender role attitudes among young men aged 15 to 24 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil[34]. Among their findings was that young men who supported more equitable gender norms were less likely to engage in self-reported risky sex and intimate partner violence [34]. Their findings show that young men in Brazil who support equal power sharing in relationships between men and women were more likely to practice healthy behaviors in their romantic and sexual relationships. Further, a multi-country quantitative study published in 2011 with data from Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Rwanda, Croatia and India showed that men with gender equal attitudes were more likely communicate healthily with a female partner and be happier in general[35]. While gender norms and hegemonic masculinity can vary from country to country, similar patriarchal power structures exist across the world and therefore the same ideas can usually be applied to different countries and settings.

Focusing specifically on young men’s masculinity and their sexual behaviors, one qualitative study of 17 adolescent males in the U.S. looked at how those young men talked about sex and their sexual identity. Sexual behavior by these young men was largely determined by positive social reinforcement from sexual activity [10]. The young men often cited how after their first time having sex they were able to “fit in” and relate better with their peers [10]. The participants also referred to sexual activity status as a type of “manliness test”: those who had sex were men and those who did not were still considered boys (or sometimes worse, according to them, a homosexual)[10]. This study reflects the influence that social environments (especially male peer groups) can have on a young man’s sexual decision making process.

*P.J. Fleming*

## **2.2 Social environment and interaction of adolescent boys**

The sexual and relationship behaviors of young men are largely influenced by their social environment, including family, friends and peer groups, as well as biological factors. While a desire for sex and intimacy may be the result of biological processes [36], how these desires manifest themselves into behaviors are largely influenced by social and cultural norms[3, 4, 28, 30].

Much of the literature on the interaction of adolescent boys and their formulation of a masculine identity has been put forth by the sociology and psychology fields. Since adolescence is a period of identity formation, young men look to their social environment to learn how to act [37]. Often times, the most salient and relevant examples of behaviors are from their own peer group [10, 37]. Young men sometimes use dating and women as a way to demonstrate to their peers their masculinity [7, 10]. The notion of “performance masculinity” speaks to the idea that a man acts in a certain way, consciously or unconsciously, to portray a certain type of manhood[30]. The way that peers perceive these actions is in line with the type of people they have seen perform those actions in the past (in real life, media, or elsewhere)[30]. In adolescent peer groups, it can be imagined, that individuals would “perform” certain behaviors because they want to be perceived by their peers as a young man who fits the masculine norm.

One type of behavior that is seen to be consistent with notions of hegemonic masculinity throughout the world is casual sex[4]. Men already have a “sexual script” (history of behaviors by previous men) for casual sex that is supported by their peers [37-39]. Scripting can be described as a preexisting set of behaviors that are normative [40]. In the context of relationships, heterosexual script theory places men as the pursuers and sex as a conquest or just for pleasure [38, 40, 41] Since adherence to this script is part of complying with hegemonic masculinity, men can be seen to be

*P.J. Fleming*

performing this casual sex for their male peers and community, as opposed to solely for the purpose of fulfilling their own sexual desires [10, 42]. Again, this may not be a conscious decision, but positive reinforcement from peers and the community can influence behaviors such as casual sex [10, 40].

While sexual behaviors are important, they often occur within the context of relationships so it is important to examine the romantic relationships of young people. The development of these relationships in adolescents is strongly influenced by peer groups as well. One study by Roscoe et al. showed that early relationships in adolescence are related to establishing a hierarchy in the peer group[12]. Relationships, therefore, can serve as a scorecard of development and progression to manhood among young men. Since hegemonic masculinity is the height of the power structure, being seen as a “boy” (as opposed to a man) can place a young adolescent in lower social status[4]. An individual who has the most or “best” heterosexual relationships (a typical characteristic of hegemonic masculinity) would likely move up the peer group hierarchy due to his public demonstration of masculinity[4, 30].

Rhoades corroborated this notion in his qualitative study of young men by finding that male friends played a larger role to influence romantic relationships in early adolescence compared to the later years of adolescence. [13]. As the young men grew older, they began to put more weight on their own individual relationship experiences, and less on the opinions and thoughts of their peer group [13]. This largely could be attributed to maturation of the young men or increasing independence as they transition through their adolescence. Rhoades further states that this may have something to do with increased social cognition among the older boys, becoming more aware of their social environment and the limitations of their friends that seek to influence their behaviors [13]. It also could be theorized that young, often pre-pubescent adolescents have less outward characteristics of

*P.J. Fleming*

masculinity than older adolescents, and therefore must choose heterosexual partners that will increase their outward projection of masculinity[2, 4].

There are many instances where the normative behaviors of peer groups (and the potential social pressure resulting from these norms) may be perceived only. 'Pluralistic ignorance' is a term that means that certain behaviors are incorrectly perceived to be more prevalent than they actually are[43]. Lambert and Kahn et al. found in their qualitative study of male and female college students that the participants perceived their peers as more comfortable with casual sex than they actually were [43]. The concept of pluralistic ignorance has also been applied to alcohol use, homophobia, racism, among other behaviors and attitudes [44-46]. Considering that perceived social norms play such a large role in theories of behavioral decision making, it is easy to see how pluralistic ignorance can snowball into increased performance of risky sexual behaviors[45, 47].

Although some peer influences can be simply perceived, often times peers try to influence each other in very real ways. One way that adolescent boys "keep each other in check", is through bullying and name-calling[14]. Often times with male peer groups, the name-calling involves referring to a peer as a homosexual (or more likely, an offensive version of the word) to insult them when they are not acting in the prescribed manner for young men in their society[14]. In Connell's book, *Masculinities*, he describes different types of masculinities that are divided up into hierarchies, with hegemonic masculinity being the dominant form[4]. One way that young men assert themselves among their peers as part of the hegemonic masculinity is through calling a "subordinate man" weak or gay[4]. While this name calling can take the form of jokes, or more serious taunting and bullying, name calling among friends is a common trait of young men's communication[14]. In fact, one study of British high school boys found that joking and name-calling was a way for young men to regulate the types of masculinity among their peers by name-calling when someone behaved

*P.J. Fleming*

outside the prescribed norms for hegemonic masculinity in that peer group[48]. Furthermore, among peers, the young men are able to “try on” types of masculinities to see what sort of response their peer group gave as a way to determine what sort of behaviors are appropriate for a man [48].

One limitation of this review of adolescent male peer groups is that all of these studies were conducted in the U.S. or Europe. While they highlight gender roles that are culture specific, they do speak to a larger notion of peer group behaviors related to patriarchal power dynamics that also exist in Latin American, and more specifically, Paraguay.

### **2.3 Latino masculinity and the Paraguay context**

Similar traits of masculinity exist across the world, but each country and community place differing emphasis on certain behaviors and male roles. Latin America is typically viewed as a region with a unified language and culture; while this is true to a large extent, large differences still exist between and within countries in the region. Therefore, when studying a specific area of Latin America, it is important to know what other work has been done in the region while also recognizing that the specific social context could be quite different than in the existing studies. There is little study of masculinity specifically in Paraguay, but there are a few studies of Latino masculinities in Mexico and Brazil (including the ones previously noted in Brazil). In no way are the cultures and contexts of Paraguay, Mexico and Brazil equal, however, religious and colonial similarities makes the analysis of Mexican and Brazilian masculinities relevant to Paraguay.

One qualitative study in Mexico City, Mexico with youth from poor and middle class neighborhoods, showed that, among peer groups, having had sex was an important factor to being a member of the peer group[6]. The young men commented on the misrepresentation of sexual

*P.J. Fleming*

initiation by their peers by saying that lying about having had sex was usually obvious and it made their peers more “gay” for having had to pretend they were having sex,[6]. This type of pressure from the social environment to have sex is likely to exist elsewhere in Latin America. .

The same study found that traditional notions of masculinity among the young men studied were associated with poor communication in relationships[6]. The authors also found that this lack of communication could lead to higher risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections or unintended pregnancies because they avoided discussing protective measures[6]. This relationship could exist across the globe since the same idea was reflected in the multi-country study of gender norm attitudes[35].

In addition, frustration due to the economic barriers to achieve certain standards of masculinity, such as being a provider, have caused these young men to be aggressive and potentially abusive[6]. Barker’s book, *Dying to be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion*, also makes this connection of low economic status with a predisposition for aggressiveness[2]. Barker’s study of Brazilian young men connected the idea that men who are unable to demonstrate positive characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (i.e. providing for family, intelligence, etc.) will demonstrate their masculinity through force, aggression and other masculine associated traits. The Mexican qualitative study found precisely the same connection when comparing the middle class group with the working class group[6]. The working class group was more likely to support violence and aggressive reactions to conflict and in their relationships[6]. This concept has great relevance to many countries within Latin America, including Paraguay, that have large populations living under the poverty line.

In an ethnographic study in rural Mexico, Hirsch found that masculinity is negotiated among men through their actions and behaviors with other men and with their romantic relationships with women[16]. Hirsch also notes that there were certain homosocial and heterosocial spaces in the

*P.J. Fleming*

town where varying relationship and sexual behaviors were acceptable for men[16]. Hirsch defines homosocial spaces as places where men spend their free time together; sometimes in the presence of women but characterized by the way these spaces serve to reinforce males' relationships with each other[16]. Accordingly, she also defines heterosocial spaces as places that are organized around the mixing of sexes; where men and women form and strengthen their socially accepted relationships[16].

These different standards, and homosocial spaces, manifested themselves into infidelity and homosexual activities among the men in town [16]. These contradictory codes of conduct depending on social environment highlight the importance of social audience to the behaviors of these Mexican men.

When thinking of Paraguay as a case study on the dynamics between masculinity, relationships and health behaviors, the limited existing research in Paraguay needs to be scrutinized for clues. In Paraguay, little research has been done on the area of men, relationships and sexual health. One government agency, CEPEP (Centro Paraguayo de Estudios de Poblacion), carries out a large demographic survey on sexual and reproductive health in the entire country. However, this study, last carried out in 2008, only looks at women of reproductive age[18]. In that study, 92% of the 6540 female participants were categorized as either "somewhat traditional" or "mostly traditional" on a scale that measured gender equality and gender roles (participants were asked a series of five true/false questions on gender roles and categorized based on their responses) [18]. In this case, traditional gender roles indicate unequal power and division of labor. This shows there is a need to explore gender roles in Paraguay further and exploratory studies need to attempt to understand men's perspectives on gender equality and gender roles. In addition, 36% of women reported verbal abuse in their current or past relationship, and 18% reported physical abuse[18]. These

*P.J. Fleming*

statistics demonstrate a likely unequal gender-power balance in romantic relationships and a need for more information on Paraguayan men who are the perpetrators of this verbal and physical abuse..

As shown in previously mentioned studies elsewhere, unequal power balance can lead to risky behaviors, poor communication, and unhappiness [22, 35].

Specific sexual health indicators among adolescents in Asunción indicate that sexual health programs need to be more targeted and better informed on the specific social influences of risky behavior, including socioeconomic status. For example, 37.9% of women 15-24 had been pregnant in their lives if they were from a lower socioeconomic status (compared to 14.4% among those with high socioeconomic status) [18]. Also, 56.5% of young women surveyed with low socioeconomic status said that they used a form of contraception in first sexual experience, compared to 74.9% for middle socioeconomic status and 83.9% for high socioeconomic status[18]. These differing behaviors for different social classes indicate that social upbringing could play a large role in shaping sexual health behaviors in Paraguay.

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with international NGOs, did carry out a qualitative study in 2001 on the perspectives and needs for reproductive health services for men throughout Paraguay[17]. One component of this study was to understand the young men's' idea of masculine behavior and appropriate gender roles in Paraguay. Focus groups were conducted with 16 groups of men between 18 and 50 years old [17]. This study generalized that there are two types of men in Paraguay: one that does not contribute to household tasks but still makes all the family decisions, and another, more modern, where the man participates in household tasks and lets the woman make decisions on minor issues and household decisions[17]. Almost all the men in the groups agreed that a man must economically support his family and work outside the home, some of the men added that men must have many women, be strong, not be afraid, and force their opinions on other



*P.J. Fleming*

members of the household[17]. These findings emphasize that masculinity is comprised of a list of characteristics, some of which are stressed more by certain men due to their upbringing or social environment. Research is still needed to determine which characteristics are emphasized in specific settings.

This same study also looked at the use of birth control methods, including the condom. The study found that most men who do not use condoms consider it the woman's responsibility to prevent a pregnancy[17]. The researchers also found a strong connection between perception of virility among the men and the capacity to impregnate a woman[17]. These types of sexual health viewpoints by men are consistent with other cultures and countries with traditional and well-defined gender roles[5, 35]. The report concluded by stating a need for more services and information specifically for men since virtually none exist[17]. While this report provides some interesting insight to masculinity in Paraguay, albeit 10 years old, it does not provide much information regarding the roots of some of these attitudes because, ultimately, it is focused on potential improvements to reproductive health services as opposed to shaping behaviors.

In a more recent study on sexual health behaviors and attitudes in Paraguayan adolescents from Asunción, Andes and Cisneros found that casual sexual relationships were increasingly common[19]. They were characterized by, among other things, the sexual component and a lack of communication about sex and protection[19]. The increasing casualness of adolescent relationships can be perceived as problematic for teenagers because the unpredictable nature of casual relationships have been linked to inconsistent use of contraceptives[49]. Also, the study in Asunción illuminated the idea that distinctive geographic places were perceived by the adolescents to engender certain emotions and types of behaviors[19]. This study demonstrates a need to further

*P.J. Fleming*

examine young men's attitudes and perceptions about relationships and sex in the context of masculine culture.

## 2.4 Summary

The area of masculinity and sexual health among men is a promising new area of study for the creation of effective sexual health interventions for young men. Worldwide, research is lacking in this area, and specifically in Paraguay there is little information on the sexual health behaviors of men. In addition, there is a shortage of programs around the world that are specifically designed to address the sexual health needs of men while acknowledging constructs of masculinity[1]. Thus far, the literature has not addressed constructs of masculinity as it relates to the formation, maintenance, and social projection of relationships in young men. The existing research has not yet fully investigated the link between sexual health behaviors or relationship behaviors and constructions of masculinity. There have been various focus groups and smaller quantitative research studies that support the relationship but further research is needed to explore this link. Further, marginalized neighborhoods in Paraguay offer a unique case study to explore the relationships between socioeconomic status, masculine projection, and resulting relationships and behaviors.

## Methods

### 3.1 Overview

This study was designed to explore, from an adolescent male perspective, their conceptions of masculinity, characterization and formation of adolescent relationships, and influence of gendered spaces on behaviors. As such, the study was designed to interview young men from the same neighborhood individually, as well as in focus groups, to determine individual perspectives as well as the peer groups' collective perspectives. This study involved qualitative data collection through focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews with young men in Asunción, Paraguay. The data generated for this study included young men's discussion of peer and family influences in their relationship behaviors and daily lives. The data was collected between June 2010 and July 2010 in a small, poor neighborhood within the Bañado Sur area of Asunción in collaboration with a non-profit faith-based organization run by a local leader. The data are from 5 focus groups and 18 individual interviews with young men between 14 and 19. The focus group data and individual interview data were then analyzed for insight into the critical influences in these young men's decision making processes in romantic relationships and other social behaviors.

### 3.2 Ethical Considerations

Before the data were collected, Emory IRB determined this study to not be research (Appendix 1). Since these data would be used for programmatic response by the local community organization, and not to generalize across young men in Paraguay, it is to be considered in the realm of practice. While this study was not considered research, the same standards and considerations were taken with the ethical treatment of participants as if the study were considered research. All participants consented to being interviewed and being recorded after being informed by the researcher of the

*P.J. Fleming*

purpose and participant burdens of the study. Participants who were part of the after school program were made aware that their participation would in no way affect their good standing in the program. During the interviews the participants elected pseudonyms and were asked limited demographic questions. All the audio was stored on a private computer outside of the community. The audio data were given to professional transcribers from outside the community who were trained and informed on the confidential nature of the data.

### 3.3 Study Site

The study took place in a neighborhood of Asunción, Paraguay characterized by its poverty and location within the flood plain of the Paraguay River. The historical city limits of Asunción were to the edge of the flood plain, but the current limits have been expanded in the recent urbanization of the country[50]. Therefore, many neighborhoods on the outskirts of Asunción were established as makeshift housing and are comprised mostly of farming families from rural areas or their descendents[50]. The study was designed for one of these such neighborhoods within the Bañado Sur because of both the concentration of extreme poverty and the lack of reliable information on these marginalized zones in the capital[50]. Because of research linking rigid societal constructions of hegemonic masculinity to low socioeconomic status[2, 6], this study was conducted in one of these neighborhoods characterized by its low socioeconomic status.

The specific small neighborhood within the Bañado Sur (not named for anonymity purposes), was chosen because it is fairly typical in terms of educational level, economy, and appearance compared to other poor flood-plain neighborhoods in Asunción. In addition, a faith-based organization in the neighborhood was well-organized with a strong leader and could provide infrastructure and support for the research project. The faith-based organization not only provides spiritual support for the

*P.J. Fleming*

community, it focuses on providing social and educational services for the youth in the community with an emphasis on completing high school.

The Bañado Sur area is characterized by its poverty and marginalization. As the primary researcher for this project, I lived within the community in order to observe daily life, gain trust and entrée into the community, and have better access to participants. I noted in the city as a whole that the neighborhood is often referred to as “*el bajo*” (down below)”, and the people are “*los de abajo*” (those from below). This references the fact that the official city limits are above the flood plain, there is a noticeable drop in elevation into the floodplain of the *Rio Paraguayo* (see Figure 1.)[51]. Most of the floodplain area was not inhabited until the 1960s when rural Paraguayans began to migrate to the cities in search of work and set up makeshift housing[50, 51]. Many maps of the city that I encountered did not show any of the streets of this neighborhood (whereas streets in the rest of the city were defined and named). This may be because certain parts of the neighborhood are not officially recognized by the municipality of Asunción and therefore do not receive basic services such as electricity, running water or street paving[50].

**Figure 1.** *A similar neighborhood in Asunción with makeshift housing in the floodplain.*

Credit: P. Fleming



*P.J. Fleming*

Since this is a marginalized and somewhat unrecognized community, accurate statistics can be hard to find. However, the limited statistics that exist can give an idea of the conditions. The Bañado Sur has an estimated population of 18,000 with 75% of those habitants being under the age of 30 years old[50]. An estimated 99% of heads of households have not completed secondary education[50]. The situation is somewhat improved for the adolescents, but still only 1 in four adolescents complete secondary education (this statistic is buoyed by the faith-based-organization that provides tremendous support for adolescents to stay in school)[50].

The majority of inhabitants are employed through the informal economy[50, 51]. The municipal garbage dump is located in this neighborhood and many inhabitants (including adolescents) make a living by traversing the city and collected recycling which they are then paid for (See Figure 2.) [50]. Most who do not work in recycling work as waiters, maids, or other types of informal labor[50]. It is estimated that most inhabitants of this neighborhood make about a third of the Paraguayan minimum wage (minimum wage is 1,507,484 Guaraníes, or about US\$328.00 with February 2011 conversion rate[52])[50].

**Figure 2.** *Horse and cart full of recycling on its way to the garbage dump. This is a common sight in the study neighborhood.* Credit: P. Fleming



Not only is this neighborhood marginalized because of its geographic location, exclusion from city politics, and poverty, it is also marginalized by stereotypes held by habitants of Asunción who do not live in these poor neighborhoods[51]. When I spoke with professors and Ministry of Health officials about the study site, I was met with much concern for my safety. These reactions are mostly representative of opinions held by inhabitants of the city and is reflective of most opinions shared with me about the neighborhood.

The characteristics described above make this neighborhood an ideal study site because of both the understudied population and a population in need of more recognition and effective social services. In addition, the poverty status of most families and adolescents fits with my objective to examine masculinity and its influences in poor urban populations.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The target study population for this study was young men aged 14 to 19 who resided in the chosen neighborhood of Asunción. Previous studies on adolescent health in Paraguay either focused solely on young women or had little representation from marginal neighborhoods[18, 19] The study was designed to understand the range of experiences that young men from this neighborhood have and therefore age, gender, and current residence were the only inclusion criteria.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

The qualitative design of the study was chosen to both understand the dynamics of peer relationships and have an understanding of how individuals perceive their friends and families influencing their behaviors. Focus groups were intended to collect data on the former, and the

*P.J. Fleming*

individual interviews would examine the latter. Qualitative methods were chosen for this study precisely because it was evaluating complicated notions of gender roles, adolescent relationships, and narratives of transitions into adulthood. The focus groups served primarily to collect general data and information about the norms of the community and peer group, but secondarily allowed me to gain a certain level of confidence with each of the participants and observe male peer interactions. The focus groups were then followed up by individual interviews with some of the participants. In-depth interviews allowed the participants to answer open-ended questions about issues that are difficult to quantify. In-depth interviews also allowed the participants to construct a narrative that placed their actions and comments into context for each individual. Since the focus of this study is the complicated interplay of gender norms and relationships, qualitative methods, specifically focus groups and in-depth interviews, were the best way to collect this information.

### **3.6 Participant Recruitment**

A total of 28 adolescent young men were identified through a convenience sample. Due to both ease and their student status, nineteen adolescent boys were selected through the faith-based organization's after-school program. The researcher recruited the remaining 9 adolescent boys from two different male peer groups. These boys were not participants in the faith-based organization's after-school program, but were identified through family networks of the young women in a community group class for teenage mothers that I was teaching.

For the participants in the after-school program, the young men in the older grade levels (equivalent of high schools students in the U.S.) were asked to participate in the focus groups due to the fact that they fit the study target population of adolescent boys between 14 and 19 years of age. Among



*P.J. Fleming*

the older grade levels, there were only 6 or 7 young men in each grade, therefore all male students in the older grades were asked to and agreed to participate.

The remaining 9 adolescent boys were not participants in the faith-based organization's after school program. I was introduced to two different adolescent boys who were not in the same peer group. I then requested that each boy invite his friends to a meeting where I then explained the purpose of the study and asked if the members of each group were willing to participate in focus groups and individual interviews. All of the boys that were invited agreed to participate. Interestingly, the majority of the boys in these peer groups claimed to attend school despite contrary information from family members. Even with probing about school specifics, the young men seemed to be attending school regularly.

### **3.7 Data Collection Process**

I am trained on qualitative data collection techniques and the ethical conduct of research. I developed the interview guides and focus group guides. In some cases, I borrowed and modified questions from the individual interview guides from a similar study in Mexico[6]. The focus group guides included a portion where the participants would draw a map of their community (see pictures of maps, Appendix 2.) and then discussion afterwards was on the following topics: where adolescents did certain things in their neighborhood, what it means to be a man, feelings about sexuality, relationship norms, sexual debut, and protective measures (See Appendix 3.). In addition, the focus groups included a component where I introduced three different cartoon characters that were supposed to represent typical teens in their neighborhood; I then asked them to describe their thoughts and behaviors relating to masculinity and sexual behaviors (See Appendix 2). The individual interview guides included questions on what it means to be a man, formal and casual

*P.J. Fleming*

relationships, current and past relationships, and their male peer groups (See appendix 4). Once the guides were developed, they were reviewed by social workers at the faith-based organization, including an adolescent psychologist, for cultural sensitivity and appropriateness. I also consulted a group of male university students from the neighborhood, aged 18 to 22, on the appropriateness and relevance of the questions. I made modifications based on the recommendations of the community members.

Once data collection commenced, I conducted the focus groups and individual interviews in Spanish, one of the two official languages of Paraguay. The second official language, Guaraní was spoken by a majority of the boys, but all were proficient and willing to use Spanish for the interviews.

For the participants recruited at the after-school program, I conducted three total focus groups with these young men, with 7 students, 6 students, and 6 students each who fit the study age requirement. After the focus groups were conducted, I scheduled individual interviews for the following week with approximately half the members of each focus group. I purposively selected members from each the focus groups for individual in-depth interviews based on the young man's comfort level communicating, and diversity of shared sexual history (i.e. variety of virgins and non-virgins, serious and formal relationships, etc.) in order to get a range of experiences from the group. I selected three male students from each group for the individual interviews, and because time allowed, a fourth male student was selected to be interviewed from the third focus group.

For the male peer groups that were not a part of the after school program, I conducted two focus groups with a group of 4 young men in the first group and 5 young men adolescents in the second group. From the first group, all the young men agreed to be interviewed, so interviews were

*P.J. Fleming*

conducted with each young man. In the second group, I attempted three individual interviews with three of the older boys since the group's average age was lower than the four other groups. Due to interruptions by their peers, the interviews were shortened but are still included in this study.

I conducted the focus groups and individual interviews with the youth from the faith-based organization in a small enclosed classroom at their "Center for Comprehensive Education". The classroom was separate from where the rest of the students were meeting and provided a private space where the participants could feel comfortable. I conducted the individual interviews a week after the focus groups in the same classroom. For the remaining two focus groups, the participants were asked where they would like to meet. Both groups wanted to meet at the "Center for Family Services" (part of the faith-based organization) where teenage mothers received educational classes. This Center has a classroom with a door so that the focus groups would not be disturbed by their employees or clients. The first group wanted to have the interviews in the same location. The second group wanted to have their individual interviews in a community library that could be borrowed for group meetings. In all cases, I was able to conduct the focus groups and interviews where the participants requested.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

All of the interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded. The recordings were given to professional transcriptionists who transcribed the data verbatim. The transcriptions were in Spanish with bracketed translations of any Guaraní substantive words used (many Paraguayans speak with Guaraní "fillers" that add no substance or content to their sentence). The transcripts were loaded into MAXQDA, version 10, for analysis.

*P.J. Fleming*

I conducted the analysis was conducted using a grounded theory approach. The transcripts were initially read and memoed according to interesting ideas and concepts and my field notes. After an initial round of reading and memoing, I developed a set of codes based on recurring concepts and the research questions. Once an initial codebook was developed, I applied the codebook to two transcripts and a colleague familiar with the project applied the codes to the same transcripts. After a collaborative review of the coding for consistency and utility, I revised the codebook and applied codes to all twenty-two transcripts (for detailed codebook, see Appendix 5.).

Once the text was segmented by codes, I systematically reviewed and memoed individual codes and intersections of codes to understand different spheres of influence on participants' lives. The data was analyzed and interpreted between friend groups, within friend groups, and as individuals.

Efforts were made to ensure fair and balanced analysis of the data. After each apparent finding was discovered, the researcher reviewed each transcript's relevant segments to ensure universality or near universality of the concept. Further, each finding was scrutinized to determine if it was attributed to a unique personal characteristic or due to broader themes among all the participants.

As with most qualitative data analysis, some of my own bias and history were involved in the analysis of these data. I have previously worked with Latino adolescents outside of Paraguay, and conducted research on male gender roles. Therefore, my findings and results may reflected more so through a gender role and masculinity lens than if another researcher analyzed the same data.

### **3.9 Data Quality and Limitations**

I conducted all of the interviews in Spanish, and my native language is English. While I am fluent in Spanish, the language of teenage boys in Paraguay (which includes the use of Guaraní words as

*P.J. Fleming*

slang) includes words not commonly used outside of Paraguay. Therefore, certain comments that I should have probed were not, and that a hidden meaning specific to Paraguay of a common Spanish word would be missed in the data analysis. I am confident that the data was understood sufficiently to provide reliable data, however certain details may have been missed.

The second focus group of male peers not in the after school program is of questionable data quality. The participants willingly consented to participate in the focus group but then made it clear through non-verbal clues that they wanted to finish as soon as possible. The individual interviews with those youth followed the same pattern. In addition, the interviews were continually interrupted by the other members of the group. The researcher believes that the data and observations provide valuable insight into a demographically different (age, education level, and economic level) male peer group, as well as emphasize the sometimes difficult nature of research with male adolescents outside the school context.

This study was only able to interview young men who participate in the after-school program and others who have questionable student status, but was unable to reach young men who admittedly had dropped out of school. The researcher repeatedly tried to access these populations but was told by the community leaders that the long labor hours and the prevalence of drug and alcohol use of this population made them difficult to reach (though this could just be additional negative stereotypes about the neighborhood).

## Results

### 4.1 Masculinity and its influences in the Bañado Sur

The results presented in this section are both a summary and analysis of participant responses in focus groups and individual interviews. The data collected is contextualized where necessary by my own experience living in the participant's community and conducting key informant interviews with community leaders.

The young men who participated in this study were asked to describe their relationships, peers, and family life. The focus groups were structured to allow participants to collectively draw a map of their neighborhood and subsequently describe where and when different activities such as hanging out with friends, looking for girls, dating, sex, and drinking and smoking occurred. Next, the participants were asked to describe masculinity and male gender norms. Finally, three cartoon drawings were used to simulate a young man in their neighborhood and a teen couple in their neighborhood (Appendix 3). The participants were asked to describe what the young man thought about and did regularly, and under what circumstances the young couple had sex for the first time. This was followed by a discussion of condoms and contraceptives. The individual interviews focused more on the peer groups, family, and individual behaviors of the young men. First they were asked about romantic relationships in their neighborhood and what the normative behaviors for their peer group were. Then they were asked about the formations and emotion of any current or recent relationships they are involved in. And finally, they were asked about their own notions of masculinity and whether or not they agreed with the focus group discussion definition.

*P.J. Fleming*

It should be noted in this results section that I had been informed by multiple key informants of the *machista* culture that existed in the Bañado Sur. The neighborhood's men were characterized by their drinking and drug use, abuse of women, and irreverence for women. I expected this study to expose why and how the young men were pressured to act this way by their social environment. What I encountered was quite different. This section will attempt to describe the existence of those characterizations within the neighborhood, where they come from, and also how the young men negotiate that characterization (which most do not identify with) in their own behaviors. As such, this section will start by synthesizing what the young men said about masculinity in their neighborhood and then discuss who they said is helping to shape their opinions on relationships, masculinity and alcohol/drug use. The next section will describe each of these categories important to masculinity in the neighborhood (relationships, sex, condom and contraception use, and drugs and alcohol use), and describe the expected behaviors for males in the neighborhood, what their friends are saying and doing, what their family is saying and doing, and finally what are the young men's resulting behaviors in this category.

#### **4.1.1 Young men's conceptualization of masculine behavior**

The young men in the focus groups were asked what it meant to be a man in their neighborhood. With probing, I heard two different versions of how a man should act. The first, somewhat surprising due to the stereotypes about the neighborhood was an idealized version of what a man should and could be: care-giving characteristics, providing financially for your family, and maintaining a stable family. These ideas were stated by all of the focus groups as important characteristics of being a man. In this male prototype, putting the family before oneself was most important.

*Interviewer:* What does it mean for you guys to be a man in the Bañado?

*Respondent:* a man in the Bañado...

*P.J. Fleming*

*Respondent:* Support a stable family...

*Respondent:* Work

*Interviewer:* What about with girls?

*Respondent:* Could be help out your family too...

*Respondent:* Bring Money into the house

*Respondent:* Bring the daily bread to the house

*Respondent:* and with girls treat them equally

*Respondent:* Treat them equal at all times

-Focus Group 3

The young men individually interviewed looked to this model as their model behavior. Nearly all of them stated that they were hoping to have families, good jobs, and treat women with respect. However, most importantly, these young men also perceived that their own goals and ideals for being a man was *different* than most of the other young men in the neighborhood.

Upon hearing more positive ideas of what it means to be a man, I probed to find out what the community expects from them as men. The male prototype that most of the participants recognized as the dominant male prototype within the neighborhood was the “macho man”. This contrasts with this responsible and selfless male prototype because of the macho man’s emphasis on self-satisfaction and power. This characterization more accurately matches the stereotypes I had heard about men from this community.

The main characteristics of this “macho man” were having sex, being in a heterosexual relationship (or better, having multiple girlfriends), not having to ask for permission for anything, and drinking and smoking. These “macho man” characteristics were typically described by the participants as the behaviors that the community expected of them as men. However, almost all of the young men did not personally identify with these characteristics nor feel that their family reflected or identified with these characteristics. Nonetheless, these macho traits are clearly prevalent gender norms in the community. Often times these behaviors were described as expected by the community and non-adherence to these behaviors were said to be non-masculine, or “gay”.



#### 4.1.2 Which male prototype?

The majority of the young men in the study self-identify with a provider and selfless male prototype.

When asked about the man they would like to be, or whether they identified with macho man behaviors, the vast majority of participants seemed to reject most of those macho norms.

*Interviewer:* How do you act to show that you are a man?

*David:* Well, work, be honest, don't have vices, and respect your woman. And your family. Because, if you drink, you have vices...get into drugs...Just because of that you're not going to be more macho or more of a man.

-David, age 17

"I feel like a man because I'm on top of my stuff. I'm not getting myself into any vices, I'm not letting myself get pulled into that...I don't accept all these things about having sex all the time, harming girls like that, different girls."

-Miguel Ángel, age 16

The vast majority of participants shared similar sentiments to David and Miguel Ángel; however only two of the young men interviewed said that they *do* identify with the macho behaviors described above. Both stated that if they did not perform those behaviors they would either feel gay or be called gay.

The rest of the participants said that they did not identify with the macho man behavior and that they acted "in another way". It is important to note that participants who self-identified more closely to the provider and selfless man still sometimes demonstrate "macho man" behaviors. For example, David (who is quoted as subscribing to the provider prototype above) openly describes that his current girlfriend is someone who he was involved with romantically while he had another girlfriend. This could be an indication that although he wants to always "respect women", he does not always achieve his goal.

*P.J. Fleming*

Considering that most young men do not identify with the macho man behaviors, but yet describe them as what their community expects from them, it is important to reflect on what the young men said the norms are, and how they are shaped. The young men shared details of their social environment and who influenced them most. The next section will describe who makes up the majority of their social environment, and who influences them most.

#### **4.1.3 Who influences the young men?**

The interview guides were designed to better understand the influence of friends and family. There was space within the focus group and individual interviews for the participants to express who else in their social environment influences their behaviors and/or conceptions of gender norms. Very few of the participants mentioned anyone but friends or family and therefore other potential influential actors are left out of this analysis. It is possible that there are other role models (teachers, neighbors, etc.) that play a big role in influencing gender norms and attitudes, but the boys mentioned them infrequently, and usually as an afterthought. Therefore, this analysis will only include the characteristics and influence of family and friend groups.

##### *Friends and Peer Groups*

The majority of the participants have multiple groups of friends. The main friend groups were typically friends from their neighborhood block or friends from their secondary school. Those that participated in the faith-based organization's after-school program also mentioned their peers in the program as a third group of friends.

Friend groups from the participants' neighborhoods usually included more friends or peers that had dropped out of school that were either unemployed or working manual labor jobs. As a result, there

*P.J. Fleming*

seemed to be a relationship between more negative and risky behaviors among friends and peer groups from the participants' block than from peer groups at school, probably due to levels of educations (although this was not always the case).

“A guy that studies think a bit more in his future, he’s a bit more forward thinking than someone who has dropped out, at least those that I’ve seen from my own experience, that I’ve seen like that, that they have told me, you know, a guy that drops out, that starts to work, and upon starting work he gets a girlfriend, and, because he can, then they start having sex, and gets pregnant, now, as young people, they want to make a family. On the other hand, if you study, you think down the road a bit more, see the future a bit more and you can think a bit more.”

-Emiliano, age 17

It is important to note that most all participants delineated between close friends, groups of friends, and peers and that varying levels of trust and communication were associated with each. There was a lack of trust expressed with sharing feelings or asking for advice from the broader group of friends or peers. Even participants such as Andrés and Eduardo who appeared to be leaders of their peer group expressed discomfort in sharing feelings or certain thoughts with the group. Most (but not all) participants said they had a best friend they could share their problems with.

“Because, you say something, and they’re [peer group] gonna say to you, they’re gonna laugh at you, that’s how they are. For example, if you tell something to them, they’re going to laugh at you, like, “how stupid are you”, and your best friend is going to tell you what it is you need to do, what not to do, he’ll advise you like that.”

-Jesus, age 14

There seemed to be a need among these participants to be able to share their feelings and thoughts with someone. There were a few participants who said they did not have *anyone* they felt they could share their feelings with. When asked how they felt about the conversations they had with me, many responded that they felt they were able to share things they never told anyone before.

“I felt relaxed...because I could get out some things that I can’t tell to anyone else, and ‘cause you said that it wasn’t going to leave this room, I dared to tell you.”

-Daniel, age 17

### *Family*

Most of the participants lived with their mother, and sometimes their father. A few of the participants lived with another relative such as their aunt or grandma. Gendered behaviors are often modeled in the home, and the young men in this study reference their family often as having a great influence on them. Often times biological parents have the greatest influence, but some participants mentioned aunts and uncles as other family members who comment on their behaviors. Nonetheless, participants notice and listen to their parents and family members and therefore they are very influential in the lives of the young men.

There are examples of parents who promote a male gender role of being promiscuous (as data show in the next sections), but also parents' positive and egalitarian gender roles are explicitly mentioned by about a third of the participants to be influential in their own gender role attitudes and beliefs.

“My dad, he was the one that talked to me more, he told me, ‘you never should talk forcefully to a woman.’”

- Javier, age 16

“Thanks to my parents because they told me since I was little, they told me a lot. My dad was the one who told me, my dad was a sailor, he was in the navy, after he met my mom, he left, and in the navy he had to cook, iron, everything that a woman did, so, he always told me, ‘my son, a man needs to know how to iron, cook, always have to be like the boy scout, ready.’ So, he taught me how to iron, wash clothes, all of that, and I know how to do that, and I’m not dependent on a woman for her service.”

- Emiliano, age 17

#### **4.1.4 Who do the young men listen to?**

The young men were asked individually whose opinion mattered most to them. The majority responded that the opinions of their parents matter more than their friends. A small number of participants were more emphatic about the importance of their parents' opinions.

*P.J. Fleming*

“Yeah, what my mom says is more important than the leader [of our peer group]”  
- Daniel, age 17

“My mom because she know what’s good for me and what things are bad for me.”  
-Diego, age 17

*Juan Carlos:* My family’s opinion is more important to me.

*Interviewer:* More than your friends?

*Juan Carlos:* Yeah

-Juan Carlos, age 17

*Manuel:* I think differently because I’m not going to have sex and all that.

*Interviewer:* Why?

*Manuel:* Because I’m still too young, and my mom says not till 18 or 20 years old.

-Manuel, age 15

“Everyone depends on just their families; you worry more about your family.”

-David, age 17

“My mom and dad, for example, they are the most important in my life.”

-Alejandro, age 17

About the same number seemed to weight their parents’ opinions just a little more than their friends.

“I’d say because of the good upbringing my family gave me, and because of the advice that my friends give me...”

-Miguel Ángel, age 16

“For me, my parent’s opinions [are most important]. Yeah, because friends, if they’re true friends, they’re always going agree with the good things that you do, they’re going to try and tell you the bad things you’re doing, right? And try to encourage your good side and they’re always going to help you out like that. Then, people tell you, ‘drink, smoke, get with chicks’, they’re trying to ruin you.”

– Emiliano, age 17

*Interviewer:* Who are the people most important in your life? Right now.

*Miguel Ángel:* First, my parents...then, my siblings...um...my friends and professors.”

–Miguel Ángel, age 16

Very few said that their friends’ opinions mattered more than their parents.

*Interviewer:* What matters more, your mom’s opinion or your friends’ opinion

*Andrés:* My friends, seriously...because my friends are going through, they’re going through it too, and some surely, how would I say? They were about my age or a bit older than me

*P.J. Fleming*

and just a little while ago they went through it and they know how they can help me. And my mom, no. My mom it's been a while and she's old now and things have started, things change a lot."

-Andrés, age 18

"The opinion that matters most in my life, could be my best friend named [*name extracted*]. He's always, always, always on my side and I'm on his. After that, could be the opinion of my mom and then, last, my older brother."

-Javier, age 16

Also, participants were asked how they ended up the way they are (in terms of personality, attitudes and behaviors towards women, drug and alcohol habits, etc.) and the majority credited their parents with their current behaviors. Some participants were not sure how to respond, but those that did, seemed to be greatly influenced by the way that they were raised.

"Because my family's not like that. That's how they raised me, I learned a lot from my family...there has to be equality in everything."

-Santiago, age 16

While interviewing the young men, it was interesting to hear them describe their parents in such an influential role. Partially I felt this way because the parents I talked to (including some of the participants' parents) said that their sons never listen to them. Further, participants described the way that their peers teased them or commented on their behaviors which, to me, seemed like it must be influential in the decision making. So, it is important to recognize a distinction between who the young men *say* influence them, and what and who might actually be influencing their behaviors. Nonetheless, the fact that the majority of participants placed higher value in their parents' opinions than their friends is a surprising and important result from this study.

*P.J. Fleming*

#### 4.1.5 How are the young men's gender norms influenced?

##### *Friends' Teasing*

The young men's social environment helps shape their ideas and resulting behaviors around masculine behavioral norms. Friends and male peers, who comprise a significant portion of their social interactions throughout the day, play a big role in shaping how these young men observe and respond to these perceived masculine role norms. Male peer groups and friends can shape attitudes and behaviors through teasing and modeling certain behaviors that then are perceived as normative. Teasing and mocking are common ways that behaviors are controlled by friends and peer groups. The young men frequently mentioned that their friends or peers would call them gay or feminine if they behaved in certain non-normative ways. This can be viewed as an unconscious tactic that young men use to steer the behaviors of peers by teasing or taunting when their behaviors deviate from the prescribed neighborhood norms for men. The most commonly mentioned reasons for teasing by peers were for a lack of relationships with young women or for their alcohol use behaviors.

There was a variety of responses to probes about how the young men felt to be teased or called gay. Some seemed to recognize it as just playful joking among friends, while others felt hurt or excluded by the comments.

*Interviewer:* How do guys feel when their friend tell them, 'you're a fag' or that 'you're gay'?

*Respondent:* Well, some take it as a joke, and some take it seriously. Most of the time when they say that, they are jokes.

-Focus Group 4

*Interviewer:* How do you feel when they call you 'gay' and stuff like that?

*Leonardo:* Nothing...my dad always taught that those were just words.

-Leonardo, age 16

*Interviewer:* If you don't act like that [macho man characteristics], what do they say?

*Andrés:* They'd say that I'm a fag, gay.

*Interviewer:* Yeah? And how do you feel when they say that?

*P.J. Fleming*

*Andrés: Awful...I don't feel like them, then, they don't invite me.*  
- Andrés, age 18

This range in responses are likely reflective of ranging levels of self-esteem among the participants. Just like any joke or teasing, those with a positive self-image will likely be more resilient, in general[53]. But, it is easy to imagine reactive behaviors (i.e., drinking when teased, or finding a girlfriend) by the young men on occasions when they are not feeling self-assured.

### *Friends' and Peers' Behaviors*

Teasing is an active way for friends to shape each other's behaviors, but modeling certain behaviors can have a strong influence on an adolescent males' perception of what is normative behavior. Since adolescent behaviors can range greatly from one person to the next, many adolescents look to their friends and peer groups to understand what types of behaviors are normal and accepted.

### *Families*

Families, especially parents, can play a big role in shaping the participants' attitudes and beliefs on appropriate behaviors for males. The participants often mentioned their parents as shaping their attitudes towards women and their beliefs about appropriate behavior. Apart from parents, aunts and uncles occasionally opine on how a young man should interact with females. The data show that siblings and cousins would more appropriately fit into the "peer and friend influence" framework than the family influences framework. Because of their similarity in age, the impact they have on the young men was through teasing and modeled behavior, just like friends and peers. Parents and aunts and uncles however play a different role in the boys' lives. They model certain gender roles and comment on acceptability of certain behaviors.



*P.J. Fleming*

## 4.2 Masculine behavioral norms and the young men's behaviors

Knowing the influence that friends and family have, I will now describe the characteristics that the young men said were expected of them in their neighborhood. This includes heterosexual relationships, sexual activity (and resulting contraception and condom use), and drug and alcohol use. In each section I will first synthesize what consensus (if any) they described for expected behavior, then describe how friends and family are shaping what is normative behavior, and finally state the young men's self-reported behaviors on each topic.

### 4.2.1 Relationships

Being in a relationship with a woman was seen as fulfilling the male gender role in the community. It was frequently referenced that a young man (or worse, an adult man) who was not involved in a relationship with a woman would be seen as a homosexual by the community.

“Honestly, if you have a girlfriend...because if I've never seen you with a girl, you're gay”  
- Participant from Focus Group 3

Relationships, in part, serve as a way for the young men to demonstrate their heterosexuality (in this heteronormative society) for their peers and family. These relationships took on different forms and levels of seriousness (to be discussed below), but the most important component was that a male was romantically or sexually linked with a woman. This notion was universal, in terms of community expectations, among all the participants.

In addition to the perceived requirement of having a relationship with a woman, some of the focus groups made clear that multiple relationships would increase a man's macho factor. Although many of the young men seemed to disagree with this practice, the social norm in the community was still described as, “the more girls you have, more of a man you are” as one participant stated. However, it should be noted that there does seem to be a limit on this. One participant (Juan Carlos, age 17)

*P.J. Fleming*

stated that a man who has too much sex or too many women would be teased and be told he “screws anything that he encounters”. Daniel, age 17, also notes: “[my friend] always goes around with two girls on his arms, and he tries to show off too much, so we start to make fun of him, we start to tell him jokingly, he sometimes gets mad and leaves.”

#### *4.2.1.1 Description of Casual and Formal Relationships*

When talking about the relationship behaviors of young men in this study, understanding the distinctions between casual and formal relationships as they are described by the young men can be important to understand the overall relationship dynamics. Since relationships can demonstrate masculinity, it is important to understand the varying types of relationships. The participants’ responses reflected that casual and formal relationships can be defined more in a spectrum, rather than in two disparate categories. This will be a description of each type of relationship based on the comments of the young men in the study. The descriptions of each category is not based on universal agreement among participants, but rather a collection of characteristics gathered to attempt to paint an entire picture of casual and formal relationships in this neighborhood.

Casual and formal relationships, understandably, are mainly differentiated by the level of seriousness involved. The idea that serious relationships are focused on the future and casual relationships are more ‘in the moment’ was a prevalent distinction for the young men.

“Yeah, there is a big difference between having a serious girlfriend, with [her] you already are planning the future that you want with her, or, and to me it’s something serious because you already know who you want to be in your life, and let’s see, if it’s a casual girlfriend you can have one for one week, for example, afterwards, another girl one month, and you switch like that and switch.”

-Alejandro, age 17

*P.J. Fleming*

There is also a difference in the way that the young women who are in formal or casual relationships are described. Young women in casual relationships are described as having a lot of partners (either currently, or in the past). The casual girl is often described as ‘fun’ or ‘easy’ and there was a general lack of respect for the casual girlfriends. The young woman involved in a serious relationship are, not surprisingly, described as being more serious about life and are ‘good girls’. There is generally a higher level of respect for serious girlfriends.

“The [serious] girlfriends, a girlfriend around here you see for example a girl that you start to go out, you have to respect her. It has to be in a way...romantic. And you’re, that way you’re respecting and asking how. And with the casual girls that you know, right, the casual girls, if you meet her, right, if you meet her in a party drinking and after that you like her vibe and stuff, and to the slaughterhouse, like they say, to the slaughterhouse<sup>1</sup>.”

-Emiliano, age 17

“The casual girls dress really extravagantly, they want to show off too much, and the other [formal girlfriends] dress more decently, they know how to act when they are around guys.”

-Daniel, age 17

“The difference is because the serious girl loves you and takes it seriously...the casual girl is because she’s just *interesada*<sup>2</sup>.”

-Gabriel, age 14

The locations where these relationships take place, as well as where the young men look for casual relationships, often differ greatly between casual and formal relationships. Focus groups and individuals mostly said that they find casual girlfriends at parties, nightclubs, or “in the street” (“the casual girls if you meet her, right, if you meet her in a party drinking”, Emiliano, age 17). A few participants said the relationships could occur anywhere (“And for me the casual girl comes to kiss and stuff, anywhere.” Diego age 17). Formal relationships usually take place in very specific locations such as the school or the home.

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<sup>1</sup> “*al matadero*” literally translated is: “to the slaughterhouse”. This can be taken in the context to mean going to have sex. The violent nature of this metaphor for sex is notable. However, not enough of the participants referred to sex in a violent way for this to be a finding of this study. It does however speak to the lack of respect for young women involved in casual relationships.

<sup>2</sup> “*interesada*” literally means “interested”. But, in Spanish, the connotation is an interest for financial or social status reasons.

*P.J. Fleming*

“The serious girlfriend, most of them say that when you go visit the girl [in her home] it’s something serious, and the other, the one that’s not [serious], Messing around like they say, it goes like that, they see each other and they kiss.”

-Santiago, age 17

“And for me the casual girl comes to kiss and stuff, anywhere and the serious girl you visit, that you already asked her dad, asked for permission before you visit her house, to drink something or invite her to go out on the weekend.”

-Diego, age 17

The majority of participants agreed that sex is more common and frequent in casual relationships than in serious relationships. Often times casual relationships are simply “hook-ups” and sex is the basis of the relationships. It was also mentioned that many times casual girlfriends (especially those at parties) already have had sexual experience and are more willing to have sex without waiting.

“For example, about sex, with the casual girls that is, if there is someone that you meet in the *discoteca* and that same day she already want to have sex and stuff, and the serious one, it depends on if you know her well already, depends on both of you, and the appropriate moment, and when you feel ready.”

-Diego, age 17

“And your serious girlfriend, you’re more caring with her, I mean, you give her much more affection. And the others, I usually am like this with them: when you’re horny, let’s say, with them its *blim blam blum* and after, you go hang out with your girlfriend.”

-Andrés, age 18

The sexual nature of serious relationships was varied. The young men mostly said that the young women in serious relationships would want to wait a predetermined amount of time before they first had sex with their boyfriends (to be described further in the participants’ own behaviors). The most common time period was one year, and the young men seemed willing to abstain. The serious relationships where sexual activity was already initiated was sometimes described as having infrequent sex due to not being able to find time alone together. The communication around sex in serious relationships was much greater than in casual ones. Usually partners were described as communicating before the first time they had sex about when they would do so.

*P.J. Fleming*

Contraceptive and condom use behaviors in casual relationships are unclear from the comments of the young men. Some said that people are more likely to use condoms in casual relationships because they do not “know” the girl (and she could have sexually transmitted infections). On the other hand, others mentioned that since casual relationships are usually just about sex, and sometimes unplanned, they are not prepared to use a condom in the heat of the moment. There seemed to be a lack of communication mentioned around sex in casual relationships, and therefore usually no discussion of contraceptive or condom use prior to the sexual act. However, condoms and contraception use was not mentioned enough in discussion of casual and formal relationship to offer conclusive findings.

Another characteristic of casual relationships is the possibility for them to turn into serious relationships. Some of the young men said that if a casual relationship lasts long enough it can turn into a serious relationship. But, it should be noted that this is not always the case and a casual relationship can last for years without the commitment level or depth of communication increasing. Based on the young men’s comments, it seems that all relationships are categorized as “casual” to begin with. If there are significant feelings it may develop into a serious relationship, but if not it will either end or stay casual. Unfortunately, this transition (or lack of transition) was not described frequently enough to flesh out how this shift may work.

#### *4.2.1.2 Friends’ Influence*

The young men usually commented that a majority of their friends are involved in romantic relationships. The younger participants (14 or 15 years old) were more likely to say they were not sure if their friends were in relationships, while older participants (16 to 19 years old) said that most of their friends were somehow romantically involved with young women. The perceived behavioral

*P.J. Fleming*

norms for younger participants are harder to ascertain from this study's data because the younger participants mostly said they did not communicate with their friends and peer group about sex or girls.

The type of relationships that peers and friends were involved in usually depended on how "serious" the individual was. Mostly the young men commented that their friends were in casual relationships because they were just "fooling-around" or having fun. The young men often referred to a connection between getting more serious (as an individual) and becoming an adult. Those that were more serious and perhaps mature were looking for serious relationships, while those that were still just having fun in their youth were looking for something more casual. In general, casual relationships and hook-ups seemed to be the more common relationship type among friend and peer groups, although each participant had a few friends that were in long-term serious relationships.

"And among them, there's really just one, they've been together three years and that's the only serious relationship there is, I have another [friend] that switches, rotates each month."  
-Emiliano, age 17

Most of the participants said that their friends are looking for casual relationships and they change girlfriends or partners frequently.

"They tell me that with one you have sex and after you do it with another and all that. They just want sex, that's what they like and they like to screw around"  
-Miguel Ángel, age 16

"The majority of my friends look for casual girlfriends...because they say that having a girlfriend is required for a guy."  
-Diego, age 17

"I think, girlfriends are for [my friends] somewhat changeable, they switch, it's no big deal because they are not very serious."  
-Emiliano, age 17

While long-term serious relationships exist and are somewhat common among the male peer groups, casual relationships are much more pervasive and normative. The young men who were not in

*P.J. Fleming*

relationships usually commented that not having a girlfriend or having sex makes them vulnerable to teasing that questioned their heterosexuality or their manhood.

“You have to have women, they say...and that that’s the way it has to be...if not, you’re a fag, gay, they say.”

-Jesus, age 14

“Some have a girlfriend, and I don’t, well, they’re going to say that I like men and all that, you have to have one [a girlfriend] now to be able to be a man.”

-Miguel Ángel, age 16

“Honestly, if you have a girlfriend...because if I’ve never seen you with a girl, you’re gay.”

- Participant from Focus Group 3

Some of the younger men mentioned that their friends do not comment on whether or not they are in a relationship. It is possible that relationships are still not part of the discourse among this group or relationships are less common among this age group.

#### *4.2.1.3 Parents’ Influence*

The young men reported varied opinions and commentary from parents about relationships with young women. There is pressure from some parents for their son to have a girlfriend and to have sex. Usually, parents consider having a girlfriend to be normative behavior and therefore their son would be different or “gay” if he did not date a young woman.

*Interviewer:* And in general then, let’s say if a guy doesn’t want a girlfriend, or doesn’t have sex, what would their dad or mom say?

*Respondent:* The first thing they’d say is the he’s gay or that he’s odd

*Respondent:* That’s true. Because my brother before...

*Respondent:* [name extracted]

*Respondent:* [name extracted], he didn’t screw anyone, he never went to hook up, and my mom and them thought that he was a fag, after he screwed a chick...made himself a man for my mom and them.”

- Focus Group 1

On the other hand, a minority of participants reported that their parents do not speak to them at all about dating, girls or sex. Mostly these participants were younger in age.

#### *4.2.1.4 Young men's reported behaviors*

About half the young men were currently involved in some type of relationship at the time of the interviews. Those that were in reported relationships were mostly serious relationships lasting anywhere from 2 months to 4 years. It is possible that participants may not have said they were in a relationship if they only had a casual partner. Interestingly, when the participants reported not having a girlfriend to me, a few of them seemed to have been embarrassed. They often followed up quickly by saying that had a girlfriend recently. It seemed to me that there is a culture of having a girlfriend and that not having a girlfriend is embarrassing to some of the young men.

Many times the relationships were formed through another friend; a mutual friend facilitated the beginning of the relationship. For example, in the case of Diego, age 17, a female friend connected him with his girlfriend: "her classmate was, studied at my high school and she told her about me, it started like that she would send me greetings through her, and after that I got her number." Text messages, through the internet or mobile phones, were mentioned as a way to express feelings for a girl in addition to telling her face-to-face. When asked why they liked their current or last girlfriend, most of the participants said they liked something about her personality or how she "carried herself". A minority of participants mentioned that they liked the physical features of the young woman.

"I liked the girl, she was beautiful, had a nice body..."

-David, age 17

"The way she talked, she's not an easy girl because I just barely was able to get her, she dresses well, she doesn't reveal too much."

-Daniel, age 17

"I like her personality...she wasn't too serious but I liked the way she was sometimes, she was chill."

-Alberto, age 17



*P.J. Fleming*

In general the young men seemed to be against cheating on girlfriends. Many commented that it was disrespectful to cheat or that cheating must mean something is lacking from the relationship.

“No [I didn’t cheat], I wasn’t missing anything because there are people that fulfill you, so no.”

- Javier, age 16

“No, I’m not like that, because the society tells you have to do it [cheating], do those things, and I don’t like them.

-Alberto, age 16

Fewer participants described cheating as fun and enjoyable.

“I tend to hook up with other girls, yeah, it’s not as enjoyable if there isn’t another girl.”

-Andrés, age 18

This is based on cheating on a serious girlfriend. The young men did not give any input on whether or not they thought it was appropriate to have two or more casual girlfriends at the same time.

Although, based on their descriptions of casual girlfriends, it seems that the young men would have different standards of conduct within a casual relationship than with a serious girlfriend.

#### 4.2.2 Sex and condom use

Being sexually active was another key expectation of men in the community. The young men often equated having sex for the first time with “becoming a man”. In fact, when one focus group was asked “where do young boys learn to become men?”, they responded as if I was asking where they learn to have sex.

*Interviewer:* Where do [boys] learn to be men?

*Respondent:* Now when they are young they go to parties, at least in high school they go to parties a lot now, now starting at 11, 12, they see that chick and stuff and they do it.”

*Respondent:* And those that don’t, the majority think about doing it and they don’t care if they get a girl pregnant.

*Respondent:* And they feel like more of a man because they fuck

*Respondent:* Or if not, some friend shows you porno videos and all that, and [like that] the majority learn.”

- Focus Group 3

*P.J. Fleming*

While having sex for the first time is often a rite of passage for adolescents around the world, it is important to note that the language of becoming a man in Paraguay evokes the idea of sex among the participants. All of the focus groups and individuals echoed the neighborhood's conceptualization that having more sex makes you more of a man, and that not having sex would characterize you as a homosexual. This notion is played out in some participants' descriptions of potential relationships with women where they describe "not having sex" as a non-option because of the negative social consequences of appearing to be a homosexual. It was interesting to listen to young men in focus groups describe sex as essentially mandatory for a young man ("you don't have sex, you're a fag", FG2; "if they see you go in with a girl and you say 'no', you're gay" FG1; "[if you don't have sex] they tell you that you're a fag.", FG5). Then later in the individual interviews, some of the young men describe their own desires to wait for the right moment or until they are more mature ("it's not a problem, I'll wait for you", I told her.", Daniel, age 17; "both of us wanted to wait until we were older", Alejandro, age 17; "[I want to] just wait, I'm not in a hurry." Diego, age 17). Although many participants denied actively trying to adhere to this type of macho sexual behavior, this prototype of a man who is defined by his sexual activity was described by all the participants.

#### *4.2.2.1 Friends' Influence*

When talking to the young men it was apparent that sex became a more comfortable topic of conversation as they got older. Then younger participants did not seem to have much experience talking about, or having sex. Sexual activity by friends and peers is also predictably dependent on age. Younger participants' peers either are not having sex or are not talking about it.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that the majority of guys your age are anxious to have sex for the first time?

*Gabriel:* I don't know. Could be that there are some that really want to do it, others that have already done it.

-Gabriel, age 14

*P.J. Fleming*

*Interviewer:* Do you think the majority of guys your age have sex?

*Manuel:* Not yet”

-Manuel, age 15

*Interviewer:* Those that have a girlfriend, is the relationships more serious or casual?

*Jesus:* Just a few because they say that they are still too young and they are just Messing around is all it is, still nothing serious.

*Interviewer:* But, do they have sex with their girlfriends?

*Jesus:* No, just a little kiss is all it is, but, just around the neighborhood.”

-Jesus, age 14

But, when talking to older participants, having sex seemed to be a normative behavior among the peers in the neighborhood. Most participants agreed that the majority of young men in the neighborhood are having sex by the time they are 15 or 16.

*Interviewer:* How many do you think wait until 18 [to have sex], from the Bañado

*Respondent:* from 100%, about 20% from the Bañado wait, and the other 80%....

*Respondent:* : do it already

*Respondent:* all of them

-Focus group 3

*Interviewer :* Do you think it's very common for 16 year old guys to have had sex? Do you think the majority have? Or not?

*Respondent:* : Yeah, let's say that half, because for many at 16 you're already a man, you have to have sex.

-Focus Group 4

It was interesting to hear many of the young men describe the process of waiting one year to have sex with their serious girlfriends. Having sex in a long-term serious relationship was described as dependent on the girl. Many of the guys agreed that they were willing to wait to have sex if the girl wanted to. While it can vary greatly in different relationships, waiting one year in a serious relationship until having sex was a common notion (although this was dependent on whether or not the girl had had sex before).

“Most of the girls wait, those that take things seriously, they say ‘one year’, or something like that, they have to wait for, to have sex.”

-Santiago, age 16

*P.J. Fleming*

Based on comments by one young man, abstaining from sex in serious relationships could cause a reactionary behavior by a young man to find sex outside their primary relationship.

“Because with the main [serious girlfriend], you can’t always have sex, so they look for another girl, if the main one isn’t available, they look for another casual girl...so, the guy, some for example, are desperate and they go and look for another girl.”

- Daniel, age 17

While Daniel described to me a dynamic that might be likely in serious relationships, other echoed the idea that young men would look for sex outside a relationship if their needs were not being satisfied. For example, Javier, who was sexually active with his girlfriends, described that he did not cheat because, “I wasn’t missing anything, only [sex] with my serious girlfriend.” (Javier, age 16).

The young men were very open about talking about condoms. In general, condom use seemed to be common but not normative. Condom use was a part of the discourse among young men in the neighborhood, but it did not seem like most of their peers were using them because of many perceived barriers.

*Interviewer:* And about which percentage of guys use condoms when they have sex? *Respondent:* around 60%

*Respondent:* Only cause of this some girls don’t get pregnant.

*Respondent:* there it is

*Respondent:* 50%

-Focus Group 1

The barriers to condom use that was described in the focus groups and interviews are common to young men across the globe. Participants stated that their friends commented on barriers to use such as reduced sensation, cost, and availability in the moment.

*Interviewer:* What are the reasons they don’t use them [condoms]?

*Respondent:* They don’t care

*Respondent:* Some say it annoys them or because the girls, some don’t want to use them sometimes, they say there isn’t contact, that there has to be contact

*Respondent:* Some say that with a condom they don’t feel anything.

-Focus Group 1

*P.J. Fleming*

*Interviewer:* And do you know which reasons they have for using or not using them [condoms]?

*Respondent:* They don't have them, some don't have them. They don't worry, if already, you tell them lets go, let's go [have sex] right now, they're in a hurry, that a guy and a girl like that they hurry up, they forget about that [condoms]."

-Alberto, age 16

Negative attitudes and beliefs that the young men held about their own neighborhood could play a role in their perception of norms. The specific neighborhood norms were described as different than the norms in the rest of Asunción. There was a prevailing thought among two of the focus groups that condom use was much lower in their specific neighborhood than in other neighborhoods within Asunción.

*Interviewer:* What percentage of couples use condoms in the Bañado.

*Respondent:* In the Bañado? Thirty.

*Interviewer:* In other words it's not that common.

*Respondent :* No.

*Interviewer:* In the Bañado no, but in the other part of town, yes.

-Focus Group 2

*Respondent:* But, commonly in our neighborhood, our peers don't use condoms, everyone does it without condoms

*Respondent:* With risk.

*Respondent :* The majority do it without protection.

*Respondent :* They just screw around, they say, 'I don't need a condom, it's like a bag for your ice cream', they'll say anything.

*Respondent :* Or else, they tell you that the occasion presents itself, and you don't have a condom, right, what are you going to do? Just like that.

*Respondent :* True. Because they don't want to protect themselves, because of that they do it without [a condom].

-Focus Group 3

Again with sex, calling a young man gay for not having sex was a way to tease and influence behavior. In the focus groups it was an automatic response that not having sex would subject a young man to teasing by his peers.

*“Interviewer:* Having sex is, for a guy, is...?”

*Respondent :* It's the best.

*Respondent :* And for a woman, the worst.

*Respondent :* Well, you don't have sex and you're a fag.”

-Focus Group 2

*P.J. Fleming*

*Interviewer:* OK, what do his friends say to him about sex?

*Respondent:* That he need to do it to know how to be a man.

*Interviewer:* What else do they tell him?

*Respondent:* That he has to do it to know how it feels.

*Respondent:* And if he doesn't do it, he's a fag.

As a result of this teasing, some of the young men mentioned that they were reluctant to report to their friends that they were virgins or that they were not having sex with their girlfriend. They said they evaded the question lied when their peers asked about it. There were a few young men that told their friends the truth, but they said they were subsequently teased.

#### *4.2.2.2 Parents' Influence*

Regarding sex, there does seem to be significant pressure to have sex from about half the parents. The pressure stems from fear of their son being a homosexual. There appears to be some level of teasing about being a homosexual in the same way that the peer groups tease. The other parents either do not share their opinion with their sons, or are in favor of their sons waiting until they finish their schooling or to get older to have sex. This largely depends on the individual parents' attitudes.

In the case of Eduardo, his father seems to live vicariously through him and encourage casual sex.

"You know, there's this woman who comes onto me, right, and my dad sees me right afterwards, and I told him about it, and my dad sometimes says to me, 'what are you going to do?' and I told him that I have sex with that woman, right, I say that to my dad, and he feels proud."

—Eduardo, age 18

In one focus group, about half the group thought they would be called gay by their parents if they did not have sex, while the other half said their parents were more respectful of their personal decision to have sex.

*Interviewer:* And what would your parents say if you guys said that you didn't want to have sex.

*Respondent:* Nothing

*Respondent:* What would my parents say?

P.J. Fleming

*Respondent* : If I told my dad he would tell me that I'm a fag.

*Respondent* : My dad would tell me too.

*Respondent* : 'You like guys.' [laughter]

*Respondent*: But there are different types of dads, because some dads tell you to wait until you want to, but there are some that tell you, you have to do it now"

-Focus Group 2

Parent's attitudes about adequate age at first sex for their sons were described by many of the participants as around 18 years old. Although, some of the participants said their parent's did not have an age in mind, but rather a level of maturity or responsibility. Also, some said that age did not matter since they were males, sex at any age would be appropriate for any teen male.

*Interviewer*: What age would parents say is the appropriate age to start having sex?

*Respondent* : At 18, my mom doesn't like to talk about that because I'm too young still.

*Interviewer*: How old would she say?

*Respondent* : At 18.

*Respondent* : They're going to say to protect yourself and you should have sex but protect yourself

*Interviewer*: To parents, age doesn't matter?

*Respondent* : No because he's a guy, and from their point of view, it doesn't matter.

*Respondent* : Sometimes the mom doesn't want you to start early because then you won't have a serious relationship and sometimes the dad agrees.

-Focus Group 3

The majority of participants mentioned that their parents talk to them about contraception use.

Those that did not talk to their parents about contraception use were aged 14 or 15.

Overwhelmingly, the message given by parents about contraception use was almost always the same:

"*que se cuide*"<sup>3</sup>. The phrase, "*que se cuide*" literally means "take care of yourself", but the young men said that this usually means condom use to them or protecting themselves. A few participants said their parents did give other advice in addition, but most simply said "*que se cuide*". There seems to be consensus that "*se cuide*" means to use a condom or do something to not get pregnant.

"My mom told me *que me cuide*, my aunt, my Grandma, that I need to *cuidarme* that I shouldn't get with just any girl."

- Juan Carlos, age 17

<sup>3</sup> "que se cuide" can be conjugated in many different ways in Spanish. "*se cuide*", "*que me cuide*", "*que te cuides*", "*me cuidara*", "*cuidate*", and "*cuidarme*" all mean the same thing, to protect yourself.

P.J. Fleming

“They told me *que me cuide*, but I never told my mom, ‘I have sex’, so they never asked me.”  
- Emiliano, age 17

“Yeah, they told me *que me cuide*, *que me cuide* and all that.”  
- Andrés, age 18

“They tell me, ‘you have to, first, you have to think twice if you’re going to say yes, or if you’re going to say no. If you say yes, you have to bring with you always for yourself a condom’, and all that.”  
-Miguel Ángel, age 16

“My dad told me so that *me cuidara* and all that..”  
-Javier, age 16

“They talk to me like that, they tell me *que me cuide* more, just *que me cuide*, to not make mistakes and get a girl pregnant.”  
- Alejandro, 17

“*Interviewer*: And do your parents say anything to you about sex?  
*Respondent*: Yeah, in order to *se cuide*”  
-Focus Group 5

“Without question, *que te cuides*?”  
-David, age 17

“Yeah, one time like that I had to meet up with a girl and, with my ‘chick’ like they say, ‘dad, can I go out really quick?’, ‘where is it that you’re going?’ he said, you know, and ‘I’m going to meet a girl’, I told him, you know, ‘OK, hurry along my son but *cuidate*’, he told me, ‘OK’, I told him. Everything cool, my dad knows already...My mom who’s in Spain tells me, ‘even if it’s a little baggy for ice, put it on, I don’t want to be a grandma yet’, she said and after, yeah, my mom, she always tells me *que me cuide*.”  
-Santiago, age 16

“*Interviewer*: And what do your parents tell you about sex? Do they talk to you about sex? What do they say?  
V: *Que se cuide*.  
V: *Que se cuide*, that you use condoms  
V: Birth control methods, because nowadays there are a lot of unwanted pregnancies, like, teen pregnancies.”  
-Focus Group 3

There was not much differentiation in which parent talked to the young men about condom use or sex. The young men mentioned equally recommendations from their mothers, or their fathers.



*P.J. Fleming*

#### *4.2.2.3 Young men's reported behaviors*

While asking virginity status was not a specific question in the interview guides, it ended up coming out in the interviews. Seven out of the 18 young men interviewed had never had sex before. Two had only had sex once in their lives. The rest either said they had sex with girlfriends or girls that they hooked up with. A few of the young men mentioned that they were involved in a serious relationship but the girlfriend wanted to wait until they were together longer to have sex. While interviewing the young men, I tried to get a sense for whether they felt ready to be having sex or if they were anxious to have sex. The young men who were virgins did not seem to be overly anxious to have sex.

One of the participants, Alberto who is a virgin, said that he was not desperate to have sex. Most of the virgins described their level of anxiousness to have sex similarly, there were a few who said they would like to have sex but have not found the right girl yet.

“I’m cool waiting, they tell you that you don’t need to rush into having sex, some will try to rush you to have sex.”

-Alberto, virgin, age 16

*Daniel:* I talked to her one time, and she told me, ‘because of that I left my other boyfriend, because he just wanted sex’, and ‘No problem, I’ll wait for you’, I told her. ‘Only when you’re ready’.

*Interviewer:* And what does she tell you? She wants to wait until...

*Daniel:* She wants to wait a little more.

-Daniel, age 17

Of those that had had sex, almost all of them said they used a condom every time they had sex<sup>4</sup>.

The vast majority said that they used condoms to prevent pregnancy, although prevention of

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<sup>4</sup> When participants mentioned that they used condoms 100% of the time I thought that perhaps social desirability bias was influencing their responses. However, in subsequent interviews, I made sure to phrase the question in a way that would give the participant plenty of opportunity to mention that they don’t *always* use it. Nonetheless, most participants still reported 100% condom use.

*P.J. Fleming*

sexually transmitted diseases was also mentioned a few times. They described their condom use as “always”.

*Interviewer:* And did you guys do anything to prevent a pregnancy?

*Emiliano:* Yeah, I always use a condom and she also protects herself.”

-Emiliano, age 17

“We use the condom, only that.”

-Alejandro, age 17

Only two participants seemed to have a cavalier attitude about condom use. These two participants, Andrés and Eduardo, also were the only two that said they were aspiring to the macho man prototype. The only reference to natural forms of contraception was by Andrés who uses the withdrawal method with his girlfriend. David was the only young man who mentioned that his girlfriend uses the injectable form of birth control. There was almost no mention of the use of birth control pills by their partners.

#### 4.2.3 Drinking, smoking and drugs

Drinking alcohol, and to some extent smoking cigarettes, were seen as normative behaviors for men in the neighborhood. While there were many references to using illegal drugs during all the interviews, it is notable that using illegal drugs was not mentioned by these young men as a defining characteristic of males (illegal drug use is seen by many members of the community as the largest problem affecting young men in the neighborhood [50]). Drinking alcohol was seen as a masculine behavior that both allowed for an individual’s inclusion in a social circle but also proved a certain level of macho for the individual. Not drinking alcohol when offered by a male peer could be punished by social exclusion or being called a homosexual.

*Interviewer:* Drinking alcohol is seen as macho, is smoking tobacco too? Or no?

*Respondent:* Yeah, all of that, for example I invite him and he says no: ‘you’re such a fag’

*Respondent:* ‘Get out of here, get out of our group!’

*P.J. Fleming*

*Respondent:* they say it like that

*Respondent:* 'Leave!'

- Focus Group 2

Based on participants responses, drinking alcohol and smoking seems to be a social gatekeeper for males, therefore not drinking, and sometimes not smoking, excludes males from certain social circles and can inhibit access to social resources.

#### *4.2.3.1 Friends' Influence*

Most of the participants perceive alcohol and drug use as normative behaviors for young men in their neighborhood. One focus group concurred that between 50% and 70% of youth in the neighborhood smoke crack, and 95% drink alcohol. More specifically in their group of friends, the majority of participants said that their friends and peers drink and smoke. The drinking usually was in the context of going to a party, but some participants referred to friends who "drink almost all day" (Juan Carlos). Smoking was less common than drinking and it was not always clear what substance was being smoked when participants referred to 'smoking' (i.e. tobacco, marijuana, or crack). Like other behaviors, drinking behaviors varied with younger participants reporting less drinking among their peer group.

Very few of the young men seemed to think that their friends and peers were directly pressuring them to drink alcohol, but many of them referenced situations where their friends teased them so that they would drink alcohol. Calling the non-drinking young man "gay" or "feminine" served to sway the young man into adhering to the masculine norm of drinking alcohol.

*Interviewer:* If one of your friends doesn't want to drink, do they say something to him?

*Eduardo:* Yeah, that he's gay.

*Interviewer:* Yeah? And when you were younger, did they say the same thing to you?

*Eduardo:* Yeah

*Interviewer:* And, how did you feel?

*Eduardo:* I felt weird, obligated to drink.

- Eduardo, age 18

“Your friend tells you that if you don’t drink that you’re a fag...if you don’t go out [to bars and clubs] that you’re a mama’s boy and all that.”

- Participant from Focus Group 4

This experience of being pressured by teasing was not experienced by all the participants. It likely depends on the frequency that the group of friends usually drinks. One participant, Alejandro, age 17, said that, “They don’t say anything to me because they know that sometimes I don’t want to because I don't like it sometimes.” While teasing for not drinking seems to be very prevalent in the neighborhood based on the participants’ responses, there are a few examples where teasing was not mentioned.

#### *4.2.3.2 Parents’ Influence*

The participants did not mention many opinions that their parents held on alcohol, smoking or drug use. The opinions that were mentioned were negative towards drinking and smoking. The times that drinking and smoking is talked about in the context of parents’ opinions, the participants mention their parents’ opinion that drinking and using drugs will destroy their life and be a barrier to achieving their goals.

“ [My parents say] that to drink and smoke like that is a vice, that I don't have to do it because its unhealthy.”

-Jesus, age 14

*Interviewer:* And drinking? Do you feel pressure from [your parents]?

*Respondent:* No

*Respondent:* No, that’s against the law<sup>5</sup>. [Everyone says ‘against the law’]

-Focus Group 1

“[My mom] She challenges me and all that, ‘If I wasn’t here you’d be out in the street or else in jail already’, because one, around here the guys already are all crack and all like crack and all that and they burn out quickly, steal, kill, and they’re thieves.”

-Alberto, age 16

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<sup>5</sup> The law in Paraguay states that you have to be 18 years old to buy and drink alcohol. However, in my observations, it did not seem difficult for youth under 18 to obtain alcohol.

“No, they tell me no, that it destroys you...your body, the society, your friends. It takes you down the wrong path.”

-Miguel Ángel, age 16

#### *4.2.3.3 Young men's reported behaviors*

Alcohol use among the young men in the study was somewhat common, with about half reporting that they drink somewhat regularly. Those that did not drink did not give any reason for not doing so, but some of them were younger and could possibly try drinking in the future. Smoking cigarettes was much less common among the young men with only 2 regular smokers (it is notable that these two, Juan Carlos and Daniel, belong to the same peer group), and three other young men that had tried smoking before. Overall the young men had an indifferent view on smoking with not a lot of peer pressure surrounding it. One young man, Santiago, age 16, said that he did not smoke because it was much harder to hide the smell than drinking. Drug use almost did not exist among the participants. Only one individual, Daniel, age 17, said he had tried drugs. Daniel said the he smoked marijuana twice. Two participants were not asked if they personally used drugs.

These reported behaviors are extremely interesting because of the notion that all young men in the neighborhood drink and use drugs in the neighborhood. Living in the neighborhood and working with youth, it was often reported to me that all the young men in the neighborhood were using drugs. This reported behavior is quite different than the picture that was painted for me on alcohol and drug use in the neighborhood.

## Conclusions

The young men recounted that their friends influence them by teasing and sharing stories about their behaviors. Families can play a different role by modeling certain behaviors and gender norms, and sometimes teasing as well. Overall the young men suggested that their personal behaviors and ideas about gender equality were quite different than the normative behaviors they described. This indicates a need to address the discrepancies between gender norms and realities.

An evaluation of adolescent behaviors will inevitably involve a variety of influences, causes, and motivating factors behind each behavior. In this section, I will discuss the interpersonal influences that young males in the Bañado Sur encounter while pursuing partners, interacting among male peer groups, and involving themselves in sexual activity. While there is literature on the role that biology (specifically hormones and reproduction) play in these behaviors [36], it is undeniable that male gender role norms and social environment also play a huge role in how adolescent males behave (including relationship and sexual behaviors, contraception and condom use, and drug and alcohol abuse). I will attempt to outline through the results of this study and through behavioral theory how gender norms (particularly misperceived gender norms) can play a large role influencing behaviors, and potential interventions or programming that can attenuate the discrepancy between perceived norms and actual norms.

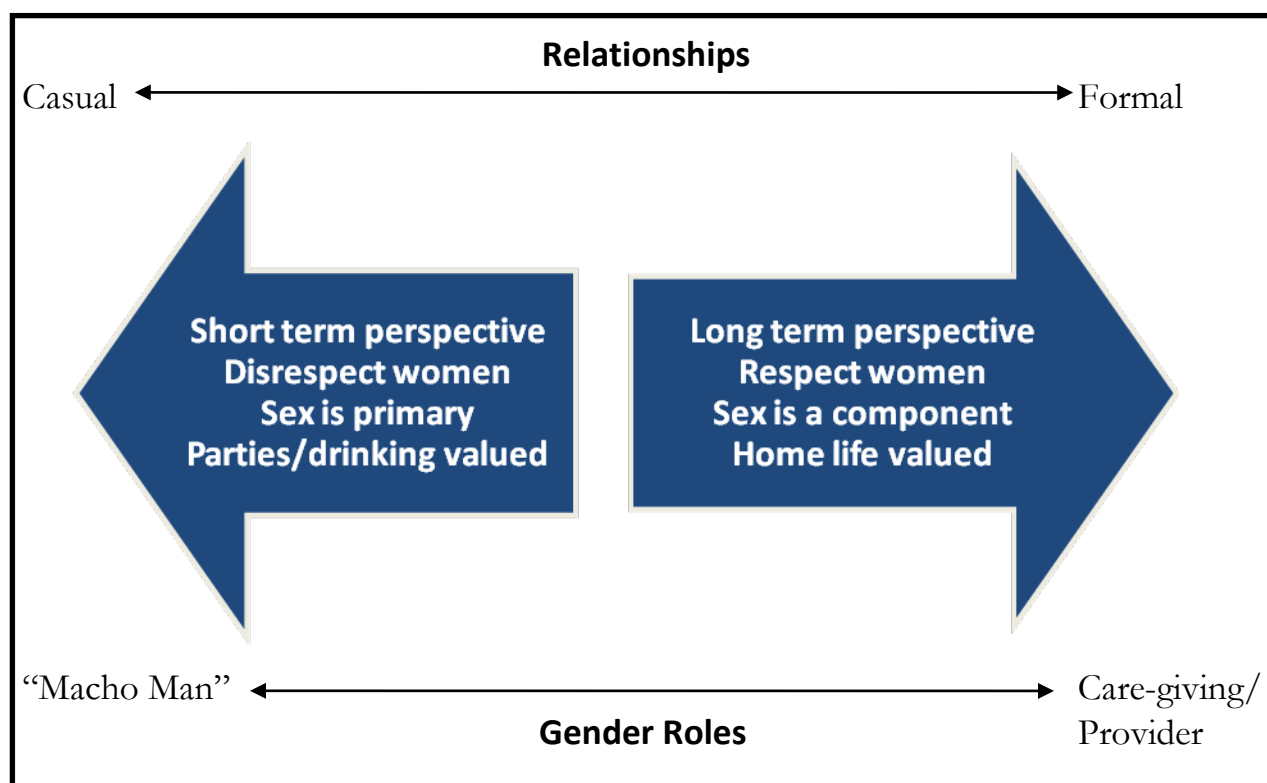
### **5.1 Misperception of the norms**

The normative behavior described for relationships, as well as gender roles, can fit into a spectrum (see figure 3). The same sort of attitudes and beliefs around casual relationships (i.e. short term perspective, disrespect for women, sex as primary, and parties and drinking are valued) can be seen

*P.J. Fleming*

in the macho man behaviors. In addition, the same attitudes and beliefs for formal relationships (i.e. long term perspective, respect for women, sex as a component, and the home life is valued) can be seen in the more care-giving and provider gender role. These behaviors fall on a spectrum, and no individual is static along the spectrum. However, the perceived norms in this neighborhood fall closer towards the “macho man” and “casual” side of the spectrum, but the actual norms of the young men interviewed fall closer towards the “formal” and “care-giving” side.

**Figure 3.** *Relationships and Gender Roles spectrum*



As was discussed by the young men in this study, egalitarian views by men in this neighborhood are seen to deviate from the norm. ‘Normative’ behavior was often described as being a macho man, having sex, drinking, and having multiple relationships with different women. And yet, the

*P.J. Fleming*

discrepancy between this “norm” and the young men’s actual behaviors and beliefs was striking.<sup>6</sup> In addition, most of the young men mentioned that they only can express their true feelings and opinions with one “best friend” or parent, but would never think of doing so among their larger group of friends. This causes the young men (and their best friend) to feel as if they are different from the norm. These self-identified egalitarian young men are not sharing their true feelings about gender equality and treatment of women among their peers. In addition, their peers are not sharing their own thoughts and opinions with them. The irony is that the majority of the social environment may share similar thoughts and feelings; however, no one is willing to share them due to worries about social exclusion or teasing. The default language of the peer group is to continue propagating the perceived social norm.

The vast majority of young men in this study were aiming to have a marriage based on love where they respected their spouse and played a prominent role in child rearing. And yet, the young men were receiving mixed messages about whether this was the appropriate or normative behavior for men. While they *may* have had plenty of examples in their lives of positive male role models, what was most salient to the young men in this study was the types of behaviors that were subject to teasing, their friends conversations, and in some cases, their parent’s comments.

Teasing that indicated homosexuality or femininity was particularly relevant to the boys. As the literature states, referring to other boys as gay allows for a male to take on the hegemonic masculine role, and subordinate his peer [4, 14]. While the young boys in this neighborhood may not immediately agree with the characterization of a certain behavior as homosexual, they may recognize

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<sup>6</sup> This notion is often referred to as “Pluralistic Ignorance”, where behavioral and attitudinal norms are less pervasive than perceived by most, and has been used to describe a variety of different phenomena [43-45]. However, this paper will not use this term because it gives the false impression that the individual has some control to cast away their “ignorance”, and in this case, there is nothing that one individual could do to educate themselves on actual gender norms



*P.J. Fleming*

the social price that the behavior carries and therefore modify their behavior. For example, many of the young men referred to feeling obligated to drink because their peers would call them “gay” if they did not. While some of the boys disagreed that this made them “gay”, some of them still drank alcohol as a result. Being defined or accused of being gay is not about being accused of sexual activity with same-sex partners, it is an accusation and relegation to subordinate status in the male hierarchy. A young man who is concerned with his position in the hierarchy, as many adolescents are, will modify behavior to maintain a certain status. Teasing is often a more powerful form of influence on appropriate behaviors because it is directed at the individual, as opposed to a passive influence like group conversation.

Conversations by peer groups could serve as a public record of normative behaviors for the group. Individuals’ behaviors in the social environment are not as important as what is spoken about publicly. The conversations shape the description and perception of a certain behavior. What is acceptable to the group depends largely on what has been said. Therefore, a young man can attempt to emulate a “positive deviant” male in his life, but he may not feel comfortable sharing these behaviors with his peers because it is much different than anything that has been said before. This can eliminate a potential source of social support for positive behaviors for these young men. If the young man perceives that peer approval will come from certain behaviors (such as drinking or his relationships), he may abandon his other goals in favor of social support. Unfortunately for young men in this neighborhood, finding social support from other young men can sometimes mean conforming to the “normative behaviors”.

Normative behaviors become cyclical in the context of perceived norms and actual norms.

Perceived norms are a major component that influence behavior (see discussion of behavioral theory and perceived norms below)[54], and therefore the perceived norms can become the actual norms if

*P.J. Fleming*

individuals are acting on what they perceive as normative behavior. Conversations among peers become the dominant way to publicize these norms. Those that deviate from the norms may not talk about it as openly. For example, a young man that believes that condom use is not normative, but decides to use condoms anyways, he will most likely not influence his peers' attitudes of normative behavior unless he actually *talks* about his "non-normative" condom use behavior. But, of course, if he thinks his behaviors are non-normative, then he is less likely to share them for fear of teasing or being an outsider.

Particularly in the case of relationships and sexual behaviors, the behaviors are usually hidden unless one talks about it. There were many cases of young men in this study who lied about their sexual activity to their peers, or lied about their virginity in order to avoid teasing or social exclusion. These hidden sexual and relationship behaviors may contribute to *actual* normative behavior of young men in the neighborhood. However, they cannot contribute to the *perceived* normative behaviors of young men unless they share or publicize this information with their peers. As long as young men feel that they cannot share their deviant behavior with their peers, the perceived peer norms will remain static.

It should be noted that some relationship behaviors are more public (such as partner selection, public affection, etc.) and therefore these types of perceived behavioral norms could change more quickly due to the fact that people can observe their behavior (in addition to hearing about it). But, importantly, when behavior can be observed, individuals may be more cautious about how their peers will perceive it. For example, a young man who is willing to express his emotions to his girlfriend behind closed doors may not be willing to express his feelings to his girlfriend in a public setting. Therefore, his peers may assume that he does not express his feelings and therefore a false norm can be maintained.

The young men also expressed that sexual and relationship behaviors with a serious girlfriend are usually not discussed among peer groups, but that casual relationships are. This can be mostly attributed to the fact that serious girlfriends are described as meriting more respect than a casual girlfriend, and talking about sex or private moments with peers could be viewed as disrespecting the serious girlfriend. This may seem like a positive and egalitarian behavior, and to some extent it is. However, this also creates hidden behaviors by young men. The sexual and relationship behaviors of young men in serious relationships are usually described as a bit more respectful, equal, and communicative than the casual relationships. However, the dominant discourse on relationships among peer groups are descriptions of casual relationships. These behaviors, while not always negative or unequal, generally were described as involving a lack of emotional intimacy and respect for women. Since this dynamic is discussed more than a serious relationship (which usually has more emotional intimacy and respect), the perceived normative behavior for young men is emotionless, noncommittal relationships with women who are not respected. Clearly, there are many deviants from this norm who have serious relationships and as young men transition into adulthood formal long-term relationships become the norm. But, reflected in the data is the fact that these young men feel like they are deviating from the norm with their formal relationships during adolescence. They feel like they should be having casual relationships and not caring about the women they are with. In adolescence, it is unclear whether serious relationships or casual relationships better contribute to the successful transition into adulthood by young people. However, it can be argued that serious relationships usually reflect a more mature and equal partnership and gender roles, and therefore it can be argued as more positive when compared to casual sexual relationships.

*P.J. Fleming*

Parents can be seen to mitigate or exaggerate the effects of these peer norms. According to the young men in the study, some parents provided messages of gender equality and protective behaviors, while others promoted more “macho man” behaviors and encouraged sexual activity. Parents contribute to the social norms by making generalizations about the young people in the neighborhood. Some parents were described as talking about the “other boys” in the community and their negative behaviors. While encouragement to not participate in this negative behavior is very beneficial to the young man, it also contributes to the social norm that all young men are engaging in negative or risky behaviors. Other parents (a minority based on the young men’s statements) take a more active role in shaping the misperceived norms of their sons. They may emphasize sexual activity to their sons and that abstaining would make them abnormal. Parents that encourage gender equal behaviors and those that promote a more “macho man” image can contribute to the misperceived social norms by their sons. Likely a factor in this communication is the fact that the parents themselves were raised among and still believe these misperceived norms. It is not too far of a stretch to say that these misperceived norms exist not just in the discourse of young men, but in the entirety of the social environment (locally and regionally).

## **5.2 Perceived norms and behavioral theory**

Most behavioral theorists can agree that perceived norms are important in determining the behavior of individuals[54]. The actual normative behaviors of a community are much less important than what the individual perceives as normative[54]. In addition, discussions of these behaviors help shape another prominent piece of behavioral theory which is attitudes about a certain behavior and the resulting outcomes.

*P.J. Fleming*

The Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction (or Theory of Planned Behavior previously), developed by Martin Fishbein, is intended to be a comprehensive individual behavioral model that pulls from previously tested behavioral models[54]. Prominent in this behavioral model are “attitudes”, “norms”, and “self-efficacy”. In this model the normative beliefs, or “norms” that are important are the perceived norms, not the actual norms[54]. The attitudes, norms, and self-efficacy are further broken down into “behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations”, “normative beliefs and motivation to comply”, and “control beliefs and perceived power”, respectively [54].

It is easy to see how a young man’s behaviors would be shaped by what their friends and family talk about. When a young man’s peer speaks about casual sex, the peer group might respond positively (not necessarily encouraging, but positive). Therefore, when a young man considers engaging in casual sex, his friends’ comments will factor into his “behavioral beliefs” (sex is a positive thing), “outcome evaluation” (if I have sex, my peers will view me favorably), and “normative beliefs” (my peers have casual sex). “Motivation to comply” can be seen as an X factor since this will largely depend on the individuals’ self-confidence and connection to their peer group.

Now clearly, predicting behavior is not this simple. Parents also influence the attitudes and perceived norms that the young men hold (not to mention the variety of other factors in the social environment that are beyond the scope of this study). According to the young men, their conversations with peers are often skewed into mistaken peer norms and potentially negative attitudes about preventive behaviors (i.e. condom use or abstinence). Since teen male peer groups can almost predictably engage in this type of discourse that promotes macho man behaviors (though, there are many exceptions), the parents may hold the power to sway behavioral beliefs, outcome evaluations, normative beliefs, and motivation to comply towards or away from macho man behaviors.

The final piece to Fishbein's model is "self-efficacy". This component is described by Fishbein as important as attitudes and norms[54]: behaviors like condom use or abstinence are very unlikely to be adopted by young men if they do not feel they know how to or are unable to perform the behavior. As Fishbein states, self-efficacy is "control beliefs" and "perceived power". With young men, self-efficacy can often be the easiest component of behavioral theory to address because of typical power dynamic in relationships favoring males [3, 22, 25]. Generally, males have more control to use a condom, choose their partner, and have multiple sexual partners. Therefore, self-efficacy for young men would have more to do with actually acquiring skills, rather than mediating a lack of control over a situation. Although, that being said, "control beliefs" and "perceived power" for behaviors such as condom use could be affected by either friends' comments of difficulty in using a condom or their own difficulty in a previous attempt.

### **5.3 Potential responses for the community**

When considering potential solutions to public health problems affecting teens in this neighborhood (i.e. unwanted teen pregnancies, STIs, drug and alcohol use, etc.) it is simple to think that a lack of education and information is a root cause. And, it potentially is. However, gender norms in this neighborhood, as well as all over the world, play a big role in shaping the behaviors of these young men. So, accordingly, the public health response has to address these gender norms in order to make real change in the types of risk behaviors that these youth engage in.

Particularly in this neighborhood, it is important for any intervention to acknowledge the negative stereotypes that exist about the neighborhood. These stereotypes were found to be held by people outside the community and within it. These same stereotypes are promoting certain behavioral

*P.J. Fleming*

norms (perceived or otherwise) for members of the community. Therefore, interventions must recognize these stereotypes and begin to break them down. Potentially a first step would be to attempt to collect data, or better understand what the actual behavioral norms are in the community. Even within small groups, data could be collected as a jumping off point for any interventions.

As of now, the young men, in general, do not feel they have a safe place to express their gender equal ideas. This is not unique to just this neighborhood, however this close-knit community could have the social resources to address it. Often times, a male facilitator who is just a bit older can engage youth in thoughtful conversation around gender norms [1]. In the case of this neighborhood, male youth could be initially engaged through sports or other competitive activities. Once engaged, the facilitator could provoke a discussion around existing gender norms, gender equality and respect for women. It is important that this type of activity is not a lecture or a traditional educational session but includes dialogue and conversation among the young men. The young men need to hear from each other about gender equality and respecting women (which the majority of participants say they support). Further, these sessions could begin to broach the topic of drugs and alcohol, which at least in part, are influenced by the male gender norms of the community. Part of breaking down existing male gender norms (especially those that can result in risky behaviors for the young men and their partners) is to open up dialogue about male gender norms and allow young men to better understand what are true normative attitudes about gender roles and risky behaviors commonly associated with adolescence[1].

Another approach based on the findings would be working with parents to understand the influence that they hold with their sons. While people often think of the father figure as playing the most important role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of their sons, the mothers of these young men also formed their son's beliefs. Educational sessions with parents (moms and dads) of teen boys can

*P.J. Fleming*

instruct parents on how to talk about relationships and sex, but also engage them in discussion around difficult issues such as sexual activity and homosexuality. Many parents in this neighborhood are not as protective with their teen sons as they are with their daughters. Discussions specifically around the gendered nature of child-rearing, as well as their fears and worries for their teen sons could help change certain behaviors of both parents and sons [1]. For example, some parents of boys in the study seemed to reflect and pass along positive gender norms to their children, but others encouraged their sons into “macho man” behaviors. Easing fears about their son becoming gay or not having a girlfriend could help parents recognize a need to shift their own parenting behaviors. Further, certain parents sharing stories about successful times they were able to talk to their sons about sex would be helpful modeling of positive behavior.

Overall, this relatively small and well-organized neighborhood has the power to engage its citizens, especially parents and teens in discussion around gender norms. Since the perception of current gender norms is less egalitarian than they actually may be, perhaps this discussion will help bring about changes in attitudes and norms, and therefore help change young men’s behavior.

#### **5.4 Implications for future research**

The results of this study raise interesting implications for work with young men, and work in marginalized populations. First, negative stereotypes exist for marginalized populations throughout the world. The question becomes, what reality and behaviors are these stereotypes based on (if any)? In the case of the Bañado Sur, these stereotypes are likely based on a small number of individuals. The marginalized population itself believes the stereotypes, and those perceived norms become self-perpetuating. More exploration is needed into this dynamic and how community members’ perceived norms are influenced.



*P.J. Fleming*

In the case of young men, these norms can become cyclical. Since no one will discuss their own non-normative behaviors, the false norm continues. More research is needed to understand the degree to which the perceived norms vary from the actual norms. In addition, exploration into the dynamic between relationship and gender roles could give key insights into how to address both at the same time.

Approaches that engage the entire community could be more fruitful. Neighborhoods like the Bañado Sur need to address these local level issues and document successes and challenges. Marginalized neighborhoods across the world likely have similar interplays between gender, relationships, and norms. When local solutions are successful, other communities can easily adapt or learn from it. While gender norms are hard to change, in this case the actual norms do not need to change, just the perceived norms. Local level efforts could be the most effective at starting this process of change.

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P.J. Fleming

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P.J. Fleming

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## Appendix 1



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

TO: Paul J. Fleming, MPHc  
Santiagopal Investigator

DATE: May 17, 2010

RE: **Notification of Submission Determination: No IRB Review Required**  
Transitions in Adulthood: Young Paraguayan men's navigation of romantic relationships and normative masculinity

The above-referenced study has been vetted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and it was determined that it does not require IRB review because it does not meet the definition of "Research" or the definition of "Clinical Investigation" under applicable federal regulations. Accordingly, IRB review is not required.

45 CFR Section 46.102(d) defines "Research" as follows:

Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.

Based on the information included in the submission, this qualitative needs assessment will be conducted to understand how young urban Paraguayan men's peer groups and their formation of a masculine identity influence their behaviors in sexual and romantic relationships with women. The information obtained from the needs assessment will be used to make recommendations to Centro Paragauyo de Estudios de Poblacion (CEPEP) for the development of effective sexual health interventions and improve the local system of care for young men in Asunción, Paraguay. The results of the needs assessment cannot be generalized beyond this population in Asunción. The IRB has determined that this study does not constitute "Research" under the foregoing definition.

In addition, the IRB has determined that the study is not a "Clinical Investigation" under applicable Food & Drug Administration regulations because it does not involve a test article and does not otherwise meet the requirements of the definition of "Clinical Investigation" as set forth in 21 CFR Section 50.3(c). Please note that any changes to the protocol could conceivably alter the status of this research under the federal regulations cited above. Accordingly, any substantive changes in the protocol should be presented to the IRB for consideration prior to their implementation in the research.

Sincerely,

Carol Corkran, MPH, CIP  
Senior Research Protocol Analyst  
*This letter has been digitally signed*

## Appendix 2

**Focus Group Guide**

- I. Presentación del grupo focal
  - a. Bienvenida
  - b. Presentación del moderador
  - c. Objetivos del grupo focal
    - *Discusión de tu salud reproductiva y tu sexualidad.*
    - *compartas tus ideas y experiencias conmigo*
    - *podamos diseñar programas para ayudar a los jóvenes.*
  - d. Participación
    - **No hay respuesta correcta**
    - **Voluntario**
  - e. Confidencialidad y respeto entre nosotros
    - *privado y será confidencial.*
    - *Jamás mencionaremos tu nombre fuera de esta sala.*
    - *no contestar alguna pregunta particular, no hay ningún problema*
  - f. Nombre y Acción
  - g. Palabras callejeras
  - h. Consentimiento para grabar/tomar nota
- II. INTRODUCCIONES
  - a. Presentación de los participantes
    - “nombre”
    - edad,
    - lo que más te gusta de ser varón
- III. MAPPING EXERCISE
  - a. Dibujan un croquis de su barrio como Uds. quieren representarlo
    - “Plasmar aquí en este papel, como Uds. ven el barrio. “
  - b. Señalen donde:
    - Viven
    - Van en su tiempo libre
    - En la noche
    - Que hacen para pasar tiempo....y donde
    - Van los borrachos para tomar
    - Toman los adolescentes
    - Van los drogadictos para fumar
    - Para evitar supervisión de los adultos?
    - Donde los jóvenes conocen a sus novias?
    - Donde pasan tiempo junto los novios?
    - Adonde van los novios para estar juntos?
    - Hay lugares donde no irían Uds. en tu barrio?
    - Hay lugares donde no deben ir las chicas de tu barrio?
- IV. Servicios e Información: Fuentes, necesidades y demandas de:
  - a. ¿Dónde aprenden sobre cambios de su cuerpo y el sexo?

## ¿Quien y que piensan de eso?

### V. Masculinidad

- a. **Me gustaría conocer que significa para vos ser un hombre aquí en el bañado sur. Menciona todas las cosas que se te ocurren y yo las escribiré en este papel. ¿Entre tus amigos/pares piensan igual? ¿Tus padres y maestros piensan lo mismo?**
  - *Explore diferentes perspectivas*
    1. *Actividad sexual, proveedor financiero*
    2. *Necesidad de dar prueba de masculinidad*
- b. **¿Qué sucede a los chicos que no actúan así?**
  - *Con su grupo de amigos*
  - *chicas*
  - *Padres*
  - *La comunidad*
- c. **¿Qué significa ser una mujer? ¿Cómo se diferencia ser una mujer de ser un hombre?**
  - *Expectativas de los padres*
  - *Comunidad*
  - *Los maestros*
- d. **¿Cual es mejor, ser hombre o mujer? ¿Por qué? ¿Dirían lo mismo las chicas?**
- e. **¿Cómo piensan que los hombres verdaderos actúan? ¿Pudieras describir a alguien que vos pensas que es un hombre verdadero? ¿Te gustaría ser como él?**
  - *Explore expectativas en la comunidad de cómo tiene que mostrar su masculinidad*
  - *Explore el papel de la sexualidad en la masculinidad*
  - **¿Dirías que un hombre que actúa diferente de cómo lo has descrito es menos hombre? ¿Por qué?**
- f. **¿Qué expectativas tienen tus amigos de vos, con relación a ser un hombre verdadero?**
  - *Explore cuales actividades son para mujeres y para varones*
  - *Explore forma de ser con las chicas*
  - *Explore el sexo*
- g. **¿Cuán importante es para ti ser reconocido como un hombre verdadero? ¿Es difícil? ¿Por qué? ¿Qué pasaría si no lo fueras?**
- h. **¿Cómo los niños aprenden a actuar como hombres “de verdad”?**
  - *De otros (padres, amigos, hermanos, modelos)*
  - *De la televisión, de las películas*
  - *De las fuentes de información*
- i. **¿Cómo sabe un niño que se ha convertido a ser un hombre?**
- j. **¿Existen personas a las que no considerarías hombres? ¿Cómo son ellos? ¿Qué piensan de la gente así? ¿Por qué?**



## VI. Desarrollo y expresión de la Sexualidad

**Quisiera que me ayudaras a crear una historia sobre un muchacho llamado José. José es un joven como tú y tus amigos. Tiene 16 años y vive aquí en el bañado sur. El estudia como Uds. ¿Qué hace el en su tiempo libre? ¿Con quién le gusta pasar su tiempo libre?**

- a. **¿Piensa José sobre:**
  - **¿Las chicas?**
  - **¿Tener relaciones sexuales?**
  - **¿Qué es lo que piensa?**
- b. **¿Quién le habla sobre el sexo?**
  - *padres*
  - *maestros*
  - *amigos*
- c. **¿Tiene deseos sexuales? ¿Le gustaría a él tener relaciones sexuales? ¿Está ansioso por esto? ¿Está presionado? ¿Está emocionado?**
- d. **¿Qué es lo que él hace para satisfacer sus deseos sexuales? ¿Cómo él se siente por lo que hace?**
  - *Investigue sobre la masturbación, las relaciones sexuales.*
  - *Investigue sobre normas sociales*
- e. **José está preocupado sobre algunas cosas en su vida. ¿Qué lo que le preocupa? Porque? ¿Con quién habla acerca de estas cosas? ¿sus sentimientos? ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?**
- f. **¿Qué le dicen sus amigos sobre sus sentimientos? ¿Y su familia? ¿Cómo esto le hace sentir a José?**
  - *Explore la presión social*

**Ahora vamos a conversar un poquito más sobre lo que piensan sobre José.**

- a. **¿Actúa la mayoría de los chicos como José?**  
*¿De qué otra manera ellos actúan?*
- b. **¿Qué piensan de la manera en que actuó José? ¿Qué pensarían tus padres?**
  - *Explore sobre masturbación y tener relaciones sexuales*
- c. **¿Cómo los jóvenes de tu edad satisfacen sus deseos sexuales?**
  - *Explore sobre masturbación, tener relaciones sexuales, prostitutas, novias?*
- d. **¿Qué piensan o como se sienten los jóvenes de tu edad acerca de tener relaciones sexuales? ¿Existe algo sobre sexo que les preocupe?**

## VII. Debut Sexual: Explore el contexto, los sentimientos y las normas sociales

**Ahora vamos a inventar una historia junta, la historia de Mario y Yolanda. Mario tiene 16 años y Yolanda 15; ambos viven en el bañado sur, y ellos andan juntos. Ellos acaban de tener relaciones sexuales por primera vez.**

- **¿Cuánto tiempo han estado ellos juntos? ¿Dónde se conocieron?**

- **¿Cómo fue que llegaron a tener sexo la primera vez? ¿Llegaron a un acuerdo? ¿Quién lo propuso? ¿Qué dijo él y que dijo ella? ¿Dónde?**
- **¿Cuándo tuvieron relaciones sexuales? ¿Qué ocurrió?**
- **¿fue la experiencia positiva o negativa para Mario? ¿Para Yolanda? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se sintió él? ¿Cómo se sintió ella? ¿Fue lo que él esperaba? ¿Por qué/¿Por qué no? (Explore satisfacción y nerviosismo)**
- **¿Estuvo alguno de ellos preocupado por tener relaciones sexuales? (Explore las infecciones de transmisión sexual, el embarazo, ansiedad en cuanto al desempeño, normas sociales).**
- **¿Se sintió alguno de ellos presionado a tener relaciones sexuales? ¿Quién? ¿Por qué?**
- **¿Usaron algún tipo de protección? ¿Por qué/¿Por qué no? ¿Cuál? ¿Quién lo propuso? ¿Cómo lo obtuvieron? (Explore la comunicación entre pareja, participación del varón, fuentes de apoyo o información).**
- **¿Por qué eligieron este método?**

**¿Actúan la mayoría de parejas como Mario y Yolanda? ¿De qué otra manera actúan?**

**¿Qué piensa Uds. de cómo actuaron?**

- a. **¿Crees que es común para chicos de tu edad haber tenido sexo? ¿Con quién típicamente tienen sexo?**
- b. **¿Cuál es el momento oportuno para un chico tener relaciones sexuales por primera vez? ¿En el caso de las mujeres? ¿Por qué? ¿Qué pensaría tus padres?**
  - *¿Ventaja en posponer la primera vez en tener relaciones sexuales?*
  - *¿Cuáles son estas ventajas?*
- c. **¿Los jóvenes y las jóvenes que salen juntos hablan sobre sexo? ¿De qué hablan?**
- d. **¿Cómo se sienten ellos conversando sobre sexo?**
- e. **¿Qué facilitaría o dificultaría esto?**

VIII. Planificación Familiar

- **¿Con que frecuencia piensan ustedes que los jóvenes usa un método de planificación familiar? ¿Por qué ellos no lo utilizan en cada ocasión?**
- **¿Qué métodos utilizan? ¿Por qué? ¿Les preocupa el embarazo, la enfermedad o ambas? ¿Quién toma la iniciativa en el uso de anticonceptivos?**
- **¿Piensan Uds. Que es fácil o difícil obtener un método de planificación familiar? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuán fácil sería utilizar uno de ellos?**
- **¿Cuán fácil o difícil sería conversar con su pareja sobre contracepción? ¿Qué lo dificulta? ¿Qué lo facilita?**

IX. Conclusiones. Explore los sentimientos durante la discusión y determine el interés y la necesidad de más información.

- **¿Cómo te sentiste durante nuestras conversaciones? ¿Habías hablado con alguien alguna vez sobre los temas que conversamos hoy? (Explore en cuanto al padres, la madre, o los amigos). ¿Cómo te sentiste hablando**

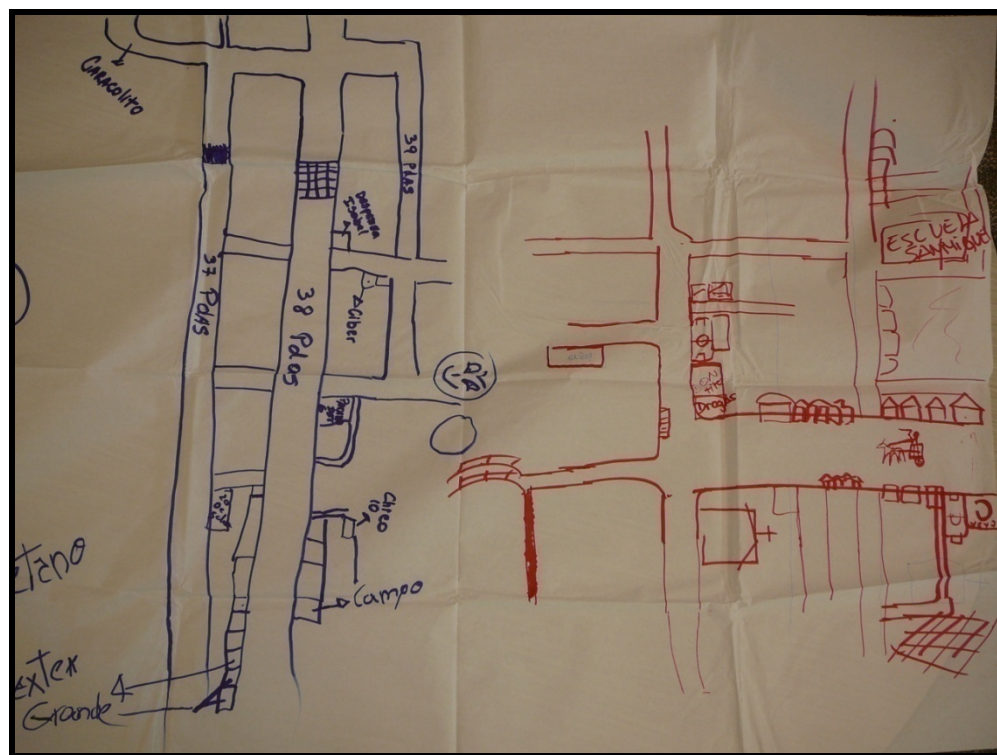
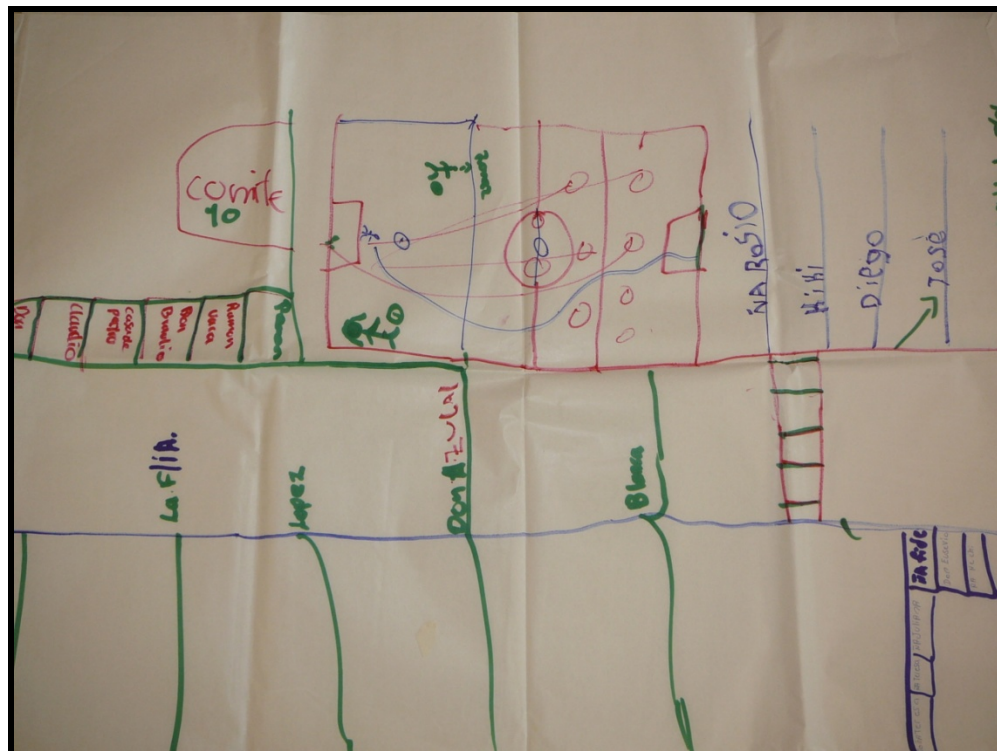
**acerca de estos temas? ¿Te gustaría conversar más con tus padres sobre estos temas? ¿con otras personas?**

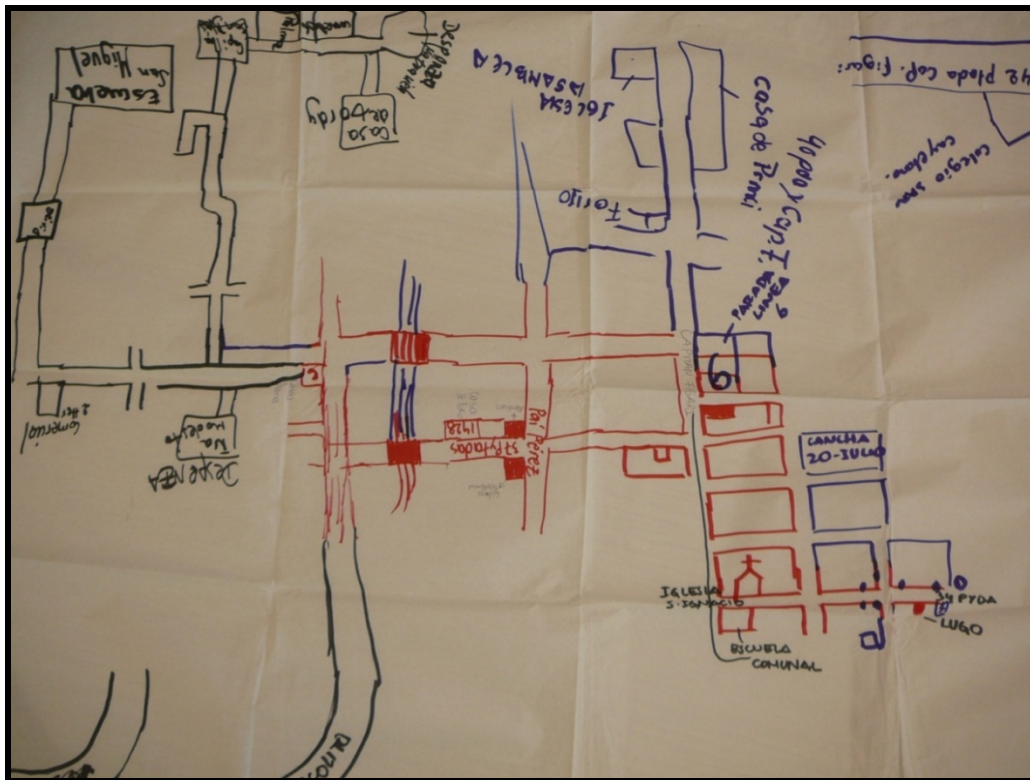
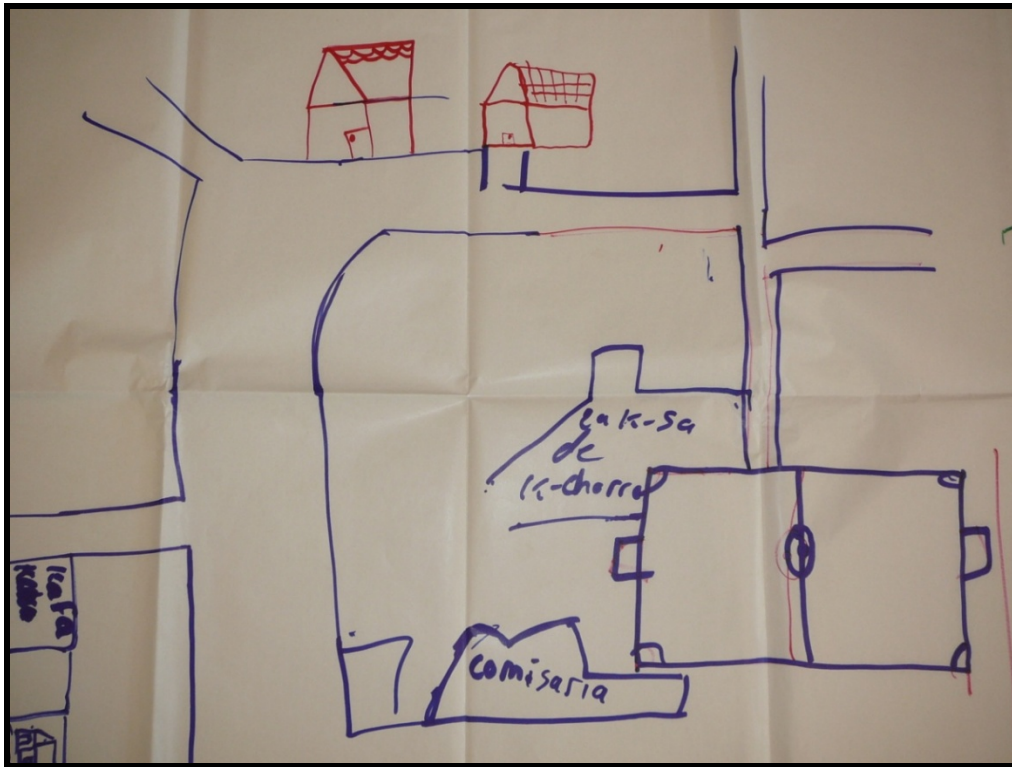
*P.J. Fleming*

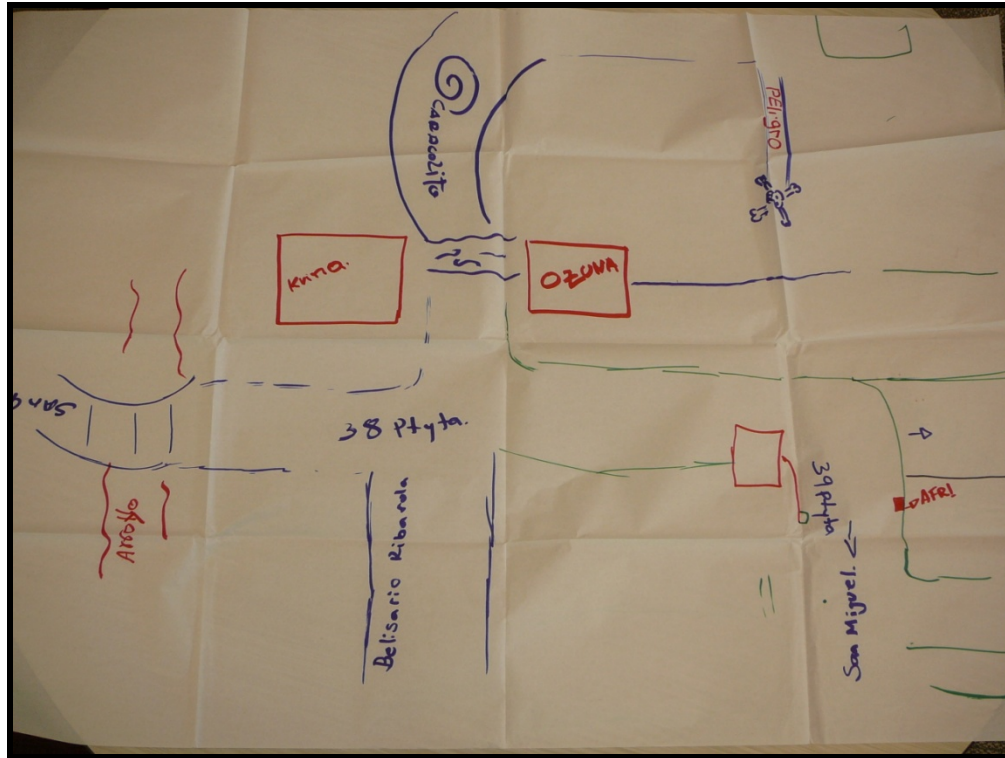
- **¿Quisiera más información sobre algo de los que discutimos hoy? ¿Sobre qué te gustaría aprender? (Explore para priorizar necesidades informativas) ¿Cómo quisiera aprender sobre estos temas? ¿Con quién quisieras discutirlos?**

*Gracias por compartir tus ideas y experiencias. Si alguno de ustedes quisiera conversar conmigo acerca de dónde pueden acudir para obtener más información sobre algunos de los tópicos que hemos discutido en el día de hoy, por favor véanme a mi o a (contacto local).*

Appendix 3







## Appendix 4

**Individual Interview Guide**

- I. Presentación de entrevista
  - a. Bienvenida
  - b. Presentación del entrevistador
  - c. Objetivos del entrevista
    - *Discusión de tu salud reproductiva y tu sexualidad.*
    - *compartas tus ideas y experiencias conmigo*
    - *podamos diseñar programas para ayudar a los jóvenes.*
  - d. Participación
    - **No hay respuesta correcta**
    - **Voluntario**
  - e. Confidencialidad y respeto entre nosotros
    - *privado y será confidencial.*
    - *Jamás mencionaremos tu nombre fuera de esta sala.*
    - *no contestar alguna pregunta particular, no hay ningún problema*
  - f. Mi Vida
  - g. Consentimiento para grabar
- II. **Familiarización**
  - a. **¿Que edad tenias en tu ultimo cumpleaños?**
  - b. **¿Trabajas también?**
  - c. **¿Cual fue el último grado que completaste en la escuela?**
  - d. **¿Con quién vivís?**
  - e. **¿Cómo te imaginas que será tu vida dentro de aproximadamente 10 años?**
  - f. **¿Tenés una novia o pareja? ¿Cuánto tiempo han estado juntos?**
- III. Relaciones casuales y formales
  - a. ¿La mayoría de sus amigos tienen novias/parejas? ¿Dónde se conocieron?
  - b. ¿Tienen sexo? ¿Cual pensas vos que es el momento apropiado para un niño tener sexo? ¿Por qué? ¿Para una niña? ¿Estarán tus amigos de acuerdo contigo? ¿Tus padres?
  - c. ¿Cuáles consejos, información, o palabras te han dado sus amigos acerca del sexo? ¿Sus padres u otros familiares?
  - d. ¿Es común acá tener varias mujeres a la misma vez? ¿Qué pensas vos de esa? ¿Qué dirían tus amigos de esa práctica? ¿Qué dirían tu mamá u otros familiares de esa práctica?
  - e. ¿Hay diferencias entre novias serias y novias casuales? ¿Dónde se conocen los novios serios? ¿Dónde se conocen los novios casuales? ¿Hay lugares para conocer mujeres decentes y otro lugar para mujeres no decentes?
  - f. ¿Cuáles características buscan los varones en las parejas/novias serias? ¿En las parejas/novias casuales?
  - g. ¿Tienen sexo las parejas formales/serias? ¿Por qué si o porque no? ¿Las parejas informal/casual?

- h. ¿Por qué los varones buscan parejas fuera de su relación Santiagopal?  
¿Presión de amigos? ¿Padres? ¿Familiares? ¿Es algo biológico?
- i.
- j. ¿Usan métodos para prevenir el embarazo o VIH con las parejas serias/formales? ¿Con las parejas/novias casuales? ¿Por qué si o porque no?

#### IV. Novia o Pareja

- a. Contáme un poco de tu novia/pareja.
  - i. ¿Dónde conociste tu novia? ¿Cuáles características te gusto de ella?  
¿Qué cosas estabas buscando en una novia? ¿Estabas buscando algo seria, o por el momento? ¿Cómo se hicieron pareja? ¿Cuáles tipos de sentimientos tenias hacia ella al Santiagopio? ¿Cómo le enseñaste sus sentimientos?
- b. ¿Supieron/saben sus amigos de la relación?
  - i. ¿Por qué si o porque no? ¿Qué cosas te decían de la relación y de ella?
- c. ¿Supieron/saben su familia de la relación y de ella?
  - i. ¿Por qué si o porque no? ¿Qué cosas te decían de la relación y de ella?
- d. ¿Han tenido sexo? ¿Después de cuanto tiempo de estar juntos? ¿Tenias que convencerla? ¿Qué decían tus amigos al respeto a sexo con ella? ¿Hablas con ellos sobre tu vida sexual? ¿Has hablado con tus padres u otros familiares acerca del sexo?
- e. Fidelidad

#### V. Relaciones con las mujeres (*si NO tiene pareja y NO había tenido pareja*)

- a. ¿Estás buscando una novia/pareja?
- b. ¿Por qué no tenes novia?
- c. ¿Cómo buscarías una novia?
- d. ¿Qué dicen tus amigos del hecho que no tenes novia? ¿Tus padres o familiares? ¿Te importa lo que dicen?

#### VI. Grupos de amigos

- a. Escuela
- b. Vicios
- c. Mujeres
- d. ¿Qué influencia tienen los grupos de amigos?
- e. ¿Hay un líder del grupo? ¿Qué influencia tiene él?

#### VII. Masculinidad

- a. ¿Tenés un hombre en tu vida que representa como vos querrías ser en el futuro?
  - i. ¿Qué dificultades hay para ser como él?
  - ii. ¿Quién te apoya para que seas como él?
- b. En el grupo hablamos de
  - i. “entre más mujeres, mas hombre”
  - ii. “coger y dejar”
  - iii. Tomar, los vicios
  - iv. Tener permiso



- c. ¿Actúas tú de esa manera? ¿Por qué si o por qué no? ¿Cómo te sientes al actuar de esa manera? ¿Es fácil o difícil? ¿Qué ocurre si actúas diferente? ¿Ejemplos?
- VIII. Conclusiones. Explore los sentimientos durante la discusión y determine el interés y la necesidad de más información.
- **¿Cómo te sentiste durante nuestras conversaciones?**
  - **¿Quisiera más información sobre algo de los que discutimos hoy? ¿Sobre qué te gustaría aprender? (Explore para priorizar necesidades informativas) ¿Cómo quisiera aprender sobre estos temas? ¿Con quién quisieras discutirlos?**
- IX. *Gracias por compartir tus ideas y experiencias. Si alguno de ustedes quisiera conversar conmigo acerca de dónde pueden acudir para obtener más información sobre algunos de los tópicos que hemos discutido en el día de hoy, por favor véanme a mí o a (contacto local).*

## Appendix 5

#	Name of Code	Code Definition
1	Family Members	This includes all mentions of parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents. It does NOT include "demographic" type things, such as "I have two sisters"
2	Friends/Peers Opinions	This includes all mentions of friends where a male friend is giving their commenting about something. This includes conversations the friends or peer groups have and when friends ask about girlfriends or sex. (This is contrasted to "Friends/Peers Behaviors" which are references to actual behaviors or what the friends or peers do. This code is what they say or opine).
3	Spaces/Locations	All references to places in the community. This includes mentions of schools, parks, friend's houses, bars, etc. This does not include the participant's own house unless they are talking about it in the context of a romantic relationship.
4	Gay/Femininity	This includes all mentions of being called gay, feminine, etc. OR calling someone else that, OR referring to a man/boy/adolescent as gay or feminine
5	Manliness	This is a code for gender stereotypes. This includes all mentioned characteristics of manliness or maleness or male gender roles. Since manliness is usually defined in contrast to femininity, it also includes mentions of gender roles for girls/women.
6	Friends/Peers Behaviors	This is all references to what their friends <i>do</i> . It can be in regards to drinking, schooling, sex, etc. But it is about behaviors or actions that their friends carry out.
	STIs	All mentions of STIs or HIV. Also, can be mentions of getting diseases from sex or "dirty girls".
7	Contraception	All mentions of preventing pregnancy, contraception (including condoms), and "cuidarse" or taking care of yourself in relationships.
8	Drugs/Alcohol	All mentions of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. This includes "Chespi" or "chepi". Fumar is also "drugs". Also includes any pressure that friends might put on because of drugs.
9	Current Novia	This includes all mentions of a current girlfriend/girl (or, if the participant does not have a current girlfriend, their discussion of their most recent girlfriend).
10	Formation	This includes all references to how a relationship is started. This includes both casual and formal relationships. This also includes where you meet girlfriends.

#	Name of Code	Code Definition
11	Girl Talk	This includes all mentions of communication with girls (or mentions of a lack of communication). This can be face to face, by phone, by text message, or communication through one of their friends. Anytime a male and female adolescents exchanges thoughts or ideas, it is this code. It DOES NOT include communication with their female family member (i.e. Mother or Aunt)
12	Confidant	All references to feeling comfortable talking to someone. This could be anyone in their social environment, but must be an explicit reference to the idea that they can trust this person and they can confide in this person. This code does include references to not having a confidant, or not having someone they trust. It does not include just regular conversation with friends
13	"Hinchar" or Casual	This is all mentions of the word " <i>hinchar</i> " (hook-up) or casual girlfriends. It can be a passage that is referring to hooking up without saying the word " <i>hinchar</i> ", but usually it will contain the word. Or will contain reference to a casual girlfriend. It includes when they are talking about a girl they are hooking up with. When it doesn't explicitly say serious or formal girlfriend, it's this code.
14	Professors/Adults	All mentions of adult role models or teachers or professors. This includes teaching of sex ed in school. Does not include adult family members.
15	Novia 'Formal'	This is all references to formal girlfriends. Usually it will explicitly say formal girlfriend. But it could also say " <i>novia seria</i> " (serious girlfriend), or be talking about someone the person seems serious about. This also includes mentions of not looking for formal girlfriends.