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Last man standing against abortion

How masculinity norms reflect opposition to abortion in Mexico City

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to contribute to increased understanding of men's perception of abortion in a Mexican context characterized by strong abortion resistance and machismo norms. It also explores how SRHR organizations in Mexico are addressing the abortion resistance through tackling these norms and (dis)engaging men. The empirical material was gathered in Mexico City through semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews with men from Mexico City and SRHR organizations. Iterative data collection and theory with a constructivist position have been used. Using concepts such as hegemonic masculinities, gender systems and gender socialization, the thesis examines the various levels of influence that surrounds the abortion resistance. The analysis shows that because of the characteristics of dominant and aggressive masculinity norms the SRHR organizations feel hesitant to involve men in their work, as it is only further restricts and harms women. However, the majority of the young men question these norms and support women's right to abortion. Thus, there is an opportunity for organizations to work with these men. Still, prior work focused on changing damaging masculinities is needed before including men in abortion matters whenever harmful masculinities are present.

Keywords: Abortion, Mexico City, Men's perception, Masculinity norms, Hegemonic masculinities, Machismo, SRHR organizations, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender roles, Gender equality

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Resumen

El principal propósito de este estudio de tipo cualitativo es comprender la manera en que los hombres perciben el tema del aborto y entender de qué manera influyen las fuertes normas de masculinidad que existen en la sociedad mexicana en él. Por otro lado, se busca explorar la relación que existe entre las organizaciones de SDSR sobre el aborto en relación con las masculinidades. El material empírico se reunió en la Ciudad de México entre enero y marzo de 2019, principalmente a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas individuales y grupos focales con hombres de la Ciudad de México y organizaciones de SDSR. El estudio ha sido ejecutado desde una posición constructivista utilizando métodos de recolección de datos y teoría que se basan en un enfoque iterativo que toma como referencia conceptos clave como masculinidades hegemónicas, sistemas de género y socialización de género. La tesis examina la complejidad y los diversos niveles de influencia que rodean la resistencia al aborto en la sociedad mexicana. El análisis revela que la violencia de los hombres mayores, el control sobre las mujeres y la toma de las principales decisiones sin tomar en cuenta la opinión de las mujeres son características clave que promueven una resistencia al aborto por parte cierto sector de la sociedad. Por otro lado, la mayoría de los jóvenes cuestionan estas normas preestablecidas y muestran una mentalidad mucho más accesible respecto al aborto. Debido a las características de las normas dominantes y agresivas de masculinidad en México, las organizaciones de SDSR se sienten renuentes al involucrarse con los hombres. Para concluir, es necesario realizar un trabajo previo sobre las masculinidades dañinas antes de incluir a los hombres en cualquier decisión que involucre el aborto.

Clarifications

The starting point for this thesis is the strong patriarchal norms in Mexico. These norms are based on a gender binary system consisting only of cisgender heterosexual men and women. With reference to the purpose of the study, which is to focus on the masculinity norms' influence on abortion, the same gender terms are used. However, this is a large simplification of reality that excludes non-binary gender identities and other sexual orientations than heterosexual.



The field work for this study is carried out through the Field Study Scholarship (MFS) program. The MFS Scholarship Program gives Swedish university students the opportunity to carry out fieldwork in low- and middle income countries in relation to their Bachelor's or Master's thesis. Sida's main purpose of the Scholarship is to stimulate the students' interest in, as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of development issues. The Minor Field Studies provide the students with practical experience of fieldwork in developing settings. A further aim of Sida is to strengthen the cooperation between Swedish university departments and institutes and organizations in these countries.

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Acronyms

ANDAR	National Alliance for the Right to Decide
CDD	Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGDs	Focus Groups Discussions
GIRE	Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IVE	Voluntary termination of pregnancy
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Abbreviations

et al.	and others
etc.	and so forth
ibid.	in the same place

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1 Introduction

The abortion legislation in Mexico is one of the world's most conservative (Yam & Vala-Haynes, 2007: 5). The restrictive legislation together with high stigmatization, force women to resort to illegal and unsafe abortions (Yam & Vala-Haynes, 2007: 5; Silva et al 2009: 56; Mondragón et al., 2011: 159). Unsafe abortion is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality due to the use of unsafe procedures (Mondragón et al., 2011: 159-160; Amnesty International, 2012: 19). Between 1990 and 2015, 13 percent of the maternal deaths around the world were connected to unsafe abortions (WHO, 2015). It is somewhat lower in Mexico, where it is estimated that 7 percent of the maternal deaths are due to unsafe abortions, which is classified as a structural health problem (Silva et al., 2009: 56). In 2010, 992 women in Mexico died from maternal cause, of which most were predictable and preventable. Mexico City is the state with highest numbers of deaths despite the legality of abortion (GIRE, 2012). In addition, unsafe abortions have a substantial effect on women's education, child health and productivity level (ibid.).

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are universal and thus apply to everyone equally without discrimination. Consequently, states are obliged to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights and citizens can hold the state accountable (Merali, 2000). Still, women's SRHR are negatively affected by restrictive legislations and gender inequalities (Pillai & Gupta, 2011). Protecting the health and rights of women and girls is recognized as central for development¹.

Increased recognition has been given to the role men and boys play in either supporting or damaging the health and rights of women and girls. Thus, an abortion resistance among men may hinder women's access to abortion, which consequently can damage women's health. Gender inequality, including unequal gender norms

¹ Protecting the health and rights of women and girls is especially reflected in SDG (Sustainable Develop Goal) 5 underscoring the importance of access to SRHR. It is seen as a critical step in achieving gender equality as deficiency in this leads to other forms of discriminations and deprivation of women's autonomy (UN Women, n.d.)

related to masculinities and femininities, is a key determinant of health inequalities and unequal access to health services. As for now, unequal gender norms largely exacerbate the outcomes and opportunities for women and girls in SRHR (Malarcher, 2010; Kågesten et al., 2016).

The importance of men's participation in SRHR and shared responsibility regarding family planning was stated at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo 1994 and at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (Maharaj, 2000). At these conferences, the men's roles were acknowledged as essential allies in achieving gender equality. Increased interest has been given to the impact of men and masculinities in SRHR outcomes. As an example, the United Nations Family Planning Report stated the importance of educating men and changing their interpretation of masculinity from domination to shared responsibility (UNFPA, 1995: 16).

This originates from increased awareness that exclusion of men in SRHR programming and policies may absolve men from responsibility in sexual health (Ipas, 2009). Although various components are required to achieve full gender equality, male engagement is seen as an essential part to challenge and transform gender norms and underlying power relations, structures, and systems that preserve inequalities between and among men and women (Ricardo, 2014).

There is a general consensus among international organizations and feminist scholars that an approach to engage men in SRHR together with women is needed. This with the aim to achieve global health development goals for men and women, along with addressing the power structures and privileges men hold as a group above women. Nevertheless, the evidence varies of how to best engage men and address masculinities in SRHR (Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, & Lippman, 2013).

Despite the increased recognition, and an understanding that men must engage in SRHR and work meaningfully and cooperatively with women's SRHR organizations (Stern, 2014), there is limited research on men's perceptions and the incorporation of men and masculinities in work related to abortion done by organizations and institutions (Hernández, 2014).

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

This thesis seeks to understand how Mexican masculinity norms affect men's perception of abortion and SRHR organizations' work on abortion. The research will focus on how masculinities take form in abortion both from the perspective of different men and SRHR organizations' working on abortion. Both perspectives are taken into account as abortion resistance among men may pose a barrier for women's access to abortion and SRHR organization can address this resistance in their abortion work. Their perspectives play a central part in the analysis where concepts of hegemonic masculinities, gender socialization and gender system will be used to gain deeper understanding of the masculinity norms and perceptions of abortion.

To that end, the aim of this thesis is to critically explore the interplay between masculinity norms and men's opposition to abortion. To fulfil this aim, two research questions have been developed to guide the thesis:

- 1) How can one understand men's opposition to abortion in relation to Mexican masculinity norms?
- 2) How do SRHR organizations address men and masculinities in abortion?

1.2 Scope and limitation

As the focus of the thesis is to investigate men's perception of abortion as well as SRHR organizations' work on abortion, only organizations that are in favor of abortion are included in the research. The research is conducted in Mexico City where the abortion legislation differ from other parts of the country. In Mexico City it is legal to have an abortion up to week 12 of gestation. It therefore makes an interesting case study as the liberal legislation has impacted the perception of abortion (Wilson et al., 2011).

As this study is limited in both size and scope it has not been possible to include an intersectionality perspective, which would further show the variety of

expressions of machismo in Mexico and different power structures. As stated by Castañeda (2002: 23) machismo is also a reflection of economic and political inequalities in a society, which impact depends on different factors such as race and class (ibid.). Unfortunately, intersectionality will only be touched upon and machismo will be investigated in more general terms.

1.3 Disposition

Following the introduction, a presentation of the conceptual framework expanding on concepts within masculinity research will be outlined, followed by an elaboration of the methodology, comprising research design as well as the methods used for data collection and analysis. The forth chapter gives a contextual background to Mexico and the abortion debate. This will be followed by the results and analysis based on the data collection and the conceptual framework. The last chapter provides a conclusion derived from the analysis and suggestions for future research.

2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is mainly built on concepts within masculinity studies. The aim with masculinity research, in line with feminism is to deconstruct the essence of the sex as well as the relationship between the sexes. The framework consists of concepts of gender system, power, gender socialization, gender roles and hegemonic masculinity, followed by the influences of the Catholic Church on gender roles. The concepts interrelate and together bring understanding of the dynamics and structures that influence individuals' behaviors and perceptions. Each of the concepts will be used to understand the findings and analyze the material.

2.1 Gender systems and Violence

The concepts of sex and gender are of great importance in order to create an understanding of prevailing social orders and of masculinities, as well as their importance and consequences. While sex denotes the biological sex, gender refers to the social, which has specific cultural meanings in different societies. Judith Butler claims that gender is a consequence of our actions and that we constantly reproduce it. She also believes that gender division and the production of gender is based on power relations, which is where gender is created. The heterosexual norm affects and controls us socially, and contributes to maintaining dominance and subordination in society (Butler, 1993).

The power aspect is central to gender, as gender relations are permeated by power. Social hierarchies are based on notions of gender differences that give rise to a gender system and to a patriarchal dividend from which only men benefit (Connell, 1995: 103). Connell believes that the reproduction of the gender system takes place on an unconscious level and that there are very few men who actively

try to counteract the gender system because they benefit from the unfair social construction (Nilsson, 1999: 16).

According to Connell, this uneven gender system would be difficult to maintain without violence, which she divides into two categories; firstly, violence such as catcalling, assault and rape to maintain their dominance in society; secondly, violence such as murder, war and terrorism, which is an important aspect of gender policy between men (Connell, 1995: 106).

Edwards adds to the discussion on violence by claiming that the perception of violence varies within a specific culture and during a specific time, and is influenced by factors such as; class, ethnicity and geography (Edwards, 2006: 44). Furthermore, he claims that although men account for the majority of violent crimes, it has no connection with their biological nature. The fact that men fall victim to their masculinity overlook the importance of the social world, leaving no opportunity for men to change. Similarly, Edwards finds it defective that violence would be a consequence of socialization as it overlooks the significance of social structures and the person's individuality and ability to self-reflect. Edwards continues that if violence is related to masculinity, it can also lead to violation of the men. This includes the ban on crying and instructions that men should suffer in silence. These orders and prohibitions create frustrations which, in turn, can lead to violence against others and against themselves. Thus, according to Edwards, masculinity can be as much about violation as about violence (ibid.).

The concepts of gender system, power and violence are necessary for the depth of the analysis. The power aspect is central and its direct link to violence to help understand the underlying structures comprising men's dominance.

2.2 Gender Socialization and Gender Roles

Gender socialization is a concept that refers to how individuals develop different sex-related characteristics or characteristics during childhood (Giddens, 2003: 560). During a child's upbringing, society provides a number of regulations on behaviors that are suitable for each sex. These regulations and expectations are realized by socialization agencies such as the family, the school and the media. They provide the right environments for the child to be able to absorb the behaviors that are

expected to belong to each sex, which results in a gender identity of the child that corresponds to the social expectations of each sex (Connell, 1987: 191).

Furthermore, socialization is an important mean for cultural transfer between generations. It is a process where the helpless child gradually but actively becomes aware and acquires knowledge and skills that are consistent with the culture in which she/he has been born. It is a lifelong process in which human behavior is continuously transformed from the social interaction (Giddens, 2003: 42). Gender socialization is also a force that can be difficult to avoid or oppose, because once one has been ascribed a gender role, society expects that one should behave thereafter (Giddens 2003: 113). At the same time, it forms the basis of our individuality and freedom, and although the society that we are born into and grows up in affects our behavior, there is room for individuality and free will (Giddens, 2003: 42). Gender socialization inevitably leads to women and men being passed on to socially acceptable gender roles, which are social expectations of behaviors that are considered appropriate for members of each sex. Gender roles do not refer to physical differences, but involve socially designed qualities and characteristics associated to masculinity and femininity (Giddens, 2003: 560).

Given that gender socialization is a force that is difficult to avoid, as it leads to people conforming to socially accepted gender roles, it forms an important part of the analysis as it helps in understanding people's behavior, and difficulties to change. Likewise, the gender roles, whose existence rests on the power of socialization, exist and operate in the Mexican community.

2.3 Hegemonic masculinity

Connell claims that there is no universal masculinity but rather a set of masculinities (Connell, 1995: 100). Qualities and behaviors that the hegemonic masculinity holds are considered natural, common and positive. Both men and women are involved in the maintenance and reproduction of the hegemonic masculinity, which involves a male domination and a female subordination. Masculinities occur mainly through relationships with other men and depend on factors such as ethnicity and social class (Connell, 1995: 100). Although it represents an unreachable ideal, it attracts many followers as there are different benefits of participating and reproducing the

hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995: 103). The hegemonic masculinity contributes to the hierarchical gender system, but also to a hierarchical order among men. It can be exercised unnoticed but also violently and directly, where homophobia is a prime example (Connell, 2000: 10). Connell emphasizes that there are very few men who embody the hegemonic masculinity, but that all relate to it and thus benefit from it, the so-called patriarchal dividend. All men participate in the reproduction of the hegemonic masculinity, but they do not see themselves as oppressors of women, nor are they aware that their reproduction of the hegemonic masculinity reproduces the gender order in society (Connell, 1995: 103).

Machismo is a phenomenon generally associated with Latin America. It has different definitions, but can be said to represent a generalized male ideology of hegemonic behaviors or attitudes (Melhuus, 1992: 121-122). This ideology praises heterosexuality and male privilege, leading to men's control and respect. Being macho has to do with the man's honor and the opposite of not being macho is not to be a man (ibid.). Machismo is often linked to the use of violence and being "tough" as well as providing for one's family. Following Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities, machismo could be called the hegemonic masculinity in Mexico (Connell, 2008: 101).

Men embody the ideal of machismo, but both men and women are affected by it as well as reproduce it (Castañeda, 2002: 17). Machismo is a gender binary system that only consists of cisgender heterosexual women and men, dictating how men and women should behave. Men and women's opposing gender identities where different kinds of sex-encoded behaviors are rewarded or punished depending on the sex (Castañeda, 2002). Men and women according to machismo are considered different by nature, where the man is superior to the woman. The behavior and attitudes of men are referred to biology, and are higher valued than female qualities. The man must constantly assert his masculinity according to the hegemonic masculinity criteria (Castañeda, 2002: 34).

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity together with the understanding of machismo is one of the most important tools in the analysis, as it helps to interpret men's behavior and attitudes.

2.4 Catholic influences: Gender roles and marianismo

Catholicism has a strong influence in Mexico (Wilcox, 2004: 59). Men and women are considered fundamentally different based on the religious explanation of the power hierarchy between men and women, which states that God created the man and the woman as two separate individuals, and that he created the man first, then the woman. God is said to have selected the man to decide over the woman. Thus, the gender division cannot be questioned because, as according to this model of explanation, God created the division of sex into society in the beginning of time (Wilcox, 2004: 58).

The behavioral norms of religion particularly affect women, as they are expected to behave in a morally correct manner to a greater extent than men. Catholicism has laid the foundation for the female ideals, called marianismo (Chant & Craske, 2003: 9). The ideals of marianismo is based on the Virgin Mary, the central figure of the Roman Catholic Church, and the femininity she portrays according to Catholicism. The most important aspect of Mary is the role she fills as a mother. From her divine motherhood she becomes a woman; likewise through her faithful marriage, a wife. Another ground pillar of marianismo consists of chastity and almost a female asexuality (Stevens, 1973). Marianismo assumes that women naturally want to become mothers and devote their lives to selflessly taking care of their families. This role derives directly from Catholicism's traditional female and maternal qualities, such as self-sacrifice, domesticity, and the ability to feed a large number of children (Chant & Craske, 2003: 9).

The Catholic influence on masculinity and femininity is vital to understand the Mexican context and the roles assigned to women and men, and consequently forms an important part of the analysis as it helps understand the different levels of inequality within the Mexican society.

3 Methodology

This chapter presents the overall research design and strategy, followed by a presentation of the data collection process such as sampling strategy with information regarding the interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and analysis of documents. This is followed by a presentation of the methods used for transcribing and analyzing the data and quality assurance. Finally, ethical considerations will be discussed ending with limitations encountered during the research process including reflections on the chosen methods.

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design since it has an interpretative form that enable the development of a complex picture such as different perspectives (Creswell, 2013:4). As the aim is to examine and analyze individuals' understandings and meanings of the questions at hand it is deemed suitable for this study (ibid.). This research constitutes a case study since a case study pursues to comprehensively understand one or several contemporary social phenomenon or activities (Yin, 2009: 4). Alike a case study design, different sources of data are used to gain in-depth understanding of the research questions (Yin, 2009: 11; Creswell, 2013: 98).

The researcher seeks to interpret the participants' perceptions of abortion and masculinities, in light of the understanding that an objective truth does not exist, rather people participate in the creation of social phenomena. As such, this study is grounded in an interpretivist epistemology and a constructivist ontology (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the study employs an iterative approach, which means that theory and data are studied back and forth, connecting them together throughout the process (Bryman, 2012: 26). Essentially, literature was reviewed to inform the different themes to be covered in the data collection, while the analysis of data was

explored by going back to theory to develop and deepen the understanding of the data. Thus, the conceptual framework was developed over time to describe the meaning of the empirical material.

3.2 Sampling

The study is conducted in Mexico City since their liberal abortion legislation makes it an interesting case study. In addition, this is where the civil society organizations (CSO) that the researcher wanted to include in the study have their head offices. Since several of the organizations have affiliated organizations or programs around Mexico, this approach will allow for a holistic perspective of the research questions.

Purposeful sampling was used to choose the organizations, which is common in qualitative research (Creswell 2013: 156). The sampling of organizations was done by mapping them in accordance to specific criteria; organizations working with all or one of the following themes: a) abortion b) women's rights, and c) masculinities.

From the organization where the researcher was conducting her internship, a colleague developed into a gatekeeper and helped in finding organizations as well as initiated the first contact with several of them. This can be seen as a limitation since the gatekeeper will only get you access to certain people (Bryman 2012: 151). However, this opened up for the opportunity to get in contact with organizations that otherwise would have been hard to access.

In addition, snowball sampling was used to find additional informants who the researcher was not familiar with (Bryman 2012: 202). Through one of the organizations, the researcher got contact with an ethics teacher and theological advisor for the organization *Católicas por el derecho a decidir* (CDD – Catholics for the right to decide), Fray Julián Cruzalta Aguirre.

People that have significant experience and knowledge about the overall work of the organization were chosen to participate. The organizations work on different levels and with different target groups which allowed for a maximum variation sampling. This approach is ideal for qualitative research since it portrays different perspectives (Creswell, 2013: 157). In total, five organizations were interviewed. For further information about the organizations see Appendix C.

FGDs consisting of different men served as an important complement to the individual interviews, as through the respondents' interaction with each other different perceptions and opinions regarding the research topic emerged (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 39). Purposeful and convenience sampling was used to find the participants. Through friends the researcher found men from different socioeconomic backgrounds and ages that were willing to participate. In total four different focus groups were conducted.

Since the researcher is fluent in Spanish, the interviews and discussion were conducted in Spanish as it was the language in which the informants felt more comfortable.

Type of interview	Interviewee	Number
Informal interviews with staff from Population Council	Interviews conducted with staff member purposively selected for her expertise on abortion in Mexico.	1
Expert interviews with staff from relevant CSOs (semi-structured)	Interviews conducted with CSO staff members purposively selected for their expertise on abortion, masculinities or SRHR.	5
Key informant interview with theological scholar	Interview conducted with scholar purposively selected for his expertise on the Church's impact on masculinity norms and SRHR	1
Semi-structured FGDs	Discussions conducted with men from different age groups and backgrounds living in Mexico City.	4 (with 3-6 participants in each focus group)

Table 1: Overview of sampling strategies.

3.3 Interviews

Informal interviews were conducted to gain context related information and perspective on the research questions. The informant was a member of the staff from the Population Council in Mexico working with questions related to gender and abortion. To gain information regarding the church's impact on society and on SRHR, a key informant interview was held with Friar Julián Cruzalta Aguirre, a professor in theology and ethics in Mexico. He holds a master's degree in moral theology and ecofeminist theology and is the founder and theological advisor for CDD.

For the collection of data from the organizations, semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were conducted. An interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed with the objective of covering specific themes, and yet allowing the informants to have an impact on the content (Bryman 2012: 471), such as bringing up unexpected aspects and issues (Ackerly & True, 2010: 168). Thus, the informants could provide valuable insight to the research problem. Besides the interviews, information about the organizations was gathered from information available online, e.g. published documents, websites and Facebook pages prior to the interview. This facilitated the selection of themes as well as the focus of each interview. After each interview, some alterations were made to the interview guide to better adjust to the purpose of the study, as well as the interview technique.

The organizations were briefed about the topic and aim of the study before the interview. One of the organizations asked for the interview questions before the interview in order to identify a suitable person to participate in the interview. This could have influenced the answers, but since the organization might not have participated without the interview guide, the researcher deemed it best to share the questions.

The organizations chose to have the interviews in their offices. Each of the interviews was recorded with the consent of the informants. This made it possible to hear the interview several times which facilitated the understanding and interpretation of the material. Hence, it corrected and clarified the messages as well as made it possible to transcribe the interviews. All interviews were transcribed which facilitated the later analysis. In addition, some notes were taken during the

interviews to capture observations that would not be mirrored in the recording. Each interview lasted around 40 minutes to 1.5 hours.

3.4 Focus Group Discussions

For the FGDs a discussion guide (see Appendix B) was developed covering the main themes the researcher wanted to investigate. Prior to the interview, the topic of the discussion and that it was confidential was explained to the participants. Each of the discussion were recorded with the consent of the informants. To explore the informants' attitudes towards masculinities and abortion, hypothetical questions were used (Kvale, 1994) such as: "How would you describe the typical man in Mexico?" and "If your close friend or partner told you she was pregnant and did not want to be, how would you discuss the topic between each other?" From these questions, the participants were asked to reflect and discuss with each other. Each FGDs lasted around 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. For more information regarding the participants please see Table 2.

Respondent	Focus group	Age	Occupation	Highest achieved education	Religion	Children ; age	Marital status
R01	Mixed	38	Construction worker	High-school	Believer in God	3; 9-13	Married
R02	Mixed	40	Construction worker	Primary education	Catholic	6; 4-14	Married
R03	Mixed	47	Construction worker	Primary education	Believer in God	5; 6-25	Married
R04	Mixed	53	Construction worker	Primary education	Catholic	4; 6-26	Married
R05	Mixed	17	Construction worker	High-school	Believer in God	No	Single
R06	Mixed	17	Construction worker	High-school	Catholic	No	Single
R07	Elderly	60	Accountant	University	Catholic	2; 21-29	Married
R08	Elderly	57	Accountant	University, master	Catholic	2; 25-32	Married
R09	Elderly	83	Accountant	University	Loves God	5; 43-55	Widower
R10	YM1	25	Architect	University	Catholic	No	Single
R11	YM1	21	Student/architect	University	Catholic	No	Single
R12	YM1	24	Architect	University	No	No	Single
R13	YM2	21	Student	University	No	No	Single
R14	YM2	21	Student	University	No	No	Single
R15	YM2	23	Human resources	University	Catholic	No	Single

Table 2: General information about the men participating in the focus groups. YM is shortened for young men.

3.5 Document Analysis

Besides the material from the interviews, the researcher also used first and secondary data covering different written material. A comprehensive literature review was conducted, covering academic articles, booklets, reports and other documents, which provided a broad understanding of the context and the research problem. Since the topic of the study is highly political, a critical approach was used to analyze the secondary data such as by whom was it written, to who and for what purpose. In addition, several of the organizations gave additional material such as brochures and booklets which complemented the previous information about them.

This served as an important complement to the interviews in the way of providing a wider understanding and analysis of their work (Mikkelsen, 2005: 188).

3.6 Transcribing and Analysis of Data

The interviews were first transcribed using a data program called Sonix. The program allowed for a rapid and quite accurate transcription of all the data. The researcher then listened to the recording again while reading the transcribed material and adjusting the parts that were transcribed incorrectly. This allowed for all the material to be transcribed thoroughly, which otherwise would have been difficult due to it being a very time-consuming task. The parts of the material that the researcher deemed important were translated to English.

The interviews were coded in themes and categories based on the conceptual framework developed throughout the research process. To analyze the material successive coding was used inspired by Mikkelsen (2005: 183). Firstly, broad concepts and categories were identified, so called open coding. Secondly, in order to identify different relations and phenomena, the concepts were connected to different sub-categories, a so called axial coding. Thirdly, to identify core categories and deepen the analysis, the themes were integrated with the theory. However, the process was not as linear. Different stages intertwined, such as sub-categories evolving during the first stage, and in the second stage, new elements emerged which consequently led to adjustments of the first identified categories etc. Still, the approach facilitated the structuring of the analysis.

3.7 Quality Assurance

While there are different criteria for assessing the quality of research, validity and reliability remain two standard principles for quality assurance. To ensure the reliability of the study several measures have been taken. As mentioned, all the interviews were recorded given the consent by the informants. This allowed for the researcher to listen to the interviews repeatedly and thus ensure that all essential

information was understood correctly and noticed (Bryman, 2012: 482). Additionally, it made it possible to transcribe the interviews, which facilitated the analysis of the data. Moreover, notes were taken during the interviews to capture information and observations that otherwise would have been disregarded. Through listening to the recordings and going through the material several times it limited misinterpretations of the material. For the parts which the researcher did not feel assured of the meanings, a native speaker from Mexico City was asked to translate and interpret.

Different methods were used to strengthen the validity (Mikkelsen 2005: 197). The researcher's internship with the Population Council provided a fundamental understanding of the abortion debate in the Mexican context. In addition, they reviewed the interview guides to ensure that relevant and understandable questions were asked.

To further strengthen the validity a combination of data collection was used, such as interviews, material from the organizations and secondary sources to confirm or refute the researcher's understandings. Moreover, the researcher documented and described the procedure and the methods of analysis in order to endorse transparency (Mikkelsen 2005: 197). In addition, much effort was given to describe the context and results, which makes it possible for the readers to make their own conclusions (ibid.).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

When conducting fieldwork that requires interviews and interaction with people, the researcher must consider ethical aspects and not harm the informants (Mikkelsen 2005: 342). Moreover, it is important to reflect and be attentive to power relations when constructing knowledge through research as well as one's positionality (Sultana, 2007: 376).

In line with this, the informants were not merely approached as sources of knowledge or information, but instead the researcher tried to create an environment of mutual learning. In addition, the informants from the organizations will be given the final thesis as an acknowledgement of their contributions and to feel involved

(Ackerly & True, 2010: 247). The men in the FGDs received small compensations for their participation such as snacks, beverages and movie tickets.

The researcher attempted to shift the “inherently hierarchical” aspects of field work through positioning herself as a solicitor of knowledge and communicating that the informants are the experts (England, 1994: 86). By being an outsider, with limited knowledge of the Mexican context, as well as a young woman, it may have facilitated the creation of a relaxed ambience where the informants are the experts. In addition, by conducting all interviews in Spanish the informants, all native speakers, are placed in a superior position to the researcher in terms of the language.

Furthermore, it is important to consider how the information of the study is represented as it may contribute to reproducing unequal power relations and oppressive structures (England, 1994; Kapoor, 2004). As England (1994: 80) argues, it is a mutual process between the researcher and the informants, a process that will be influenced by the researcher’s subjectivity. Consequently, it is important to take responsibility for the study such as acknowledging that field research is invasive as well as that the research cannot fully represent the informants (England, 1994: 248-250). As a result, a constant reflection of how one’s own background, values and beliefs influences the understanding of the information has been made.

In order to increase the safety, the informants decided where they wanted to meet. Informed consent was practiced during the interviews and discussions and prior to the interviews participants were told who the researcher was, the purpose of the study and what the material will be used for, allowing the informants to decide whether they wanted to participate (Mikkelsen 2005: 342; Bryman 2012: 135). For the focus groups, a document outlining the information stated above was prepared before the interviews and read out loud followed by questions for them to confirm (see Appendix D) (Hammet et al., 2015: 94). Moreover, confidentiality was discussed with the informants prior to the interview in order to know if their organization’s name could be used, and if so, to what extent, specifically when it comes to citations (Mikkelsen 2005: 342; Creswell 2013: 174).

3.9 Limitations

Several factors have created limitations and potential biases for the study. Firstly, a case study is less suitable to make generalizations to other contexts (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Since the focus is on SRHR organizations working with abortions, and a relatively small sample of men from Mexico City, the conclusions are limited to this context (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the scope of this study is confined to the interpretations of the respondents' descriptions of their perceptions and experiences (Sultana, 2007: 378).

With purposive, convenience and snowball samplings there are issues of representativeness and selection bias (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Purposive and snowball methods were chosen in order to find suitable organizations for the study. Even though the methods were relevant for the study's purpose, a wider variety of organizations might have altered the findings and showed other tendencies. One of the organizations received the interview questions prior to the interview, which might have influenced her answers. However, along with the discussion the questions deviated from the guide and thus allowed for a more open discussion.

Convenience sampling was used in order to find enough men that were interested in participating in the study. It was challenging to gain access to men who could participate in the study, principally because of limited time but also lack of interest. The initial plan was to have two separate FGDs with men from lower socioeconomic levels separating young and elderly men. Due to difficulties finding young men, a mixed discussion was held. Having two separate discussions might have showed tendencies within each age group more clearly. However, through their discussions and questioning of each other's opinions a more comprehensive understanding could be given about the different levels of machismo and abortion perceptions.

A random sample of men could have given a more representative view of men's perceptions in Mexico City. Also, having individual interviews besides the focus groups could have reflected other opinions that the respondents did not feel comfortable discussing in groups. Due to the scope of the study these methods were not feasible.

Lastly, even though the researcher's level of Spanish is advanced, it is not her first language which may influence the interpretations. For that reason, a native Mexican assisted in translation for the parts the researcher felt uncertain.

4 Background: Mexico and Abortion

This chapter provides a contextual overview of Mexico and its abortion climate, including general information about the country as well as situating the issue of abortion in Mexico. Specifically, national trends in the abortion debate will be reviewed followed by public opinions and ending with the Church's view on abortion.

4.1 Mexico: Country Overview

With approximately 130 million inhabitants, Mexico is the tenth most populous country in the world (World Bank, 2017). The country consists of 32 federal entities; 31 federal states and the federal district Mexico City. Mexico City together with the metropolitan area has around 21 million people (INEGI, 2015), which makes it the most populous metropolitan area in Latin America. There are great social inequalities, with over 40 percent living in poverty (Esquivel, 2015). There are also great differences between women and men at work where women earn 16 percent less than men (OECD, 2019). At the same time, dividing the total paid work and unpaid domestic and care work between women and men, women do 55 percent of the total work (see Figure 2) (INEGI, 2017). Besides, on average women in Mexico do 77 of all unpaid domestic and care work (see Figure 1) (ibid.).

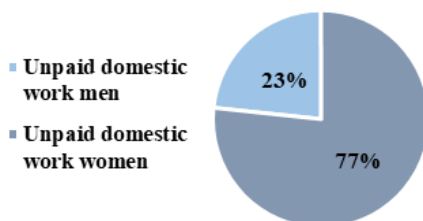


Figure 1: Division of total unpaid domestic and care work between men and women

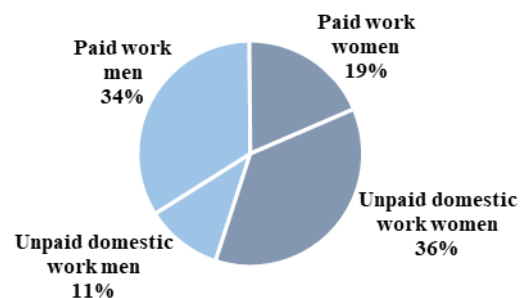


Figure 2: Showing the total paid work and unpaid domestic and care work divided between men and women

In the last 50 years, there have been several social changes seeing that the divorce figures have doubled, the number of heterosexual marriages has decreased, and single-parent households have tripled (Wradio, 2017). Even so, 82.7 percent of the Mexican population consider themselves to be Catholics, while 4.7 percent consider to be non-religious (INEGI, 2010b).

On average, Mexicans have 2.3 children (INEGI, 2010a) and less than 10 percent live in a single-person household (OECD, 2016). There are 2.8 percent single-fathers living alone with children, while there are 16.8 percent single-mothers (Olvera, 2016). Around 67 percent of the children are born outside of marriage, which is due to an increase in couples cohabiting outside of a legally registered marriage (OECD, 2018). Due to social changes, there is no longer the same social stigma for couples living "in sin" outside of marriage (Wradio, 2017)

According to INEGI (2014), 51.6 percent of the women aged 15 to 49 use a contraceptive method, while 15.3 percent have used one before and 33.1 percent never used one. The most commonly used contraceptive methods are condoms (45%), implants (31%), pills (10%), IUDs (9%), and injectable (5%) (Soria & Tamés, 2018).

As of April 2007, abortion became legal in Mexico City during the first 12 weeks of gestation at the will of the woman. CSOs focusing on reproductive rights, especially the National Alliance for the Right to Decide (ANDAR), played an important role in this law reform process (Soria & Tamés, 2018). In the other states of Mexico abortion is much more restricted. Today, rape is the only circumstance in all of the states for which abortion is legal. Other causes that are taken into account in different state legislation are: reckless abortion² (in twenty-nine states); danger of death (in twenty-four states); congenital or serious genetic alterations in the product (in sixteen states); serious damage to the health of the woman (in fourteen states); non-consensual artificial insemination (in thirteen states); economic causes (in two states) (GIRE, 2015).

After the legislation, around 16.500 to 20.500 abortions are performed per year in Mexico City (Soria & Tamés, 2018). Of the people seeking abortion, 71 percent live in Mexico City, 25.3 percent in the State of Mexico and 3.6 percent in other

² Without the intention of the pregnant women

states. Due to the varying legislation, the costs to travel to Mexico City, the price of abortion³ and other barriers such as social stigma, the women of Mexico do not have equal access to SRHR (Becker & Días Olavarrieta, 2013). Poor and indigenous women are disproportionality denied access to abortion which increases the likelihood that they will undergo unsafe abortions (Soria & Tamés, 2018). As a result, women are forced to bear unwanted babies.

The most common age group for abortion is women between 18 and 24 years old (45 to 47 percent), while for people under 18 years old, it is around 6 to 7 percent (Soria & Tamés, 2018).

4.2 Abortion Debate in Mexico

Abortion is highly debated in Mexico and has engaged both the public and scholars for a long time, and involves arguments over ethics, religion, freedom and rights. Abortion is debated between two major poles: the progressive and the conservative (Maier, 2010; Gutiérrez Morales, 2013). On the progressive side are the scientific, historical, atheist, and modern feminist positions, which propose the liberation of women from the obligation of motherhood. That is, they support that women should have the right to decide and also reproductive autonomy within the framework of citizenship rights, which include the right to individuality that supposes the possibility of taking autonomous moral decisions about themselves, their body and their fertility (Fuentes Belgrave, 2013). Figure 3 shows a photo from a demonstration for the right to abortion in Mexico City, where they have placards saying “For our rights to decide - legal, safe and free abortion” and “Our bodies our decision”.

³Abortion is free of charge in public hospitals, but the appointments cannot be booked which means that in order to get an appointment women have to arrive early since they only receive around 20-30 women per day (Balance, interview, 12 March 2019). To pay for an abortion in Mexico City ranges from 80 USD to 530 USD, depending on the clinic, the method and the weeks of pregnancy (Vanguardia, 2018).



Figure 3: Demonstration in Mexico City in favor of abortion, with focus on women’s right to decide (Estrada & Huerta, 2018).

On the conservative side is the Church, which, under the divine mandate, justifies the subjection of women by arguing that women’s natural mission is to reproduce (Amuchástegui et al., 2012). The secularized and revised discourse of the Church gathers together the core message of human rights and in its name claims the right to life while proclaiming itself its guardian (Lamas, 2014). This discourse is in line with the central representation of women as mothers in Latin America (Encabo, 2016). Figure 4 shows a demonstration in Mexico City against abortion, where they have placards saying “March for life” and “Defend life”.



Figure 4: Demonstration in Mexico City against abortion, with focus on the right to life (Magaña, 2016).

The arguments used by each side mirror each other, such as the defense of the life of the unborn is opposed to the defense of the life of women, the harm done to women who are forced to follow a pregnancy against their will are opposed by the idea of harm done to the unborn, and the autonomy of the women are opposed by the autonomy of the fetus etc. (Brown, 2015).

The most common argument against the IVE (voluntary termination of pregnancy) is that abortion equates murder. Other arguments are natural law, scientific studies that prove the initiation of life of the fetus and invocations for the protection of life from international law. Moreover, the life of the unborn is also defended by the right of men to procreation, which is allegedly violated "for not demanding that they participate in the decision to terminate a pregnancy" (Madrado Lajous & Vela Barba, 2013: 61). Thus, the conservative strategy has focused both on the right of the fetus as well as the right of men's procreation.

Meanwhile, the progressive side has focused their arguments on the rights of the woman such as the right to her own body, equality and social justice and the importance to prioritize the rights of a real person over a fetus.

4.2.1 Public Opinions on Abortion

Public opinion surveys in Mexico City have showed that the support for the abortion legislation has grown over time. In 2007 before the passing of the reform, 38 percent of the adults surveyed supported the proposed abortion legislation. After two years, the public support for the abortion legislation had increased to 74 percent (Wilson et al., 2011).

Furthermore, a national survey of 5600 men and women aged 18 and over from 2013 (Buendía & Laredo, 2013), found that 49 percent were against the legislation in Mexico City, and with only 28 percent in favor. Mexico City and the state of Mexico were the places with most people in favor of the legislation to a total of 45 percent. Moreover, 28 percent of the people living in Mexico City and the state of Mexico thought that abortion is illegal under any circumstances, and only 60 percent had heard that abortion is legal in Mexico City. There were three reasons that were considered more acceptable for having an abortion according to the survey, if it poses a danger to the woman's life (54 percent), in the case of serious

fetal malformations (42 percent) and if the woman's health was at risk (36 percent). Few supported abortion in case of lacking financial resources (11 percent), wanting to finish her education (10 percent), had had an abortion before (10 percent) or upon request of the woman (13 percent) (ibid.).

4.2.2 The Catholic Church on Abortion

The Catholic Church has a strong conservative anti-abortion discourse stating that from the moment of conception the embryo becomes a human being with a soul (Njoku, 2005: 3). The Catholic Church teaches that human life is sacred and therefore, abortion is a serious and disgraceful crime committed against innocent human life (Njoku, 2005: 21-22). The main argument against abortion is the commandment not to kill, which according to F.J. Cruzalta Aguirre F (2019, interview, 12 March) is a principle to guide your life, not a rule to be followed strictly. A principle must be adapted to each circumstance and situation and as he further states, there is no text in the Bible that prohibits abortion, and therefore cannot be considered a general rule against abortion.

Despite different internal liberalization reforms within religious organizations, the topic of SRHR persists solid and conservative (Kane, 2008). According to the church, sexuality is something that must be controlled because it is basically a sin (Cruzalta Aguirre, F. J. 2019, interview; 12 March). This is done through a set of rules such as; no sexual intercourse before marriage, no sexual intercourse outside of marriage, no control over reproduction and no sexual intercourse for recreational purposes, only for the purpose of reproduction. These rules mostly apply to women, since violations of men are not condemned neither by the church nor the society (ibid.).

In Latin America, the church is closely connected to the political power (Kane, 2008: 263-264). In Mexico, religious issues are channeled into political parties through alliances between political parties and the church (Razavi & Jenichen, 2010). Through this power channel, it exerts influence and spreads its views (Kane, 2008: 263-264). In addition, the church influences indirectly different media content such as soap operas (Torre, 2006; Pérez-García & Leal-Larrarte, 2017:

177). Through these shows it infuses its ideology and situates abortion as something problematic and miserable. The women in the shows that have an abortion are portrayed as murderers and at guilt. However, it is the man that is the responsible one, who should take the decisions of the family (Cruzalta Aguirre, F. J. 2019, interview; 12 March). Thus, through different channels, the Catholic Church continues to have power and vast influence on Mexican society and its culture.



Figure 5: Painting of Virgin Mary (Sarullo, 19th century)

5 Results and Analysis

This chapter will present the results and analysis based on the data collection and the conceptual framework. Firstly, the masculinity norms will be presented to contextualize the situation in Mexico today. Secondly, the masculinity norms' influence on men's perception of abortion will be analyzed. The third section will discuss how SRHR organizations' perceive and address men's role in abortion. Lastly, the findings will be discussed in a final discussion.

5.1 Masculinity norms in the Mexican Context

The gender roles in Mexico have gone through extensive changes ever since women started working outside the household about 50 years ago (Scambor, Wojnicka & Bergmann, 2013: 2). Influences from the feminist and women's movements in Mexico have resulted in a changing social and cultural context in Mexico (Hernández, 2014). The man's position as a sole provider for the family has weakened, and with this the once traditional gender divisions of labor (Scambor et al., 2013).

There is a coherent belief in the focus groups that with each generation Mexican society as a whole and relationships between males and females are becoming more equal. This is a tendency that can be seen around the world. As the world becomes more globalized and integrated culturally, socially and economically, countries move towards increased gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2018: vii-viii). Roles and responsibilities that before were only acceptable for one gender have now become more mixed. Besides the extremely important role as a mother, paid work is now within the framework of what is acceptable for the Mexican woman under the machismo norms of today's Mexico (Chant & Craske, 2003: 212) There seems to exist a greater equality between the man and the woman in heterosexual

relationships and marriages, not just in terms of work but also at home. Men are more involved in care activities, which all of the men in the focus groups confirmed, and women have started to gain more ground in the public sphere (Hernández, 2014). However, machismo is still present throughout society (Scambor et al., 2013: 2). The Catholic Church together with the machismo, have strong impact on how people think, speak and act on abortion. The Catholic Church's strong opposition to abortion strongly influences the public opinion, and together with strong masculinity norms, they illegitimatize women's autonomous decision-making (Cruzalta Aguirre, F. J. 2019, interview; 12 March). Especially among the older generation there still exists a very traditional thought and behavior patterns which could be potentially harmful and pose barriers for an inclusive SRHR (Ipas, 2019, interview: 15 February).

In the next sub-sections the binary divide of male and female that appeared in the focus group discussions will be analyzed. Additionally, men's protective role in relation to women and how the gender system is upheld by both genders will be considered.

5.1.1 Sex dichotomy: Active men and passive women

In the machismo there exists a dichotomy mindset of men and women and what is considered appropriate for each gender (Castañeda, 2002: 56). Violating these roles may result in repercussions such as violence or insults. For example, homosexuality is mostly spoken in negative terms as it does not fit in with what is considered appropriate. This skepticism towards homosexuals could be derived from both machismo and religion (Chante & Craske, 2003: 134). A homosexual man is assumed to be less masculine in the machismo ideal, as penetration from another man makes them sexually "passive" hence "female". Meanwhile, from the Catholic Church there it is a continuous condemnation of homosexuals (ibid.). This opposing view of homosexuals often takes the form of homophobic language. This is present in the focus groups where a homosexual is referred to as maricón⁴, which they use synonymously with being a coward, sissy or linked to being a woman. For example,

⁴ Maricón means gay, but often used to refer to somebody as a sissy/coward.

in the FGD Mixed they discuss how they will be reprimanded if they step outside the acceptable gender norms such as doing ‘women’s tasks’: “I would not go and buy tortillas⁵ [...] they would call me maricón”. As argued by Butler (1993), the gender order with the heterosexual norm is reproduced by using homophobic language and consequently contributes to maintaining dominance and subordination in society (Butler, 1993). As well as discussed by Giddens (2003: 113), if they do not follow the gender socialization that has divided responsibilities between men and women, and step outside what is expected of them, they will be reprimanded. Consequently, a man must avoid female attributes such as being passive as that would make him less masculine.

Catholicism informs female sexuality, where the ideal of *marianismo* teaches women not to associate sex with pleasure, but instead with childbirth and marriage, so that she can fulfill her assigned role of being a mother (Melhuus, 1992: 89-98; Rivas, 2008). The informants highlight that women’s general roles is that “[women] only serve to give children, to give love and to give a healthy environment to the man”. The reason why motherhood is strongly emphasized seems to be to reduce the woman's sexuality to something reproductive and within marriage (Melhuus, 1992: 98). In contrast, Mexican males largely consider primal sexual instinct and being sexually active as one of the basic pillars of *machismo* (*ibid.*). This can be attributed to a correlation between the virility of the masculine man and his ability to reproduce, which would prove his masculinity (Gilmore, 1994: 78). On the contrary, a woman with an active sexuality is often associated with negatively charged concepts such as promiscuity and unreliability (Chant & Crakse, 2003: 134). As said in the FGDs: “If a single woman has several relations than she is a bitch, a whore, a prostitute. For her it does not exist a sexual liberty”.

Men have a right to be fulfilled sexually, regardless of whether it is inside or outside the marriage, and thus the need for sex can be used to justify infidelity (Melhuus, 1992: 105-7; Chant & Craske, 2003: 222). In the FGDs this is shown clearly too: “Generally all Mexican men are [womanizers], they like to have a spare part, a separate person for when you make your wife angry, with the other one you

⁵ Buying tortillas is considered a woman’s job and also where housewives often socialize.

are pleased” [everybody laughs] “That's true” confirms one “Not all, but it is common” says another.

This gender socialization that creates a division of what is appropriate for each gender starts early in the childhood (Giddens, 2003: 42). Through the men's upbringing in a machismo society with strong social norms of how boys and girls should behave (Connell, 1987: 191) they feel it is expected of them to be in charge: “You will be the one in charge of a household, and you will have to provide for a family and take care of them, that is just how it is”.

In the primary child rearing girls are taught how to be young ladies and “kept on a leash much shorter”, while boys are early given independence and shown how to be “typically manly” (Lancaster, 1994: 44). This type of upbringing was discussed in the FGD: “Even though my mother and grandmother mostly raised me, they in turn were brought up in a machismo society [...] for example, that it is not okay to cry as a boy”. Edwards would refer to this as a violation against men, which he believes may result in violence against others (Edwards, 2006: 44).

Despite their upbringing with clear gender roles, the men in the focus groups discuss that they want gender equality and also that they consider it natural to share responsibilities at home: “now it is weird if the woman does everything”. Still, women are largely overrepresented in the domestic sphere and have the most active role in caretaking (INEGI, 2017). For example, on average women in Mexico do 77 percent of all unpaid domestic and care work. Even though the role as the provider can put pressure on the men it can also bring certain entitlements such as priority of his career, less responsibility at home and major influence on decision-making (Lerner & Mikula, 2013: 249). Many Mexican women have a choice to stay at home or work, and those who choose to stay at home do not necessarily do so because of pressure or demands from their male partner, but by free will to devote themselves entirely to their children and home, as well as other activities without the pressure of having to earn a living (Castañeda, 2002: 264-270).

Consequently, both men and women can benefit and be limited by participating and reproducing the hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995: 100-103; Edwards, 2006: 44). For instance, as for men they hold a lot of responsibility and are financially burdened, and limited in how they should behave. However, they also hold many benefits where dominance, power and freedom are common, just to

mention a few. As for some women, they have the possibility to stay at home and take care of the children and not being pressured to earn a living.

5.1.2 Men's dominant role: Protection and Violence

Although the Mexican society has gone through extensive changes regarding the relationship between the genders, the man is still usually the head of the family and the primary provider (Castañeda, 2002). This makes him responsible for taking care of the woman, which often takes the form of controlling her. Ekholm (2004: 33) calls this protectionism, that is, the protection of the women and controlling their lives for an assertion of themselves as men. The protectionism thus reflects both the ideal of masculinity in machismo with attributes such as power and control, but also the ideal of femininity in marianismo with values such as chastity and an alleged vulnerability, which requires protection. This protectionism seems to come natural to the elderly men interviewed in this study, while most of the younger men question this traditional male role. The elderly men state that it is a desirable norm and behavior for a man to protect his woman:

You try to point out that someone goes with her [the partner] to give her protection or respect. It's a characteristic of the typical Mexican that he doesn't like that someone observes or offends the partner, it's a characteristic of us. Maybe in other countries they offended the girl and they pretend they didn't see him, just like it is okay let's go, instead of defending her. (R02, FGD Mixed: 13 February 2019)

By protecting the female members of the family, the man can maintain his dominant role in the family as well as the honor, as the honor and shame is manifested by the behavior of women (Melhuus 1992: 121-122). The connection between protection and love is closely linked. As Melhuus points out, this protectionism is not necessarily perceived as negative, although it often restricts Mexican women, it can be perceived as caring and a sign of love. It is a man's role to care for and protect "his" woman (ibid.). Thus, as stated by Connell (1995: 103), while the men are reproducing these hegemonic masculinities, they are doing it unconsciously. As such it remains unquestioned and enacted as a demonstration of their great love and affection.

Contradictory to men's role to protect women, is also the violent man. According to a national survey conducted in 2016 by INEGI, more than 40 percent of men living with or married to their partner aged 15 or older have exercised some form of violence⁶ against her throughout their relationship (INEGI, 2016)

These statistics indicate that gender-based violence is rather prevalent in the Mexican society but still the men in the FGDs argue that men today are softer and more equal with their partner, as well as much less violent compared to the past:

We are no longer in the times of the 80s and 90s, now there is no longer the same violence against women. Before for any little thing a slap was given, now we are more understanding. (R01, FGD Mixed: 13 February 2019)

The men consider this violence to be a natural masculine instinct for dealing with difficult situations: “[Men's role] is changing, but for example suddenly we are like animals, it is the aggressive instinct of men”.

Furthermore, the respondents relativize and belittle the violence through comparing the situation in Mexico with Saudi Arabia saying “In Arabia you cannot take off [the burqa] [...] there it is even worse, because they take it off and they kill them [the women]”. Thus, it can be argued that violent behavior is normalized through comparing themselves with men that murder women. Pick, Contreras & Barker-Aguilar (2006) derive this normalization of violence from the gender norms and traditions advocated by machismo, that is, the man's right to take all decisions and exercise power over the woman, and the woman's position as the inferior to the man and incapable, or unauthorized, to decide on her own.

The male chauvinist is the one that takes the lead in the house, gives the orders to the children, to the wife, to everyone [...] it is very common maybe around 90 percent are like that. There are exceptions, but the majority is like that. (FGD Elderly: 9 March 2019)

This male role of protection and violence is not seen among the young men, who generally show a greater openness towards changing gender roles and becoming more gender equal (Hernández, 2014). This is seen in the FGDs with the

⁶ 40% emotionally, 25.3% economically, 11.6% physically and 5.3% sexually violated.

young men where they discuss how important it is with gender equality: “I think that is the way it has to be [divide everything between the couple], half and half, because now it is not like that we work and women don’t”.

The young men disagree with the ideal of men taking care of women, and argue that women can protect themselves. They all question the social norms that expect them to provide and protect women and express that they feel pressure, especially when it comes to paying for everything and having to take the first step when wanting to date someone: “You have to provide, you have to ask for the first date, you have to pay, you have to take the first step for everything”.

The machismo is here challenged and questioned. They express that the expectations put on them from their surroundings is a large burden that result in great responsibilities. Being men they “have to be responsible for everything and be the strong pillar of the family”. Instead they want women to contribute financially, “How lucky to meet someone who believes or follows the same idea that both can provide” and “I hope that this type of egalitarian practices [where the woman also pays the bills] will become more common, I would be delighted”.

Nevertheless, while they discuss the man’s role and opposing the hegemonic masculinity of being the ideal man as the sole provider and protector of the woman, they simultaneously express a desire to live the part. However, as Connell (1995: 100) also states, their current low income does not allow them to. The hierarchy of men and masculinity interact with the socioeconomic level, where the higher class is at the top. They aspire to a higher socioeconomic level, and when they reach that level, they will adopt this masculinity norm and be the provider of the family.

People of our age still have the idea to be the provider. You have the “chip” that I have to be the person who has enough to be able to offer and to give. (R15, FGD YoungMen2: 17 February 2019)

As a man it can be disturbing if the partner earns more [...] you begin to think but I'm the one who should be the first to give everything, to buy a house, to pay for a car, that sort of things. (R14, YoungMen2: 17 February 2019)

In addition, reproduction of gender norms is often done unconsciously without reflection (Nilsson, 1999: 16). Thus, they consider themselves as progressive and

wanting gender equality, but are also reproducing the hegemonic masculinity unintentionally.

In conclusion, the division of what is considered female and male in Mexico creates different expectations of how people should behave and act. Men are supposed to be sexually active, while women's sexuality is connected to reproduction. If the roles are not upheld they are faced with repercussions, starting early in childhood. Even though the men share a greater part of the household and care work than before, national statistics show that women continue doing the majority of the work. Moreover, men's protective and dominant role, which comes out of love and care, hinder women's autonomy and limit their agency. This limitation can also be reflected in violence against women, which is normalized and belittled. Both women and men benefit from this system to some extent and consequently uphold it. However, the young men are starting to question this system and show a greater openness towards gender equality, even though they still are affected by their upbringing and want to take care of their partner.

An important part in the discussion of sexuality is sexual reproduction, where abortion is central. Therefore, since the woman's sexuality is limited by the sex norms they also affect abortion. In the next section the significance of masculinity norms with regards to abortion will be analyzed.

5.2 Perceptions of abortion in the light of masculinity norms

While the previous section analyzed the masculinity norms in Mexico among the focus groups, the following section will discuss the masculinity norms' effect on men's perception on abortion. The deeply ingrained machismo together with the Catholic Church, are closely connected to the hesitation towards abortion.

5.2.1 Women's responsibility to prevent pregnancies

The clear division of gender roles between women and men create different expectations as well as responsibilities for each gender. While the gender roles allow men to be sexually active, the connection between women's sexuality and reproduction results in women being responsible for everything within the reproductive sphere such as preventing unplanned pregnancies (Ipas, interview, 15 February 2019), which can be reflected in the FGDs:

There are so many contraceptives today, also for the day after, so if the person gets pregnant it's because she wants to [...] Nowadays there is a lot of information to avoid a pregnancy so if someone gets pregnant now and can't have it [the baby], it's ignorance, and it's irresponsible. (R07, FGD Elderly: 9 Mars 2019)

It's the will of the two, he is not forcing her... You brought it on yourself. You wanted someone to come into the world by putting out. The answer is that it can be prevented [...] I'm going to abort because I'm studying, because it's not the time, because I don't want to. That should have been thought of before. You also want to have sex, go ahead but take precaution. (R06, FGD Elderly: 9 Mars 2019)

Despite expectations of men to have many sexual relations, their part in the pregnancy is not reflected upon. It may be because as stated in FGD Mixed “the man can always leave”, or because women's role linked to reproduction makes her responsible for the pregnancy (Hernández, 2014) and consequently to obtain contraceptives. The perception is that contraceptives are easily accessible and consequently, women that get pregnant act irresponsibly without considering the consequences. Even though contraceptives can be found in many places different barriers such as limited resources and social stigma impede access (Gómez-Inclán & Durán-Arenas, 2017). The 2015 National Youth Survey revealed that 49 percent of the adolescents do not use contraceptives during their first sexual intercourse, mainly because they did not expect to have sex. Furthermore, 11.2 percent said it was because their partner did not want to and 5.9 percent felt ashamed to get contraceptives⁷ (Mundoadmin, 2017). Consequently, women have limited

⁷ 9.3% because they simply decided not to use it, 9.3% because they did not know the methods, 7% because they wanted to get pregnant and 3.7% because they thought the feeling was different.

possibilities to access or use contraceptives as they are both judged if they buy them and pressured not to use them (Gómez-Inclán & Durán-Arenas, 2017). All the same, women are still to blame for an unwanted pregnancy and need to take on responsibility. As mentioned in FGDs “we all make mistakes, but we have to learn from them, and you have to take on responsibilities for your mistakes”. In this case, taking responsibility means getting pregnant and having the child.

In the prevailing structures the men can distance themselves from involvement and responsibility in reproduction. Women are expected to not be sexually active, be prepared with contraceptives in order to be responsible for possible unwanted pregnancies, while they are also pressured not to use contraceptives (Mundoadmin, 2017), all at the same time. This creates an unreachable ideal and burden on women with regards to SRHR and abortion (Fennell, 2011; Wiggington, 2018).

5.2.2 Protecting women from dangerous abortions

The prevailing protectionism in Mexico, where the man naturally protects his woman, is present in the discussions about abortion. In accordance with the Catholic Church, the elderly men in the FGDs connect abortion to “be a murder, a criminal, and killing of an innocent child”. However, they say that they would support abortion if it endangers the woman or the child, since within their protective role they must keep the family safe. Similarly, in a national study made in Mexico 2013, they found that the support for abortion increased if the abortion posed any danger to the woman or in the case of serious fetal malformations (Buendía & Laredo, 2013). Moreover, all participants agree upon abortion in case of rape:

It's not the same when you get pregnant from consensual sex [for pleasure] to get pregnant as when you're raped. If it's rape I am absolutely in favor of abortion but to abort because I spent a very nice night and then I don't want it, I don't think it's okay because you're killing a human being. (R07, FGD Elderly: 9 Mars 2019)

Thus, the support extends to the woman as long as the pregnancy poses any dangers or when it was forced upon her. Then the man needs to protect and save the woman, who is fragile and helpless, both in accordance to the machismo and

marianismo, and the ideal man is asserted through protectionism (Ekholm, 2004: 33).

All of the men have concerns regarding the negative effects of an abortion. The concerns are similar to the ones depicted by the Catholic Church, which often displays abortion to seriously harm women and leading to existential crisis and psychological traumas (Vida Humana Internacional, 2015: 3-6). The men argue that one must “consider the medical and psychological complications that may result from an abortion”. Especially, they feel concerns for the woman’s physical and mental health since “she is hormonally and psychologically united to the fetus”. They also reflect on how it may affect them since it is still a life, “It would be hard not to think that it is still a human being [...] I think it would be a small trauma that is not easy to overcome”.

Even though these strong negative effects do not have much empirical support (López Gómez, 2015), and only 0.68 percent⁸ of women have had complications in the Mexico City hospital system (Soria & Tamés, 2018: 144), the fears are still widespread. Since the safety of the woman is an important factor for the men, the legality plays a big role, “it is very different if abortion is legal or not” because they “do not want to put the woman at risk”. Public surveys have shown that the legality of abortion has generated a greater acceptance towards abortion and thus showing how the law can impact opinions (Wilson et al., 2011; López Gómez, 2015: 24)

Also, respondents state that they fear the risks their daughters may face if they go to a clandestine clinic and conclude that they prefer the health of their daughters over an unborn child: “I’d rather be told than she goes to a clinic and has a problem. But that’s going to involve other things like communication and trust with the daughter or son”. Thus, despite the men’s opposing views of abortion they are more understanding when considering the woman’s safety.

The protection of women can either take the form of favoring or opposing views of abortion, depending on what they consider is the safest option. On the one hand, referring to the negative effects and complications of abortions, the need to protect the woman results in a negative view of abortion. On the contrary, the favoring view of abortion can also be manifested in the need to protect the woman, but rather from

⁸ From the legality to December 2016.

the danger of pregnancy or an understanding that illegality and restrictions may force women to take dangerous measures. Consequently, this protective role can either have a positive or negative effect on women's access to abortion, and in its most extreme form this protection role can be demonstrated through different types of violence exercised by men.

5.2.3 The impeding effect of violence on abortion access

Part of the traditional male role is the protecting and naturally violent man. The high prevalence of gender-based violence is justified by the respondents as a natural masculine instinct and belittled through comparing it to men who murder women. The normalization and legitimization of violence negatively affect women's possibility to take autonomous decisions regarding her sexual and reproductive health (Pallitto et al., 2013).

As the machismo limits women taking their own decision, men may act aggressively when women decide to have an abortion on their own: "We have patriarchal sexist customs where women are minors, where they cannot make decisions about anything, not about something basic such as their body" (Cruzalta Aguirre, F.J. 2019, interview; 12 March). In its most extreme form it can even result in abandonment. For example, the organization Gendes explains how an abortion caused aggressive reactions from a man because "he felt very disappointed and angry with his partner [...] and he no longer wanted to be with her and started to violate her psychologically". The man's dominant position is questioned as he cannot control his partner, and subsequently, the family's honor (Melhuus 1992: 78-79). It can be argued that women's access to abortion threatens men's dominant position and to maintain the dominant position the man uses violence (Connell, 1995: 106). If a woman is active in her own decision-making it overpasses the strict gender roles where the man is in charge, and she can be threatened by violence as she dishonors the man and brings shame to the family (Melhuus 1992: 78-79). Since the woman does not behave as a woman should, violence is justifiable. The woman confirms the man's dominance through her own passivity. This power game is evident both within the household, whether it be the economy or the women's freedom, as well as outside, at work and in society (Castañeda, 2002). According

to the men in the FGDs a woman should be satisfied with her position and not overpass her liberties: “It’s okay that women take more decisions but like everything, excess is bad. As for now there are women who abuse their freedom”.

Men’s dominant role and use of violence confirm their active position in the social order, disabling the woman’s agency.

5.2.4 Young men’s changing perceptions

The younger respondents from the FGDs YoungMen1 and YoungMen2 show a more nuanced view of gender roles and women’s autonomy. Their perception of abortion is somewhat more progressive in comparison to the older respondents’. As discussed by Folch-Lynn, de la Macorra and Schearer (1989: 146-147), as the Catholic Church’s role in society is changing, and young people are more educated, attitudes regarding female sexuality is moving towards a greater openness. It also results in an increased access to contraceptives that helps to distinguish sex with the purpose of reproduction or for pleasure. Thus, contrary to views depicted in FGD Mixed and Elderly, the young men state that they are in favor of abortion under any circumstances, using arguments from the progressive side of the debate stating that it is a woman’s choice and right over her body: “It is the woman’s decision [...] you have to support the decision she chooses”, “It [abortion] is a completely valid option in every sense” and “It is a total support to the woman who wants to have the abortion”.

It is apparent that they are aware of the feminist movements, as well as the limitation an anti-abortion legislation would mean for women, as they use the same arguments to defend the right to abortion. This goes in line with several studies that show that men who are the most sensitive towards gender issues and question the dominant model of masculinity, are more likely to present themselves as supportive, collaborative and respectful of women’s rights and decisions (Hernández, 2014).

In addition, the informants acknowledge their part of the pregnancy and reason that they have to take responsibility for the child. Still some consider it unfair that they have to take care of the child when it is just the woman that can decide whether to keep a child or not.

That's a difficult thing because let's say that as a man you would like to have a child and the girl doesn't want one. That child is also yours not only hers. But it is important to consider that it is her body, which weighs more. (R13, FGD YoungMen2: 17 February 2019)

In the end they conclude that as it is the woman's body she naturally has to take the decision. They also discuss the possibility to take care of the child themselves if the woman is not willing to:

It's okay if she [the partner] doesn't want to take care of the baby. I would ask her if she would be willing to go through the pregnancy and then I would take care of the baby. (R15, FGD YoungMen2: 17 February 2019)

Since it is the woman's body that carries the fetus and "them as men can never fully understand what a woman is going through" they must conform to whatever decision she makes. Thus, it can be argued that the young men also have a more progressive view regarding childcare as they discuss an active involvement as well as considering their roles and responsibilities (Levtov et al, 2015; Morrell et al., 2016; Promundo, 2016).

However, this openness towards abortion is not reflected in the young men from FGD Mixed. They, as opposed to FGD YoungMen1 and YoungMen2 only find it acceptable to have an abortion in case of rape or if the child has deformations with arguments that "it [a disabled child] would only bring a lot of problems and costs". These younger men's opinions are opposite to the other men's in the group regarding the traditional gender roles and how men should behave. Thus, they do not show the same tendencies that have been detected in other studies, that men that question the dominant norm of masculinity are more likely to support women's rights (Hernández, 2014).

The difference in opinions among the younger men in the different focus groups can be due to many reasons. The young men from FGD Mixed come from lower socioeconomic background and all have lower level of education in comparison to the other young men. In other studies, education has proved to be a factor that that leads to more open views regarding abortion (Folch-Lynn et al., 1989:146-147). However, due to limited data and sample size, this correlation between the men's varying opinions and level of education, can only be speculated.

In conclusion, within the given gender roles women are supposed to be responsible for reproduction. Accessing contraceptives is faced with different barriers such as stigma and pressure from partner. Many of the men are strongly resistant towards abortion and want to protect the woman from physical and psychological effects of an abortion. Hence, it can be said that they somewhat accept abortion if it poses any dangers to the woman. At the same time, the normalization and legitimization of violence hinder women from taking autonomous decisions regarding abortion. The young men vary in their perception of abortion. The young men from YoungMen1 and YoungMen2 have more progressive views regarding abortion, stating that they are in favor of abortion under any circumstances and would conform to the woman's decision. Meanwhile, the young men from FGD Mixed have a conservative view of abortion, considering it to be a murder.

5.3 SRHR organizations' abortion work: Is there room for men?

This section will discuss and analyze how SRHR organizations perceive and address men's role in abortion. The role of masculinity norms in relation to organizations' work will also be considered.

5.3.1 SRHR organizations and abortion: Men as threats

The organizations consider abortion to be a woman's right since she should be free to take autonomous decisions about herself, her body and fertility. The organizations argue that deciding about oneself is fundamental for equality and social justice, which can be impeded by men. They have experience with men taking on a dominant role and controlling the woman when participating in abortion, either to continue an unwanted pregnancy or to terminate a desired one. Even though the organizations are aware of how men's support can enhance women's well-being, they consider the risks to be higher:

We opened up space for men at first and had bad experiences [...] There have to be many security processes for all these movements and that is why we have decided to focus more on women. (Balance, 2019, interview: 12 March)

As their objective is to help women, they prefer to talk to women privately without the interference of men to ensure that the decision about the abortion is the woman's.

Abortion is not only considered a woman's choice, but a matter that should be limited to women. For example, within services to accompany women to abortion, women are preferred due to the sensitivity of the subject and the vulnerable situation for the woman. It is argued that "women feel more trust in each other" and can therefore better support each other. One of the organizations says:

It is a matter between women. For example, if the woman feels cramps, a woman would understand, but not the men [...] Women focus on women and men on men. Like, you understand better [...] I think you can have a bigger impact. (Balance, interview, 12 March 2019)

In the issue of abortion, differences in bodily experiences are seen as barriers since men do not menstruate, and therefore cannot understand the information given to them (abortion is compared to a heavy menstruation) and consequently, men exaggerate the dangers: "Explaining medical abortion and not having a female body that menstruate then a little bit of blood can be a lot of blood for them".

Thus, men's lack of understanding, and exaggeration of emotions, are seen as a hindrance to work efficiently as more time would have to be allocated to the man. It is further argued that since men do not have a direct biological referent and are taught to disconnect themselves from emotions, they are detached and distanced from these issues and empathy can therefore not be generated. As a result, it is not considered appropriate for men to engage in abortion as they would only slow down the organizations' work as well as expose women to risks.

It would require reallocation of the organizations' already limited resources from women to men to extend their work to include masculinities, which they do not want. Neither do they want other resources aimed at women to go to men. An example is how the campaign HeForShe by UN Women, an institute dedicated to

work on women, placed resources on campaigns and activities for men. When men, accompanied with their masculinities are included together with ‘women’s issues’, it is argued that it can publicly diminish the importance and political relevance of working with women. When more attention is drawn towards men, the women, yet again, remain in the periphery. Thus, there is a fear that promoting men in SRHR comes at the expense of women’s SRHR (Connell, 2005: 1807; Sen, Östlin & George, 2007; Peacock & Barker, 2012).

Nevertheless, neglecting men’s involvement in abortion may reinforce and uphold attitudes that unintended pregnancies are women’s issue and responsibility (Ekstrand et al., 2007; Makenzius et al., 2009). Through reinforcing this stereotype, it legitimizes and normalizes the field of reproduction to be exclusive for women. Furthermore, men are important for women’s access to safe abortion through their roles as gatekeepers, partners and family members (Sen et. al., 2007; Ipas, 2009). Through their significant positions in society they could advocate against the barriers that women face when wanting to access safe abortion, such as legal restrictions, social stigma or financial difficulties (Hernández, 2014). At the same time, due to the strong patriarchal structures in the Mexican society, it is easier for men to listen to and respect other men, as well as show a greater validity towards the speeches of men than of women (Equidad interview, 11 March, 2019). As a result, the organizations argue that men should work with issues regarding men and “create an agenda of their own”. The men should work on the structures of masculinities and gender roles in order to create a positive and constructive participation of the man, instead of men’s role today that is largely characterized by absences, abandonments, oppressions and violence (Pallitto et al., 2013).

In conclusion, the characteristics of dominant and aggressive masculinity norms in Mexico result in organizations’ aversion to involve men as they would impede their work and put women at risk. Men are further excluded from abortion work as there exists an underlying perception that issues regarding women, in this case abortion, should be dealt with only by women, while men should focus on male issues such as harmful masculinities.

5.4 Final discussion

The Mexican masculinity norm together with its given gender roles permeates the whole society. The society is very influenced by the Catholic Church, where men and women are believed to be essentially different with assigned roles and responsibilities. Generally, the support for abortion is increasing according to public polls (Wilson et al., 2011), which is also reflected in the views of FGDs YoungMen1 and YoungMen2. However, the machismo norms prevail and hinder favoring views of abortion.

The form of today's machismo in Mexico contribute to an abortion resistance. The characteristics of the masculinity norms such as violence, protecting and controlling women, as well as taking the main decisions, go against the fundamentals of abortion. Abortion, on the contrary, means freedom of choice for the woman and liberty to decide over her own body. This active female role of power opposes and challenges the male position and masculinity.

Because of these male characteristics the organizations prefer to focus only on women as men's inclusion is considered to impede their work rather than develop it. The negative impact the machismo norms have, discourage organizations to work with men, which further contributes to the view of men and women as each other's counterpart. This binary view leaves little opportunity for men to change (Edwards, 2006: 44). According to feminist post-structuralism, the categorizations of typical men and women contributes to the construction of masculinity norms, which is destructive and restrictive for both men and women (Taguchi & Frid, 2004: 15). The organizations' focus on women may consequently contribute to the reproduction of the masculinities. At the same time, because of these masculinities, including men may harm women. It is a vicious circle that is hard to break as they feed into each other.

On the other hand, among the majority of the young men in the focus groups challenge the hegemonic masculinities and are critical to these norms. It is a social transition where more men are getting more open towards abortion and critical towards the masculinity norms. These changes open up for opportunities to have them more actively involved in abortion, without the negative effects of the inclusion of men. According to the organizations the men are excluded because

their harming effects, originating from the machismo identity they possess. However, this openness and critical standpoint of the men may open up for organizations to include men in their work with abortion. Working with men will directly or as a side effect bring benefits for women as well. It can be an opportunity for the organizations to work with men who are already critical towards these norms (Hernández, 2014). However, still remains the fact that the women's organizations do not want to diverge from their focus on women.

Gender socialization leads to women and men taking on different gender roles that give rise to a gender system and social hierarchies (Giddens, 2003: 560; Connell, 1995: 103). It is through the socializing process the traditional male qualities arise and gain their superior position in the patriarchal society. It can be important to have this in mind when working with men. For instance, the work made directed towards men might be more efficient if executed by other men. Being aware of the context that one operates in, with ingrained social hierarchies between men and women, can result in better results with regards to changing the masculinities.

Even though the women's organizations do not directly focus on masculinities, their work can still be considered gender transformative. Through their work they deconstruct the schemes of unequal gender relations and influence the social transitions and movements. Their work is aimed at women's empowerment and agency, ensuring women's freedom and right to decide on their own. By gender equality, changes of what a female gender role characteristics include will change, which also indirectly affects the masculinities. Since gender is a socialization process, a change on one part will force the other one to adapt and change too.

Another example of how the organizations that do not directly work with men, but still have impact on the masculinity norms, is ANDAR that contributed to the abortion legislation (Soria & Tamés, 2018). The legalization of abortion has had a positive effect on the attitudes towards abortion, which is reflected in the young men's greater openness towards diversities in gender roles.

Still, abortion resistance is not only hindered by harmful masculinity norms, but also by strong Catholic values including misinformation regarding the dangers of abortions. Although much suggest that the Catholic values are weakening in the country as once before considered controversial behaviors are becoming normalized – cohabiting and having children outside of marriage and going through

divorce – the Catholic values are still strong in the opposition against abortion (Wradio, 2017; OECD, 2018). Also, the ones in favor of abortion are influenced by the Catholic discourse that state that abortion is dangerous to the woman's health. Different work is being done to alter the Catholic Church's influence on abortion. The organization CDD works to detach the perception that abortion goes against being Catholic as well as spread accurate information regarding the implications of abortion. Through their own Catholic beliefs they can connect with other Catholics and through that vein change their opinions regarding abortion (CDD, 2019, interview; 4 March). By connecting with people through common values, such as family and protection of such as well as religious views, can result in changing the resistance of abortion. As seen in the FGDs these values go above the men's resistance towards abortion. Thus, through emphasizing that family values such as safety can mean to support the woman in abortion, the abortion resistance could decline. It may be necessary to first find a common ground where men can accept and respect an abortion decision before attempting to create favoring opinions.

Lastly, the masculinity norms and the abortion resistance are closely connected and feed into each other. The norms are deeply ingrained in the society, which make them hard to change. Still, changing perceptions can be seen among young men. Their openness towards abortion and questioning of masculinity norms open up for opportunities to have them more actively involved in abortion.

6 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the interplay between masculinity norms and men's opposition to abortion in Mexico City. To gain insight on the specific topic, the perspectives of men and SRHR organizations in Mexico City constitute the primary data. The conceptual framework containing concepts such as hegemonic masculinities, gender systems and gender socialization, help to explain the complexity and the various levels of influence that surrounds the abortion resistance. This in turn also enabled seeing the influences on the masculinity norms from various positions.

The thesis contributes to the understanding of the different facets that entails the abortion resistance in Mexico, which are embedded in Catholic values and sustained by masculinity norms. The gendered division of roles and responsibilities on sexuality and reproduction contribute to placing the responsibility for avoiding pregnancies on women. Even though women are not supposed to be sexually active they must be prepared with contraceptives as they are responsible for avoiding unwanted pregnancies, while at the same time pressured by men not to use them. These contradictions, containing unattainable ideals increase the burden on women with regards to abortion.

The stigmatization against women is further accentuated through a strong abortion resistance based on Catholic values mostly seen among elderly men. They also enact the characteristics of the machismo such as protection and violence, impeding women's autonomous decision-making. As a consequence, women are faced with various barriers to access abortion, limiting their health options and consequently, development.

Even though male engagement is important to transform these gender inequalities, the machismo norms hinder men to be included directly in abortion as they could further restrict women. Since the dominant and aggressive masculinity norms are strong in Mexico the organizations are unwilling to involve men in their abortion work.

However, these traditional characteristics of machismo are not reflected in the majority of the young men in the focus groups who question masculinity norms and support women's right to abortion. Therefore, there is an opportunity for organizations to work with these men, critical to the masculinity norms and advocates of gender equality, since the normally harmful identity traits are not as striking in these younger men. However, whenever the harmful masculinities are present prior work on men is needed that focuses on changing damaging masculinity norms before including them in abortion matters. Thus, the international objective that men shall share responsibility regarding family planning should not always be directly reflected in men's inclusion in abortion.

While exploring men's perception of abortion and machismo, some areas for further research emerged. First, extending the research to include women and their perceptions of machismo would give a more holistic understanding of the different barriers women are faced with when wanting to access abortion services. Secondly, further studies to explore how to change the damaging masculinity norms that in this study emerged as barriers for women's access to abortion. Thirdly, including an intersectional approach to the study would further illustrate the power relations that influence abortion resistance and consequently, a deeper understanding of the different barriers faced by women. Lastly, further research on how masculinity norms and abortion could be combined in organizations' work would be advantageous. Such research could contribute to a better understanding of how work can be done with men and their masculinities without restricting or harming women.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Example of Interview Guide for Organizations

The nature of the interviews allowed for the respondents to influence the direction of the interview. The questions were adjusted depending on their answers as well how much previous knowledge the researcher had about the organization. Moreover, the respondents explored some questions without the researcher interrupting the conversation. Therefore, the interview guide should only be considered as an example of questions and indication of the topics covered.

Before initiating the interview, the researcher introduced herself, the study and the purpose of the interviews as well as discussing the confidentiality and requesting to record the interview.

Interview guide for organizations

General information

- 1) What is the organization's objective?
 - 2) How do you work to achieve it?
 - 3) How do you work with SRHR and abortion?
 - 4) What population do you target?
 - a. Do you have projects that include working with mixed population (men and women)?
 - b. Do you work with men and women together or separately? Why?
-

Work on abortion and men

- 1) Why have you chosen to work with men?
 - a. How do you include men in your abortion initiatives?
 - b. What have been the results?
 - 2) Have you organization found difficulties working with men?
 - a. If yes, what difficulties? What do you do to overcome those difficulties?
 - b. If not, what practices have allowed you to work with men?
 - 3) What are the challenges and possibilities of working with men on abortion initiatives?
-

Work on masculinities

- 1) Do you work in any way to change gender roles/masculinities that have a negative impact on women?
 - a. How do you do it?
 - b. What have been the results?
 - c. What barrier have you had?
-

Round-off

- 1) In order to advance on your objectives, what needs to be done?
 - 2) Is there anything else you would like to comment or develop?
-

8.2 Appendix B: Example of Interview Guide for FGDs

The nature of the interviews allowed for the respondents to influence the direction of the interview. The questions were adjusted depending on their answers and discussion. Moreover, the questions were adapted for each focus group, for example, for the men with children, the scenarios were adapted to include their role as fathers. Moreover, the respondents explored some questions without the researcher interrupting the conversation. Thus, the interview guide should be considered examples of questions and indication of the topics covered.

Before initiating the interview, the researcher introduced herself, the study and the purpose of the discussion as well as discussing the confidentiality and requesting to record the discussion.

Interview guide for FGDs

Masculinities

- 1) In general terms, how would you describe the character of a typical Mexican man?
- 2) Are there qualities that makes a man more or less of a man? Which ones?
- 3) Do you feel like these typical men?
- 4) Do you consider your masculinity to be different than your fathers'?
- 5) How would you describe a typical Mexican woman?
- 6) Do men and women have different responsibilities? What are they, and why do you think it is like that?

Abortion

- 1) If your partner, or someone close to you, says she is pregnant and doesn't want to be, how would talk about it?
 - 2) If you would have an abortion, would you tell anyone?
 - a. Would you tell your parents that she is pregnant?
 - 3) What does an abortion mean you?
-

-
- 4) Who should take the main decision regarding an abortion?
 - a. Do you think a woman has to communicate an abortion decision?
 - 5) What role would you like to play in the abortion?
 - 6) Do you feel that you have enough information regarding contraceptives and abortion?
-

Round-off

- 1) Is there anything else you would like to comment or develop?
-

Demographic data

- 1) How old are you?
 - 2) In which state do you live?
 - 3) What is your highest completed education?
 - 4) What is your occupation?
 - 5) Do you practice any religion? Which one?
 - 6) Do you have children? How many and what age?
 - 7) What is your marital status?
-

8.3 Appendix C: Presentation of Organizations

Name	Short description	Interview date
Balance	<p>A progressive feminist civil association that advocates at the national, regional and international levels on public policies and programs on sexual and reproductive rights, with an emphasis on women and youth, through citizenship, leadership training and evidence-based arguments. They provide financial, emotional and logistical support to women who do not have sufficient resources to access the legal abortion services available in Mexico City.</p> <p>Website: https://www.balancemx.org/</p>	03-12-19
Católicas por el derecho a decidir (CDD)	<p>A nonprofit organization created by Catholic women and men who from an ethical, Catholic, feminist and secular perspective defend the human rights of women and young people, especially sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe and legal abortion.</p> <p>Website: https://catolicasmexico.org/ns/</p>	03-04-19
Equidad de género	<p>A feminist organization that promotes equality between women and men, as well as the rule of law, through the promotion of public policies with a gender perspective, the strengthening of leadership and the citizen participation of women in all spheres of political and social life. They promote citizen participation in the struggle for respect for women's right to make free and informed decisions about their lives and bodies, and actions are taken to exercise women's right to access legal abortion.</p> <p>Website: http://www.equidad.org.mx/</p>	03-11-19
Gendes	<p>A civil society organization specialized in working with men to promote processes of reflection, intervention, research and advocacy from a gender perspective with emphasis on masculinities and human rights, to promote and strengthen egalitarian relations that contribute to social development.</p> <p>Website: http://gendes.org.mx/index.php/es/</p>	02-27-19

Name	Short description	Interview date
Ipas	<p>A global non-profit organization that works to increase women's ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, especially the right to abortion. They seek to ensure that women receive comprehensive, respectful, dignified, safe and quality care during and after abortion.</p> <p>Website: https://www.ipasmexico.org/</p>	02-15-19

8.4 Appendix D: Interview Consent Form

The following questions were asked to the participants of FGDs before starting the interviews. Before asking these questions, the researcher introduced herself, the study and the purpose of the discussion.

- Did you understand the Study Information Sheet provided by the researcher orally explained?
- Do you have any questions regarding the Study?
- Do you accept that the interview will be audio recorded?
- Do you agree to take part in the Study?
- Do you understand that your personal details such as name and opinions will not be revealed to people outside the project?
- Do you understand that your words may be quoted in my thesis or other research outputs but your name will not be used?
- Do you understand that you can withdraw from the Study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why you no longer want to take part?