

**The Birth of the *Machista*: Changing Conceptions of the Nicaraguan Masculine**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the concept of masculinity as it concerns a group of male community leaders from impoverished neighbourhoods of León, Nicaragua. In collaboration with the non-governmental organization, *Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud* (CISAS) and utilizing person-centred ethnography, it explores masculinity in Nicaragua as reflected at the level of the individual. The work proposes that masculinities in Nicaragua are not as simple as some have suggested. Moreover, it relies on a Foucauldian analysis of disciplinary power to explicate the foundations of said conceptions as well as to develop new understandings of the idea of *machismo*.

Following analysis of an interview series and a thorough review of relevant literature, this thesis places Nicaraguan conceptions of masculinity as being discrete according to individuals. Moreover, the work deconstructs the notion of *machismo* as being nothing more than an individuated subject, most likely imposed on Nicaragua and, by extension, various other Latin American cultures, by forces exogenous to Latin America. Finally, this thesis discusses the tie that masculinity and health have as well as the influence that CISAS has on the personal lives of the research participants as well as their work in their communities.

<b>PERMISSION TO USE .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS USED .....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.1 Methodological Approach .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.2 Methods .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.2.1 Overview of Study Design and Boundary Setting.....	10
2.2.2 Sampling Strategy and Contacting Participants .....	11
2.2.3 Field Notes and Participant Observation.....	12
2.2.4 Participant Context .....	13
2.2.5 Person-centred Interviews .....	14
2.2.6 Focus Groups and Key Informants.....	17
<b>2.3 Analysis.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.4 Culturally Competent Scholarship .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.5 Ethical Conduction of Research.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2.6 Study Strengths and Limitations .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: GENDER AND HEALTH.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>4.1 Political and Social History .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>4.2 The Feminist Movement in Nicaragua .....</b>	<b>39</b>

4.3 Health Systems in Nicaragua.....	45
<b>CHAPTER 5: MASCULINITY .....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1 What the Men had to Say about Masculinity .....	51
5.1.1 Employment and Equality .....	52
5.1.2 Responsibility .....	57
5.1.3 Relationships, Children and the Home .....	60
5.2 Putting it all Together .....	66
<b>CHAPTER 6: MACHISMO .....</b>	<b>71</b>
6.1 What Men had to Say about Machismo .....	78
6.2 Masculinity as Discourse.....	90
6.3 Resistance .....	96
<b>CHAPTER 7: LIFELONG LEARNING .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>APPENDIX I: SAMPLE QUESTION FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>APPENDIX II: TRANSLATIONS .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>APPENDIX III: ETHICS CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>APPNDIX IV: KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION.....</b>	<b>140</b>

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## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Research Questions.....	4
Table 2: Specific Objectives.....	4
Table 3: Culturally Competent Scholarship.....	22

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Graffiti near Central Park, León, Nicaragua.....	57
Figure 2. <i>Machista</i> Culture Model.....	68
Figure 3. Temporary Model.....	70
Figure 4. Mural of the Popular Insurrection.....	94
Figure 5. Today the new dawn ceased to be an illusion.....	95
Figure 6. Your milk is not substitutable and it arrives with love.....	95



## **ABBREVIATIONS USED**

AMNLAE	Association of Nicaraguan Women ‘Luisa Amanda Espinoza’
AMPRONAC	Association of Women in the National Situation
ATC	Association of Rural Workers
BeREB	Behavioural Research Ethics Board
CETRA	Centre for Labour Studies
CIERA	Centre for Research and Study of Agrarian Reform
CISAS	Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud
FSLN	Sandinist Front of National Liberation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MINSA	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OLM	Women’s Legal Office
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
SAP	Structural adjustment programs
SMP	Patriotic Military Service
US	United States of America
UNAG	National Union of Farmers and Ranchers
WHO	World Health Organization

## Chapter 1: Introduction to Research Problem

On 2 November 2006 a young Nicaraguan presented herself at a Managua hospital with intense vaginal bleeding (3). Her doctors did nothing to intervene and watched as the young woman died in hospital. But why would any well-trained physician ever hesitate to treat such a case? The woman in question was bleeding due to complications in pregnancy. What is more, Nicaragua had recently approved (although not passed) a law banning therapeutic abortion, making Nicaragua one of just a few countries in the world that has completely outlawed all forms of abortion. Consequently, the attending physicians feared reprisal from the newly elected Sandinista government, which can place doctors in jail for up to 20 years for participating in an abortion. Sadly, this young woman is not the only woman who has died as a result of the recent law; while many recorded unnecessary deaths have already occurred, it is not possible to know how many women have died as a result of abortions-gone-wrong outside the medical profession (4). But the question still remains, what societal preconditions caused this death?

This issue can be read in many ways; however, the layers of differing levels of power are most conspicuous, and perhaps, most relevant. One method of analysis, albeit located in an antiquated political right, would equate power with law, or writ large here, with the juridical proceedings that would ultimately place a doctor in jail for performing an abortion. Power read, in this case, as the operation of law in terms of constitution and sovereignty (5). The absolute control given over in sovereignty exists because of a ‘contract’ between two agents. A Marxist analysis of the situation, however, would connect power with state apparatuses’ ‘ideological ‘representations’ of power—as if

power operated through deferred, discursive mechanisms.’<sup>1</sup> (5) While the ‘juridical’ and ‘discursive’ methods of analyses differ, they do share the commonality of a preexisting (prior to power’s emergence) ‘sovereign’ (exerting power) and ‘subject’ (having power acted upon). However, power can be read differently in terms that are more local and regional. That is to say, local power relations should be sought as an area of study rather than global ones because the former can explain the latter (6). Michel Foucault stresses the study of ‘effective practices’ of power<sup>2</sup> to clarify the *effects* of power as opposed to motivational explanations of power, avoiding the creation of an ‘author’ of power’s devices. He maintains that power is not a homogenous display of supremacy of one group or individual over another but is acted out through *individuals* and is therefore rather heterogeneous in nature. Finally, Foucault recommends investigations of power from a bottom-up (individual), rather than top-down (group, collective, or large-scale) perspective so that, again the binary is avoided, and one can see ‘how mechanisms of power have been able to function’ (5).

Such a mechanism of analysis as suggested by Foucault prevents an underestimation of the ‘diverse, even ‘polymorphous’, character of the relations of force extant in our society, and leaves unexplained the mechanisms required to connect and consolidate these relations’ (5). Rather than discuss individual subjects as taken for

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<sup>1</sup> Power is in this case an idealized Nicaraguan governmental control over abortion. Idealized because it is viewed as an omnipresent rule that exists beyond simple individual control.

<sup>2</sup> Here Foucault makes reference to the Panopticon used in modern jails to observe prisoners. In essence, he is referencing different methods of exercising power. For more on this subject see 7. Foucault M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books; 1977.

granted, Foucault attempts to understand current specified subjects in terms of the historical conditions that propagated them.

Yet analyses of power, while useful, do not fully explicate the cause of the young woman's death. An examination of masculinity and its nefarious creations create a useful context for trying to resolve the question around the death. Masculinity serves as a vehicle for both reception *to* and resistance *of* power.

The purpose of this study is to determine if constructions of masculinity changed within a group of male community leaders that participate in popular education workshops run by Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud, or CISAS,<sup>3</sup> a Nicaraguan non-governmental organization (NGO). Particular attention will be paid to Nicaragua's historical political climate, in an attempt to illustrate how the participants' current perceptions of masculinity differ (if at all) from preceding ones. Here I relate Foucault's concepts of disciplinary power in specific historical loci to socially constructed notions of 'truth' surrounding gender. Moreover, the process that men participating in programs learn about society's and, in turn, their own constructions of masculinity will yield discourse surrounding a determined point of departure for changing constructions of masculinity while, concurrently, refining concepts of masculinity specific to the group. To develop this understanding the discussion will present two main areas of understanding masculinity, but, in recognition of *performative* differences, men's interconnection of private and public perceptions, conceptions, and enactment of masculinity will also be considered.

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<sup>3</sup> CISAS as an organization will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

**Table 1: Research Questions**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Research Questions<sup>4</sup></b>
Masculinity	How does a study on masculinity relate to health? What do people say about masculinity? How do people perform masculinity? How do people embody masculinity? What differences are there between public and private performance of masculinity?
Historical Context	How do past negotiations of masculinity differ from the present? How are they the same? What societal preconditions allow for the creation of current constructions of masculinity? How have constructions of masculinity changed for the participants since being involved in the programs at CISAS?

**Table 2: Specific Objectives**

To explore how concepts of masculinity have changed over recent decades with particular consideration given to the shaping of masculinities incidental with the most recent revolution, the counter-revolutionary war that followed, and the neoliberal governments of the 1990's.
To explore how concepts of masculinity have changed among men since beginning programs at CISAS.
To improve conceptual understanding of masculinity by exploring and clarifying ways that masculinities performed in the domestic sphere interconnect with masculinities performed publicly.

Following a discussion of the methodological foundations of the study and the exact methods used, a concise review of masculinity theory will set a framework for discussing participants' conceptions of masculinity and, afterward, the thesis will explore those same conceptions.

A plethora of authors attempt to deal with the concept of machismo and, quite frankly, I am not the first to be puzzled by its ambiguity in literature on Latin American masculinities. Beyond the specific research questions and objectives, this thesis will

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, each of these questions are specific to the research participants and they are not presumed to be generalizable to any larger populace.

draw on past authors' attempts to define *machismo* and simultaneously synthesize new ways of conceptualizing the term within the framework of Foucault's disciplinary power. More exactly, the thesis will discuss the non-indigenous cultural construction of the *machista* and corollaries belated through that construction.

The participants of this study have been involved in work with CISAS for quite some time; however, they have also been involved in a variety of other learning opportunities. While it would be ideal to attempt to understand exactly what impact CISAS has had on the men, it is inappropriate (for the purpose of the current study) to deal with this topic. However, the concept of life-long learning will be explored in order to apply the more delicate subtleties of relations of power on a social level.

The creation of a critique is inherently complex. So too is the creation of an idea. This thesis seeks both the critique and the idea: the critique of what is an idea-turned-reality from the field of anthropology, and the idea that this reality is merely an apparition of the vestiges of radically changing thought. The emergence of gender studies in Latin America brought about the fabrication of a slew of acculturated ideas, meanings and beliefs each variegated through philosophical particularities; moreover, it brought about new dialectics of savage philosophy.

Christopher Bracken's book *Magical Criticism* (1) elegantly addresses the issue of savage philosophy in a critique of racialization and the continued use of the ethnocentric *savage* in academia. Bracken argues (1) historians', anthropologists', and philosophers' (even governments' and media's) rhetorical ruminations concoct irruptive *ekphrases*, or textual portraits of discourse (indeed discourse itself), that have "real, physical connection[s]...[that] take part in the realization of objects, processes, and even

worlds (p. 5).” The crux of what has preceded is itself a magical criticism:

‘distinguishing but confusedly between semblance and reality, the savage thinks that the representation of a thing partakes of the properties of the thing (2)(p. 681).’

However, it may not be clear exactly what savage philosophy is and how it relates to the present theses. Bracken’s (1) discussion of the topic reviews Freud’s understanding as a way of synthesizing contemporary savage philosophy. Considering psychoanalysis, Freud (80) evaluates savage philosophy borrowing a word from Freud—*taboo*. Of Polynesian origin, a condition and not a thing, *taboo* is ‘sacred’, ‘forbidden’ and all things *taboo* are ‘unapproachable’ as they are charged with ‘a peculiar magical power’ (p. 18, 20). Freud furthers this concept of so-called ‘magical power’ through use of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

Persons or things which are regarded as taboo may be compared to objects charged with electricity; they are the seat of a tremendous power which is transmissible by contact, and may be liberated with destructive effect if the organisms which provoke its discharge are too weak to resist it (p. 20).

Savage philosophers (1) maintain that even the exclamation of names can ‘transmit’ *taboo* because ‘signs have a ‘real’ and ‘physical’ connection with things’ (p. 2).

However, Freud maintains that only ‘the savage’ would consider this as a possibility.

Bracken continues with a quotation from J.G. Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*

Unable to discriminate clearly between words and things, the savage commonly fancies that the link between a name and the person or thing denominated by it is not a mere arbitrary and ideal association, but a real and substantial bond which unites the two (p. 2).

But surely this is a ridiculous theory. Present day scholars do not deal with such absurdities. Or do we?

## Chapter 2: Methodology

### 2.1 Methodological Approach

I have chosen person-centred ethnography as a methodology for conducting the proposed research as this method allows for a discourse on masculinity that looks at not only what people *say* about their own subjective experiences of masculinity, but also what people *do* and how they *embody* them. Moreover, this method goes beyond discourse analysis, both to reduce the affect of normal social discourse with the hopes of understanding more ‘hidden or latent dimensions of the organization of persons and of the sociocultural matrix and their interactions’ (8)(p. 334). While many ethnographers look at, at least in some capacity, all of these areas of experience, person-centred interviewing and observation allows for a particularly unique analysis of masculinity. Person-centred ethnographers focus on questions that relate the participant as both informant and respondent: there is a great distinction between asking a Nicaraguan man, “tell me how and why Nicaraguan men behave like *machistas*” (a typical ethnographic question) and, “tell me how and why you behave like a *machista*” (a person-centred approach).

The methods selected to complete this study include methods that normally fall into person-centred interviewing and observation as well as some that do not. Each method was chosen for its suitability for better examining what men do, say and how they embody masculinity. The study utilized open-ended, in-depth interviews, observation, participation, a focus group activity, and contextual synthesis and analysis of literature relevant to the topic.

Person-centred ethnographers examine ‘the relationship between subjective experience and the larger social, cultural, and political economic contexts from which it



emerges, including the extent to which it is affected by the context of the interview setting itself' (9). They neither presume nor discount the possibility that human subjectivity varies across cultures. Furthermore, a main priority of anthropologists that work in this context is to seek to understand how society affects individual subjective experience (9). Person-centred ethnographers seek to clarify how both historical and current sociocultural and material contexts affect relations between *individual* community members. More specifically, the method attempts to answer:

How are community members *constituted* by their contexts? To what degree and in what way are they at least partially autonomous individuals, engaged in a dynamic, sometimes coercive, sometimes enabling interplay with a context that is in some way *separate* from and alien to them? What, then, is the nature and location of such constructs as self, identity, agency, cognition [sic] in different kinds of communities? How are the phenomena relevant to these constructs differentially formed, stabilized, and located in the interplay between public and private spheres? What in a particular place and in relation to a particular person, is to be thought of as a communal (sociocultural) form; what as an intrapersonal (psychological) form? When is this traditional dichotomy misleading, so that some synthesizing concept of behavioural locus and integration might be warranted? What do these various *locations* of local influences on thought, emotion, morality, and action have to do with social process and with the implications of history, stability, and change—and, indeed, with the idea of freedom? (8)(p. 333)

It is not a goal of person-centred ethnography to understand exclusively individuals, but rather to elucidate the relationship between the contributing factors and performance of individuality, and particular sociocultural contexts.

Person-centred ethnographers also look at the interviewee as both an informant and as a respondent. That is, the interviewee can act as both an expert in his or her cultural context and they can be the 'objects' of study themselves. They can add a subjective experiential context to what is considered an objective cultural understanding. In fact, the role of the interviewee moves between informant and respondent continuously

throughout the interview process in order to fully capture the interplay between individual and cultural context.

Beyond the interview itself, it is important to note that, as the oft-quoted quip goes, *actions speak louder than words*. The advantage of someone working in ethnography is that they have the opportunity to observe beyond the *intrapsyche* that is presented in the interview. One is able to directly observe the influence of the social surround on the individual and explore how the individual negotiates their day-to-day experiences. However, while an individual's actions are observable, their experiences are not, and therefore observation alone is not sufficient. It must be backed up with interviews that ask the individual about their experience.

Finally, it is important to understand, especially from the perspective of someone looking into masculinity, exactly how subjective experience is embodied. That is, how are 'the senses and perceptions of the body...culturally elaborated into the experience of self and other' (9)? As Hollan argues, it is not sufficient to study the mind as separate from the body like traditional ethnographers have tended to do. The study of how corporeal experiences translate into culture is an interesting, if extremely difficult, area of study. Likewise, how the body is used in order to access certain spaces or gain access to certain information is also very important to this area. Studying experiential embodiment is fraught with difficulties including the ability to describe something that is tacit and the difficulty of not confusing one's own musings on the physiological, sensual, and perceptive aspects of embodiment with that of the culture that they are interested in.

## *2.2 Methods*

### *2.2.1 Overview of Study Design and Boundary Setting*

The current study followed the tenets of person-centred ethnography in discovering what the members of the masculinity group at CISAS were saying, doing, and how they are embodying masculinity. As the interest for the study lies in the researcher's desire to discover more about how the men of the program at CISAS negotiate masculinity, boundaries for participants were inherently easy, and limited to the men at the NGO. The process of 'data gathering' lasted approximately three months in Nicaragua beginning June 2008.

Likewise, cultural competence is key to fully grasping person-centred approaches and thus, much of my time in Nicaragua was spent in the role of ethnographer so that I could better understand the culture. The research took place with the men's program that I attended in July 2007. I worked directly with members of CISAS during my stay in the role of observer—so that I could better understand how the group interacts, gain the trust of the participants, and best evaluate how to approach the research questions proposed—as well as ethnographer. I attended and participated in several impromptu and prepared CISAS meetings, four training workshops for the group of men, as well as community events in the particular neighborhood I worked in. Following two weeks of observation, I held a focus group interview. This first group interview was intended to commence conversation about the subject of masculinity. Particular phenomena I observed over my time in Nicaragua that I did not fully understand or phenomena that I believe needed further explanation as well as a previously constructed question sheet (more below) guided the interview. Concomitantly, this first focus-group interview served the purpose of supplying initial data for analysis that was used to begin person-centred interviews, the

third stage of data collection. This third stage involved person-centred, open-ended interview series with members of the group.

Finally, after all the individual interviews had terminated, I discussed some of my initial thoughts with CISAS members in order to confirm and develop thoughts on the interviews.

### *2.2.2 Sampling Strategy and Contacting Participants*

The process of sampling, whatever the study and sampling design, should result in a group of participants that are able to accurately represent what the researcher is looking to uncover (10, 11). In the case of the present study, I was looking for participants that were ‘information-rich’ and were part of the group, making sampling a relatively easy process. As such, I discussed my needs with a member<sup>5</sup> of CISAS who helped me in preparing a letter of invitation that was sent out to every member of the group. This letter included details of the study purpose and design. Members that were interested in participating were asked to attend a focus group at a local community centre near to where everyone lived and/or worked. In total 5 out of 15 invited came to the focus group. Each of these participants was scheduled to be a part of the interview process that was to follow, however, only three of those individuals came out. As a result, I contacted 3 more participants during one of the training workshops that I participated in. These were three men that did not have the opportunity to come to the focus group but who were interested in participating in the research. In total five men participated in the focus group and six men in the interview schedule with eight men participating in total.

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<sup>5</sup> This was done in order to prevent the potential for loss of privacy or anonymity.

The initial focus group was designed so that (a) the men could be introduced to and made comfortable with the study intents, and (b) I could get a preliminary sense of their thoughts on masculinity in order to compose the first interview schedule. It addressed first, the question of whether masculinity has changed since the men were young and, second, where and how it changed.

### *2.2.3 Field Notes and Participant Observation*

Taking field notes is the primary method for collecting data in participant observation (day-to-day occurrences, overheard conversations and casual interviews) (12).

Participant observation was initiated as soon as possible after consent was given for the study and was a continued process throughout the study. I observed participants both in the formal training workshops held by CISAS as well as in community settings during weekend gatherings. An iterative process, taking field notes turns simple observations into data because they provide a mode for further analysis and keep a detailed record of observation. However, it is important to keep detailed field notes so that the researcher can read and reread their work in order to find holes in the information given, or things that are not understood so that subsequent information gathering can be better informed (13). As already mentioned field notes are a source of data, but they are also a method of analyzing. In order to best make use of the data and analysis components of field notes, I first kept jot notes in a notebook that had key words for memory trigger. Then using a word processor I kept detailed notes on pertinent observations that occurred while I was in the field as well as while I was conducting the focus group and interviews.

Approximately, thirty pages of notes were written in total. Field notes were not taken on a scheduled basis but only as events relevant to my study occurred. For instance, if I

noticed certain behaviour that I thought was unusual or interesting, I would take jot notes in a notebook and write up the observation at my earliest convenience on my laptop (either the night of the incident or, if I was away from a computer, as soon as I was at my computer). These notes were consulted in the preparation of my interview schedule as well as for the completion of my data analysis. Field note additions to the thesis are indicated and were used as explanatory anecdotes. It is worth commenting that this thesis uses the in-depth person-centred interviews to a much greater extent than any other form of data gathered.

#### *2.2.4 Participant Context*

The participants of this study are all community leaders living in distinct poor neighbourhoods of León, Nicaragua. Their ages range from early 20s to early 70s. Of those interviewed: one was in his twenties, two in their late 50s, one in his sixties and one in his 70s. I had the opportunity to visit many of their homes. Their neighbourhoods were located far from the city centre. Their houses were by and large constructed from cinderblock or concrete with corrugated tin roofs. Some had businesses operating out of the home where they sold basic items. Most had a great deal of people living within a small space. There was no green space and the only accesses to their houses were along dirt roads, with the exception of one individual who lived near a main thoroughfare. While there was a water tower supplying water to the homes, some of its parts had been stolen rendering it inoperable. Some of the constituents of the neighbourhoods lived near open black-water drainage that is a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes and pathological organisms.

### *2.2.5 Person-centred Interviews*

The interview topics were guided by the desire to evoke information surrounding masculinity and took place after a rapport had been generated with the participants. With that in mind, Levy and Hollan suggest a number of general categories for interview topics including locating information; patterns of identification and identity formation; aspects of self; morality; the body; stress, illness, and healing; death; emotion; religion and the supernatural; fantasy, creative art, and dreams; and children<sup>6</sup>. Locating information includes information that positions individuals within the social structure of their community and includes topics such as ‘social roles, patterns of association, friends and enemies, economic status and activities, marital status, children’ and any other information deemed important for locating individuals within a particular social network (8). The current study will attempt to flesh out exactly how individuals identify with masculinity.

Patterns of identification and identity formation deal with, perhaps in a more pointed way than locating information, how the individual identifies with themselves, or, it answers questions such as ‘who am I?’ However, information in this particular area can still be positioned categorically as less concentrated information than aspects of self. Patterns of identification and identity formation are placed at the ‘intersection of (aspects of) an individual and (aspects of) his or her communally provided social roles and social definition’ whereas aspects of self (usually investigated in the latter period of interviews, and in my case, near the end of the interview series) deal with the ‘respondent’s sense of which actions or thoughts are really his or hers, which just conventional actions, and

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of each of these questions can be viewed in Table 3

which come from outside the self, and if from ‘the outside,’ then, from where<sup>7</sup> (8)(p. 342).

Issues around morality deal with the conception of self in the larger social construction of moral responsibility. They deal with moral evaluation, self-control, as well as directly and indirectly observable power over others. Moral discussion almost certainly deals with what is good and bad behaviour and, related to masculinity, the interviews in this area will discuss ‘masculine’ behaviour and morality.

The body presents the researcher with the challenge of investigating how individuals ‘live in and through their bodies’. (8) Embodiment is key to this area of research. Stress, illness, healing, death, and emotion all look at specific aspects of self and identity in periods of life that normal conceptions of self and identity face dilemma. Ideas surrounding children provide a rich source of information about how ideas around masculinity are taught, and in the current case, how men’s interactions with their family members defines their own masculinity.

Some topics listed above are, however, less easily discussed with an interviewer when there is not a certain level of trust established and therefore, it is recommended that several interviews be completed for each individual in the study. Issues that are more personal can be discussed at a later juncture in the interview process when the interviewee is more familiar with the interview proceedings and more comfortable discussing personal issues. That said, none of the interviewees had any difficulty in

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<sup>7</sup> Levy indicates that possession phenomena are notable to this area (for more see 14. Levy RI. Gods, Spirits and History: A Theoretical Perspective. In: Megeo J, Howard A, editors. Spirits in Culture and Mind. London New York: Routledge; 1996. p. 11-28.)



discussing things of a personal nature and, in fact, much of the more personal details I sought came out in questions that were not intended to achieve that information.

There are several ways that an interviewer can distort the information that is given by the interviewee and it is important to remain aware of the ways this can occur (8). The researcher must be aware of ‘centrally organizing cognitive orientations’ that may impact the interview process (8). As Levy and Hollan maintain, it is very important to be aware of ‘psychological’ happenings, or sudden changes in his or her feelings, as signals that something important is occurring within the psyche of the interviewer. Care was taken throughout the interview processes to give regard to such happenings and when they did occur, they were recorded.

The interviews were digitally recorded and provided a useful check for interview distortion. Listening to the recordings post interview at the sections that cause changes in the interviewers psyche can re-stimulate the reaction and give the researcher time to think about why the particular reaction occurred. The recordings can also reveal what occurred next in the process of the interview as a result of the interviewers feelings (i.e. did the interview change course as a result of what occurred?). Using this advice, I re-listened to interviews immediately after, both to inform my next interview as well as to be able to better understand what happened in the interview. While I did follow these instructions, there were no occasions that I felt the interview process changed as a result of participant reactions.

I maintained a familiar stance when conducting the interview and was sure to present myself in a way that was common to everyday conversation. It was important to listen with sympathy and without judgment (8). Prior to going into the interview, I developed a

sample question framework that outlined criteria discussed above. For the sample question framework please see Appendix 1.

### *2.2.6 Focus Groups and Key Informants*

Focus group interviews can serve the purpose of locating potential informative question styles for the more in-depth personal interviews, for creating hypotheses based on participant responses, as well as for getting interpretations of results from earlier interviews (15). As already indicated a recorded focus group interview that lasted approximately one and half hours transpired before the person-centred interviews. Because this was my first interaction with the group and I was unsure of how my presence would be regarded, I had the help of the previous leader of the men's portions of the training workshops. We met prior to the focus group where I explained what I wanted to get out of the group and the different methods I would utilize to do that. This individual assisted me in leading the group and keeping people on topic and focused on their tasks.

The focus group began with introductions (of myself) and casual conversation while we awaited the arrival of all those invited. I began the meeting by going over the participant consent form and obtaining written consent from each individual. I then utilized an icebreaker to get everyone feeling comfortable. Afterwards I explained the group activity that we were going to do. As I was interested in finding out more about how and if masculinity has changed over the years as well as to stimulate conversation around this topic, I used an adaptation of the popular education technique, 'The Wall.' While 'The Wall' is generally used as a 2-day workshop for uncovering information focusing on economic issues, I adapted the methodology in order to serve my purposes.

Specifically, I used large pieces of paper to illustrate a road that represented an historical ‘road map’ of masculinity. The men were instructed to draw a road that indicated how masculinity has changed over time. Each turn in the road would represent a time in history where the concept of being a man has changed. If there has been no change, then the road would have no turns. At the same time, they were given cut-outs of flowers and cut-outs of boulders. The flowers were to represent those aspects of masculinity they deemed as good or enabling to society, and boulders were to represent those aspects that were deemed ‘bad’ or as barriers to society.

Jot notes were taken around the important parts of the conversation and the road itself was used as a guide for my interviews. However, there was some contradiction between the road itself and what people were saying. Unfortunately, the quality of the recording was such that it was impossible to transcribe the focus group. The focus group occurred after work hours and, as such, many of the community members filed in and out of the centre where we were having the focus group, making for multiple conversations being picked up at all moments on the recorder.

Importantly, both prior to and during the research, key informants were interviewed to better inform research questions. In total two of those informants worked as faculty with the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua and the other was a seasoned veteran in Nicaraguan gender work as well as a guest faculty member with Universidad Centroamericana in the Interdisciplinary program for Gender Studies. The total number of key informants utilized for this study was three. Some of the field notes that I wrote surrounding the key informant interviews were used and are indicated as such below.

vii. Personal Statement

To give the reader a bit of background in order to better understand where I have come from and why I have taken up this particular study, I will provide a short autobiography. I am a white male who grew up in rural Saskatchewan, Canada. I began my university career in the Department of Music at the University of Saskatchewan where I studied in the performance program for two years, prior to entering into the sciences where I ultimately completed a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Biological and Physical Sciences. During my undergraduate degree I read widely and also happened to take a postcolonial literature course focusing on African literature and, in particular Nigerian literature. During this time it quickly became apparent to me that women in all parts of the world are disproportionately positioned.

Part of my inspiration for devoting my time and energy to men and masculinities is due to an accord with the tasks set out by women's and feminist movements that seek human equality and justice. In order to add to the literature in a meaningful way, I decided to write on masculinity where there is a paucity of research; while contrastingly, there is a large body of literature on women and femininity. I asked, how could we possibly change structure and discourse saturated in hegemonic masculinity when we do not fully investigate the masculine?

### *2.3 Analysis*

Qualitative research data analysis normally begins at the same time as data collection and continues throughout the time in the field. As themes and patterns began to precipitate, research was guided to accommodate rich data. Key informant interviews, the focus group, participant interviews, and participant observation all influenced the path

of the study as one idea led to another. Depoy and Gitlin postulate four distinct analytical thinking and action processes:

- 1) Engaging in inductive and abductive thinking
- 2) Developing categories
- 3) Grouping categories into higher levels of abstraction
- 4) Discovering meanings and underlying themes (10)

These processes are in no way meant to be viewed as stepwise, but occur as a continuous and fluid process. In such a way new sources of data can be considered in comparison with previous ones in order to develop meanings and themes.

Data provided by participants were analyzed immediately following interviews by listening to interview recordings while reading the corresponding jot notes. As patterns and potential themes emerged, I made notes so that I could adjust my interview questions for the next interview. While in the field, I maintained a keen eye to irregularities or to behaviour that I did not understand. These behaviours were recorded in my field notes and those that I thought pertinent to the study were added as queries in the interview process.

Throughout the data collection phase of the study I had key informant interviews. These interviews occurred both before and throughout the process of the focus group and other interviews. As such, I was able to discuss my preliminary analysis with experts in the field who were able to confirm my thinking process and guide it further.

Part of the analytical process involved the complete transcription of the interviews (approximately 48 pages of single spaced text) by a Nicaraguan resident who works for CISAS. Her involvement was pursued so that, considering the possible limitations of language, transcripts would be most accurate. Once the transcripts were complete, I checked each one for accuracy by listening to the recordings and making corrections

where necessary. As I checked over the transcriptions I began to look for emerging patterns and themes.

Once I returned to Canada I began coding data. This involved first reading through the transcripts multiple times while thinking about codes. As I read, I used the Microsoft Word comments tool to write notes and codes in the margin. The codes were one word and the notes were simply reflections on what the person was saying. Then, once I was satisfied that I was not identifying new codes, I began to think back to my original research questions so that I could pick out themes that came out of the codes. As such, I read and reread the interviews with the intent of better organizing the codes; four main themes were developed. Thus the codes created the themes. This is an important note of clarification because I did not pre-determine the themes that I wanted and assign codes to them, but I went through the data in a reductionist way and then built it back up into themes by collecting congruous codes and deciding how they were similar.

Once the themes were developed they were again considered from the perspective of the research questions. I wrote out the themes on a piece of paper and put appropriate codes within them and thought carefully how each question could be answered. As such, codes and themes represented text that represented participants' understanding and experiences as related to the topic of masculinity. All of the analysis occurred with the text still in Spanish ensuring that the participant voice was maintained. The transcripts in coded form were regarded as the results of the interview and were used in writing the discussion, which can be taken as a way to link the understandings and experiences of the research participants to the research questions.

## 2.4 Culturally Competent Scholarship

It is important to understand the ethics surrounding studies in foreign cultures. Meleis presents eight criteria through which to carry out culturally competent scholarship, emphasizing that rigor in scholarship is more extensive than rigor in research. To clarify, rigor in scholarship includes not only includes the specific design of the research (rigor in research) but also includes rigor in assessing those analytical discourses that guide an investigation (16). The following table outlines the eight components defined by Meleis, her definition, as well as my attempts to conform to them.

**Table 3: Culturally Competent Scholarship<sup>8</sup>**

Criteria	Definition	Conformation Attempts
<i>Contextuality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge of research participants socioculturally and in a historical context</li> <li>- Sensitivity to structural conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five months in field</li> <li>- Significant research regarding the history of Nicaragua</li> <li>- Use of person-centred ethnography</li> </ul>
<i>Relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ability of research questions to support the improvement of a population's issues and interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration with CISAS on the development of appropriate research</li> <li>- Knowledge translation</li> </ul>
<i>Communication Styles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating in a manner that is comfortable for the research participants and yet still sufficient for research rigor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five months of language/cultural immersion</li> <li>- Awareness of language limits</li> <li>- Informal interview technique</li> <li>- Interviews scheduled around participants' time</li> </ul>
<i>Awareness of identity and power differential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness that researcher and participant differ in knowledge, boundaries, power, and motives for engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural and positional awareness</li> <li>- Reflective thought on participant encounters</li> <li>- University ethics submission</li> <li>- Informed consent</li> </ul>
<i>Disclosure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uncovering participants' experiences in an authentic and understandable manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of relationships with participants through community involvement</li> <li>- Five months in field</li> <li>- Use of person-centred ethnography</li> </ul>
<i>Reciprocation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring that all constituents' goals for the research are met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desires for research ends discussed with CISAS</li> <li>- Use of informed consent</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Criteria from: Melis AI. Culturally competent scholarship: Substance and rigor. *Advances in Nursing Science* 1996;19(2):1-16.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge translation</li> <li>- Open-ended interviews allow participant voice</li> </ul>
<i>Empowerment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising the consciousness of research team and participants both during and after study completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of participants' voices in the research.</li> <li>- Open-ended interviews allow participant voice</li> <li>- Focus group using popular education techniques</li> <li>- Knowledge translation</li> </ul>

### *2.5 Ethical Conduction of Research*

The Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan (BeREB) approved this study April 8, 2008. Every effort was made to make the consent process as fluid and easily received as possible for the participants. I fully recognized the potential to alienate and exclude the members of this particular group by presenting them with a lengthy proposal that is not understandable and seemingly intimidating.

Specifically, I had the proposal translated into lay terms so that any jargon was removed; the initial contact was by people who have worked with the individuals at CISAS already, and as such, the members of the group were comfortable speaking with them; and finally, my discussion with CISAS fully explained what the ethics process is about and why I have to complete it. All guidelines provided by the BeREB were followed in order to ensure ethical completion of the study. To review the consent form I provided to the participants, please see appendix III.

### *2.6 Study Strengths and Limitations*

This thesis and its methods presented a variety of strengths and weaknesses partly due to my own fault and partly due to the restrictions presented to me as a student engaging in international research. The methodology I used for actually gathering data



was particularly helpful in the construction of my interviews. It allowed me to gain particular insight into the participant's lives that were made possible by the nature of questioning that person-centred ethnography utilizes. However, at the same time (as a student) I created several weaknesses to the study. First, and perhaps foremost, the study was completed in a language foreign to my own and communication was potentially a limitation to the study. Despite taking great steps to learn Spanish, I was still engaging in a language that I am still learning. Additionally, these limitations could have been present in the way I conducted my interviews as I may have missed potential avenues of questioning that a native Spanish speaker may not have.

Because linguistic competence is chief to adequate work in the area of person-centred, indeed all ethnography, I engaged in intense language training prior to beginning the formal part of the research process. Spanish lessons began at the University of Saskatchewan in January 2007 where I completed the introductory Spanish 114 course. In May 2007, I arrived in Nicaragua for the first time. While there I completed 3 weeks of intense Spanish immersion as part of the requirements for a global health class. I spent a total of 8 weeks in Nicaragua living with a home-stay family. Following this trip I enrolled in and completed Spanish 214 at the University of Saskatchewan (an intermediate grammar and writing class). In June 2008, I returned to Nicaragua and enrolled in 5 more weeks of intense one-on-one Spanish lessons, while living in a home-stay. Moreover, 7 additional weeks were spent bolstering these skills during field observations and conversing with colleagues at CISAS. At this point, I felt competent in my ability to conduct interviews, however, to waylay misunderstandings in my language

skills, I hired a Spanish speaking Nicaraguan who worked at CISAS to complete the transcriptions of my interviews so that I would not miss anything vital.

I spent a total of five months in Nicaragua over two trips, in the role of ethnologist and student as stipulated above. Experts that work in the field of ethnography stipulate that extended periods of time spent in the culture of interest are necessary for obtaining a deep understanding of the culture. As such, my understanding of the larger Nicaraguan culture may have been less than what I could have understood over a greater period of time and I obviously did not (and do not) understand every facet of Nicaraguan culture. For example, I was unable to explore virility's relation to masculinity in as much detail as I would have liked. That said, Table 5 outlines the steps I took in order to ameliorate these weaknesses.

Another limitation occurred as a result of scheduling conflicts. Unfortunately, two of the participants that initially came to the focus group were unable to attend the interviews.

## Chapter 3: Gender and Health

Because this thesis is being completed as a partial requirement for a Master's of Science in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan, I am obligated to answer the question, how is my study and more specifically, masculinity, related to health? When initially challenged with addressing this question, I quickly wrote a summary of how women are affected by gender. However, as I began to think more about the issue and expanded my search of the literature, I noticed how difficult it was to come across studies that enlist men in affecting social change in terms of gender—that is not to say such studies do not exist, only that they are few and far between. Moreover, it became apparent that I was doing what many of my predecessors have done—and what I personally believe to be a half-cocked approach—not addressing the masculine side of gender issues. Development studies and gender development programs must necessarily incorporate *both* men and women into their studies. For example, when dealing with programs on domestic violence, of course it is imperative to have programs that address victims, but so too is it imperative to have programs that engage men. While the following section will attempt to address the question of how masculinity is related to health, particularly in the context of global health, the entire breadth of the thesis will also serve this purpose. As a bit of a disclaimer, the association between gender and health is inherently involved; this section is only meant to address the issue in view of the current study and to point towards an under-studied and under-valued aspect to global health programs and studies on gender. After a short pre-amble, discussion around this important topic will begin with a more in-

depth look at CISAS and their motives surrounding their gender training workshops and, following, look at a more global perspective on the topic.

For example, when studying violence against women and/or gender-based violence, why are there not more development programs or studies that involve males? Barker et al (17), in a World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned study, directly acknowledge that ‘the social expectations of what men and boys should and should not do and be directly affect attitudes and behaviour related to a range of health issues,’ and ‘gender, interacting with poverty and other factors, directly affects how health systems and services are structured and organized and how and which individuals are able to access them’ (p. 3-6). A wide range of health outcomes and behaviours are affected by social constructions of gender and their corresponding gendered inequity including: prevention of HIV transmission and other sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive use, physical violence towards women and between men, domestic work, parenting and health-seeking behaviour (17-23). Of course, gendered health risks do not only negatively affect women—the same studies and others recognize that masculinity affects both women and men. It is not difficult to notice (in whatever cultural context you may find yourself in) that males often involve themselves in certain risk-taking behaviours that can include things such as violence, substance use, unsafe driving, sexual ‘adventurism’ (and more) in an effort to assert their own manhood. Additionally, social constructions of men and boys as being invulnerable to harm impair them from seeking physical and/or mental help when it is needed.

To enter into discussion on the issue of masculinity and health, I would like to discuss CISAS’ role a bit further in facilitating popular education with research

participants. CISAS is a non-governmental not-for-profit organization, founded in July 1983. It adopts the strategy of Primary Health Care, as well as the methodology of Popular Education and emphasizes the Social Communication of health. The organization firmly believes in the promotion and defense of the Covenant on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental focus on community health. CISAS began working with groups of men in 1996 in a concerted effort to promote sexual and reproductive health as well as empowerment in women. Women working with the organization maintained that it would do little good for them if men were not involved in their work. As Sternberg (who has done significant work with CISAS researching sexual and reproductive health with men) and Stycos (24, 25) maintain, it is vital that men's interest in family planning and sexual and reproductive health as well as women's empowerment be relayed to men. CISAS has coordinated efforts to direct men to information they could utilize in order to better understand men's 'behaviour, attitudes, and the context of these, in order to develop an awareness of the social and cultural norms defined by *machismo*, and the way these norms create a certain model of 'acceptable' male sexual behaviour, and a particular set of attitudes' (26)(p 90). Sternberg's study examined men's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in sexuality, reproduction, and fatherhood. It was obvious from Sternberg's research that men garner certain attitudes and behaviour towards sexuality, reproduction and fatherhood, but as an agency for development it is vital to understand to a greater extent exactly how these attitudes have changed. While CISAS (and perhaps other NGOs) recognized this point many years ago, it is not until most recently that this idea has started to work its way into mainstream development fields. In fact, part of this research is supposed to be used for aiding in evaluation of the

programs at CISAS. As such, I will discuss the strong and lasting impact these programs have had on the men more in Chapter 7.

Two of the millennium development goals are to promote gender equality and empower women as well as to reduce maternal mortality. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (27) calls for gender equality in health: meaning men and women can have equal opportunities to ‘maintain their health, contribute to the development of public health, and benefit from that development.’ In their report PAHO identifies several areas of health that are particularly problematic when viewed with a focus on sex. More specifically, elderly women are more likely to have at least one limitation in their daily life activities; infant mortality rates are very high in many Latin American countries; the percentage of women between the ages of 15 and 49 who have been in a spousal union and report having experienced violence by a spouse or partner is also very high for Latin American countries (30% report physical and 10% report sexual violence in Nicaragua), and of those many do not seek help (40.5% in Nicaragua). Every aspect of this report requires involvement by men and women alike.

A discussion of how gender and health are related in Nicaragua would not be complete without addressing the issue of how the liberalization of the Nicaraguan economy, explicit in the structural adjustment programs (SAP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has affected the social determinants of health<sup>9</sup>. Such neoliberal economic planning is aimed at the macro level of economics and therefore does not take

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<sup>9</sup> The social determinants of health are income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment/working conditions, social and physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender, and culture. For more see 28. Canada PHAO. Determinants of Health: What Makes Canadians Healthy? ; 2007.

into account the disproportionate amount of women that comprise the small industry and informal job sector. Likewise, 'stretching household budgets, caring for the ill, and in general managing to get along under conditions of economic and psychological stress are unpaid services that do not apparently affect the market' and thus, SAPs fail to account for this increasing burden on women (29). In addition, when men do contribute to household income, only a small portion is given to the family while more is kept for personal spending. The authors of SAPs did not utilize *gender-sensitive* methods when doling out the programs, and in so doing dealt out additional burden to women.

Income is a primary social determinant of health. Besides only being able to access jobs that generally pay less, women, when in equal positions to men, do not receive the same income. One consequence of SAPs is a decline in jobs for women in the manufacturing sector (although this is most evident in Asia) (30). Household-based work is a good case in point as women 'often help in domestic food cultivation and small livestock management, as well as food processing and preparation; they are exclusively responsible for fuel and water collection, child raising and care of the sick and elderly; they also often earn small amounts of cash from informal entrepreneurship including sale of surplus horticultural produce and brewing' (30). Again, this type of work goes unnoticed by macroeconomic policies as they are aimed at large scale economic liberalization and do not consider 'micro' consequences.

Women migrating to other countries in order to find work is not unusual in Nicaragua. Women seek jobs outside of Nicaragua because of the few opportunities for work and economic problems at home. To put this into perspective, Nicaragua has a combined unemployment and underemployment of 50.3% and its average monthly

household income is US\$100 while Costa Rica (its neighbour to the South) is US\$395. (31, 32) In fact, an entire industry revolves around getting labourers across the border. This industry focuses on men who promise women jobs as models, actresses, and waitresses (33). However, although the women often obtain jobs for the first month of their stay, once their visitor visas expire, they are pressured into prostitution. Paid domestic service or export processing zone employment also negatively affects women's health (33).

As already mentioned, recent laws regarding abortion have caused an unseen amount of preventable death in women and children leaving families motherless. Too, violence against women remains high in Nicaragua. According to Ellsberg et al. (34) 52% of all women in Nicaragua have reported experiencing some sort of physical violence in a domestic setting. Domestic violence (and violence in general) has negative effects on both mental and physical well-being in women (35) and is an important element of how gender intersects with health in many cultural and historical contexts.

Finally, what has transpired recently in development and academia on development is a one-sided approach to gender—that is, focus is on empowerment for women while men are often left on the backburner and not dealt with directly. While well intentioned, this does little to deal with the problem, as gender is a many-sided topic. Research and programs aimed at understanding men and masculinities helps deal with a variety of mental, physical and spiritual health topics that can have beneficial impact on women and men alike.



## Chapter 4: Historical Context

### 4.1 Political and Social History

Because Nicaragua has spent much of its colonial and post-colonial history engaged in some sort of conflict (the country has only recently been at peace since the end of the contra- or counter- revolution in 1990), it is vital to contextualize the study within this history. That is to say, the Somoza, former Sandinista, Chamorro, Aleman and finally the current Sandinista governments, all brought forward different political schema that had a fundamental shaping of both gender and sexuality<sup>10</sup>. This section is in no way to be interpreted as a comprehensive history of Nicaragua but will focus mainly on the *major* political and military events that brought on the current government in order to better illustrate the context that surrounds study participants. This history is meant to outline the ultimately violent and volatile social circumstances that Nicaragua has experienced over the centuries. Also, there are specific histories that are vital to understanding the study and will, hence, be interspersed throughout the text of this thesis.

Nicaragua, in 1850, had sustained several hundred years of foreign intrusion as well as warfare between the regions of León (politically, part of the Conservative party of Nicaragua) and Granada (politically, part of the Liberal party of Nicaragua). While both British and United States interest in colonizing the region was stayed through the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, the Liberals turned to the United States' William Walker to take the Conservatives out of power. However, Walker strongly believed in Manifest

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<sup>10</sup> In some cases, the schemas have had direct and disastrous impacts on women such as the current abortion laws that have outlawed *all* forms of abortion. For more on this topic see 36. Howe C. Gender, Sexuality, and Revolution: Making Histories and Cultural Politics in Nicaragua. 1979-2001. . In: French W, Bliss K, editors. Gender, Sexuality, and Power in Latin America Since Independence. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc; 2007.

Destiny<sup>11</sup> and, with his small group of armed mercenaries from California, took over the Granada capital and eventually proclaimed himself President of Nicaragua, instituting many pro-American policies (38). He was eventually ousted from the country through an arranged truce, only to return for another attempt to overthrow the government in 1860, when he was caught and turned over by the British to the Hondurans and promptly executed.

Consequent to the execution of Walker, the Conservatives had a political 'leg up' and ruled Nicaragua between the years of 1857-1893. But in 1893, the Liberals won the government back, much to the dismay of the United States who soon made it known that a Conservative overthrow of the government would be supported. A U.S. controlled Conservative government ensued and due to the rebellion that caused it, Nicaragua's economy and polity significantly waned; the rebellion disrupted processes vital to the economy of the country. Because of the American control and the failing economy, many Nicaraguans became angry, including the Liberal Benjamin Zeledón. In 1912, this former military officer and minister of defense turned general, with a contingent of Liberals, began another uprising with the intent of ridding Nicaragua of the corrupted U.S. influenced government. U.S. marines were loaned to the Conservative government to aid with the attempted supplant and the rebellion was soon overcome. Zeledón's lifeless body was dragged through the hamlet of Niquinohomo, where a teenager by the name of Augusto César Sandino watched government troops beat Zeledón's body, an event that contributed towards his deciding to lead his own Nicaraguan revolution.

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<sup>11</sup> The government of the United States of America believed that their expansion throughout North and South America was both destined and ordained by God. For more, see 37. Davidson L. Christian Zionism as a Representation of American Manifest Destiny. *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*. 2005;14(2):157-69.

For the next twenty-one years, U.S. soldiers helped maintain a series of consecutive pro-U.S. governments while occupying Nicaragua. Moreover, the U.S. helped the Nicaraguan governments establish the infamous National Guard. Tired of the U.S. forces, corrupt Nicaraguan government, and National Guard, Sandino joined a Liberal-led insurrection against the forces by organizing his own guerrilla outfit. When the Liberals agreed to a peace settlement, Sandino continued the rebellion with his detachment. Sandino's goals were the creation of a popular political party as well as peasant cooperative land distribution and his politics were nationalist and anti-imperialist (demonstrated through his hatred of U.S. occupation). Finally, the U.S. forces left in January of 1933 and Sandino signed a prefatory agreement with the controlling Sacasa government.

Importantly, as the U.S. force left Nicaragua, the U.S. and Sacasa governments strengthened the National Guard and in so doing placed the Nicaraguan politician Anastasio Somoza García in charge. Somoza García quickly took full control of the Guard and overthrew the Sacasa government. Soon after, the National Guard, under the control of the Somoza family, became the dominant force in Nicaragua terrorizing the people into submission while the Somoza's guaranteed those loyal to them certain advantages like turning a blind eye to corruption and exploitation of the peasantry. Somoza succeeded in developing the Nicaraguan economy towards goods export and the creation of a Central Bank, Institute of National Development, and National Housing Institute; although none of the advances succeeded in helping the average citizen, with the exception of providing some semblance of economic stability.

Somoza García's reign came abruptly to an end when he was assassinated in September of 1956. His son Luis Somoza Debayle took over his father's dictatorship and took a more 'soft' political line, creating U.S. sponsored policy that ultimately created a multitude of ineffective public programs including: public housing and education, social security, agrarian reform and more. He revitalized the government by re-cultivating relationships with the Liberal party. In 1967 he suddenly died of a heart attack and was replaced by his younger, more ambitious and treacherous brother, Anastasio García Debayle took over after winning a 'rigged' election.

Whereas Somoza Debayle strove to make the dictatorship's public image more respectable through the consolidation of their family fortune and involvement with the Liberal party, García Debayle used brute strength via the National Guard and notoriously expanded his family fortune through corrupt means in the Nicaraguan public's eyes. A constitutional principal stated that he had to be out of office by 1972 so García Debayle, again through U.S. advice, turned over the government to two Liberals and one Conservative who maintained control until 1974, when García Debayle was again elected in a falsified election. García Debayle maintained control of the National Guard even when he was out of office for two years.

The infamous 1972 Christmas earthquake marks an event that would ultimately prove to be that proverbial straw that broke the back of the dictatorship. After an excess of ten thousand people were killed and a 600-square-block section of Managua was destroyed, international relief material and aid money came pouring into the country. Placing himself as chief of a National Emergency Committee, Somoza accepted the aid money and relief material—which was subsequently sold—and has yet to rebuild vast

portions of the city (empty lots where buildings formerly stood, can still be seen throughout Managua). The poor citizenship was forced to live in wooden shacks that were not sufficient for long-term living.

The Sandinist Front of National Liberation (FSLN), a Sandino influenced guerrilla force, was gaining popularity amongst the public at this point in Nicaraguan history and was becoming increasingly active in its guerrilla activity. Moreover, the elite business group of Nicaragua became disillusioned with Somoza and his corruption. Following a hostage taking by the FSLN in December of 1974, Somoza sent the National Guard to retaliate against the guerrilla operation and they stole from the poor, imprisoned them without cause, and executed, raped and tortured masses of them, resulting in Somoza being cited as one of the world's most notorious human rights abusers (38, 39). This action fueled even more hatred for the dictatorship amongst the public and, because Catholic priests and missionaries were now seeing the atrocities committed against their parishioners, they soon denounced the National Guard in international forums.

Following Somoza's massive heart attack and break from office for medical treatment in Miami, the National Guard and other Nicaraguan elites began to loot the national treasury and plot for the new leadership. Just prior to this event, due to international and more significantly, U.S., pressure, Somoza halted the National Guard activity and allowed freedom of press once again. Finally, in a culmination of events, twelve important citizens of Nicaragua aligned with the FSLN who were already engaged in guerrilla attacks on National Guard posts:

There can be no dialogue with Somoza...because he is the principal obstacle to all rational understanding...through the long and dark history of *Somocismo*, dialogues with the dictatorship have only served to strengthen it...and in this crucial moment for Nicaragua, in which the dictatorship is isolated and weakened,

the expediency of dialogue is the only political recourse that remains for *Somocismo*. (38) (p.33)

While driving to his office on January 10, 1978 the editor of national newspaper *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, was assassinated by gunmen spurring an almost unanimous two-week national general strike and riots composed of more than 30,000 individuals (38, 39).

With more support than ever pouring in, the FSLN proceeded from 1978 up until Somoza's flee from Nicaragua on July 17, 1979, to accomplish a number of tactical and strategic defeats over the dictatorship and National Guard. Immediately, the provisional government of the FSLN began the enormous task of rebuilding Nicaragua. The government developed mass pragmatic popular based programs in health and education, and, despite being forced into trade relations with the Socialist Bloc, the government developed and maintained their own unique economic system that included:

(1) a mixed economy with heavy participation by the private sector, (2) political pluralism featuring interclass dialogue and efforts to institutionalize input and feedback from all sectors, (3) ambitious social programs, based in large part on grassroots voluntarism, and (4) the maintenance of diplomatic and economic relations with as many nations as possible regardless of ideology (38)(p.42).

The people and government of Nicaragua made enormous strides economically, socially, and politically throughout the rule of the FSLN, however, despite Nicaragua's unique political climate, the newly elected Reagan administration was in deep opposition to the FSLN as they feared the spread of Marxism and the Socialist Bloc. Economic sanctions, CIA sabotage through propagandizing nationally and internationally (with the hopes of isolating the FSLN), and the invasion of Nicaragua through a surrogate U.S. trained and sponsored *contra* force marked the 1980s as a decade of growing militarism and instability.

The *contra* forces systematically attacked (using guerrilla tactics) all FSLN institutions including social program infrastructure (schools, clinics, and more), cash crops, and villages that were seen to be pro-Sandinista (38). Regardless of the enormous casualties, the FSLN maintained its popular support. Unfortunately, the still fragile state of the economy could not withstand all the pressure and soon the FSLN took desperate measures: they adopted a number of different neo-liberal economic policies that proved disastrous for the economy with superinflation rising to 33,602 per cent. Nicaragua attained the rank of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and estimates of damages due to U.S. destabilization run around 9 billion USD (40).

Due to all of the economic and life loss throughout these years, the 1990 elections provided a way out of war for the people of Nicaragua. The U.S. government, as usual, intervened in the election by promising that U.S. sanctions on the country would cease with the election of Violeta Chamorro (wife of the assassinated *La Prensa* editor). Chamorro subsequently won the election and took over as the first female president of Nicaragua. The U.S. followed through on their promise and ended their five-year embargo. Chamorro almost immediately did away with the FSLN mixed economy and put into play a series of structural reforms that were in line with the structural adjustments the IMF and World Bank suggested (41, 42). In 1992 an IMF/World Bank structural adjustment program was instituted that ultimately reduced spending in social programs to 1.3 percent of GDP, increased unemployment from 25% in the late 1980s to around 60% in 1992, and cut large portions of spending on health and education (41, 42).

The economic situation grew worse and, in 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit Nicaragua leaving approximately one-fifth of the population without a place to live, killing about

2400 individuals, and wreaking havoc on the countries infrastructure. Taking a page from the playbook of the last Nicaraguan dictator, Nicaragua's newest President, Arnoldo Alemán decided to funnel aid money to himself rather than put it towards the goal of rebuilding after the damage incurred from Hurricane Mitch. Increased measures by the IMF and World Bank at eliminating poverty were undertaken resulting in neoliberal economics accepted almost in toto (40). The people of Nicaragua continue to live, even today after the Sandinista government has been re-elected, in extreme poverty with the country ranking as the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Post-revolution times, in the context of Nicaraguan history, have brought interesting new freedoms as well as well as restraints on individuals that have direct consequence on their actions and perceptions of what it is to be 'male' and 'female'. For example, soldiering and the fight to defeat the contra forces provided a unique hyper-masculinated and violent environment that granted men an ability to enact their aggressions on an enemy. However, as Howe has discussed, while difficult to prove because of historical silences in this area, there seems to have been an increase in domestic violence in Nicaragua due to men's acting out their aggressions on their wives in place of the enemy (36). Despite the difficulty of these arguments, it still goes without saying that the fluctuating and often violent history that begot the current society has had a very real and prominent effect on constructions of gender.

#### *4.2 The Feminist Movement in Nicaragua*



1977 marked the year that the Nicaraguan women's movement officially began with the formation of the Association of Women in the National Situation (AMPRONAC). In many ways, this year marked the beginning of a formal struggle against patriarchy in Nicaragua—a struggle fraught with the trappings of any fight against power. During the years of 1977-1986 AMPRONAC and the Nicaraguan governing bodies created programs and passed laws that served as a front of resistance to the hegemonic gender issues current to the period. AMPRONAC was composed of mainly women from different socioeconomic echelons: house-wives, students, and market women; a united and unified force against an understood uniform oppressor (43). Their capacity varied from protest, human rights advocacy, and guerrillas to the 'logistical rearguard' with their motivations stemming from their ethical duty to oppose the Somoza dictatorship as well as their roles as women (wives, mothers, daughters or sisters of male combatants) (43)(p.211). The beginning years of AMPRONAC included demands that prostitution be outlawed, women's images in advertising be terminated, and women's equality be upheld, demands that were responded to by the Sandinista junta by ordering 'employers to pay equal salaries for equal work, without discrimination based on age or sex; the decree prohibited all commercial use of women's bodies as sexual objects in advertising or in the media' (43)(p.212). Likewise, the junta passed an agrarian reform law that allowed women to be beneficiaries no matter what their marital status. In addition, AMPRONAC worked successfully to pass the Family Relations and Child Support Laws that each entrusted equal responsibility to both sexes for raising and caring for children notwithstanding their marital status. As already discussed, this period saw a tremendous rise in literacy across the country, a substantial portion in rural women (a

hoped-for aim). Moreover, AMPRONAC created maternal and infant health care programs as well as building hundreds of schools and pre-schools and dozens of childcare centres nationwide.

Early after the success of the Sandinista revolutionary government AMPRONAC became the Association of Nicaraguan Women ‘Luisa Amanda Espinoza’ (AMNLAE)<sup>12</sup>. Efforts towards the emancipation of women were directed principally at integrating women ‘into all the tasks, activities, organizations and goals of the revolutionary process’(43)(p.212). AMNLAE supposed women could liberate themselves from patriarchy by proving their ability to oppose male domination through participation in non-traditional revolutionary roles. Difficulty in the leadership of AMNLAE became very apparent by October 1981 when membership in the organization exceeded 25,000 members: confusion regarding AMNLAE’s role arose due to its crossing over into other popular organizations’ territory (leading to inter-organization tensions) that were likewise attempting to recruit members for civil defense. Moreover, AMNLAE found that a significant number of women were already participating in organizations such as the Sandinista Youth, labour unions and/or neighbourhood committees. Consequently, the leadership of AMNLAE decided to reorganize its structure and work methodology (as opposed to its principal task of women’s integration) as, not an organization distinct from other Sandinista organizations, but as a ‘political-ideological movement’ that worked with women within the other organizations to ‘overcome the obstacles they encountered that limited or prevented more active participation at both the grassroots and leadership level’ (43)(p. 213). Despite the changes, those associated with AMNLAE saw little

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<sup>12</sup> Luisa Amanda Espinoza was the first woman martyred in the fight against the Somoza dictatorship.

change in the position of women, something that Croquillon believes was associated with their inability to discuss women's position as subordinate to men. With the onset of the contra-revolution AMNLAE associates became 'bogged down' with recruiting soldiers for Patriotic Military Service (SMP), reconnecting mothers and sons, or helping mothers deal with the loss of their children in the war. While AMNLAE did succeed in politicizing the, before, private space of motherhood, 'it was not able to lead women to question the monopoly of responsibility borne by mothers in regard to their children, or the irresponsibility of men as fathers, or even [their] identity which was determined exclusively by women's role as mothers' (43)(p. 215). In 1983, precipitating from the perception of women outside AMNLAE that it was not accomplishing women's emancipation, many independent feminist initiatives began that (while AMNLAE continued to be the only formal women's movement during the period in question) now compose the very diverse women's movement currently in existence.

Out of the new initiatives came the Women's Legal Office (OLM) that offered legal and psychological service for: 'divorce, custody of children in cases of separation, domestic violence, rape, etc.' (43)(p. 215). In addition, the Department of Rural Women, part of the Centre for Research and Study of Agrarian Reform (CIERA); a research team in the Centre for Labour Studies (CETRA); and another, part of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC); were created in 1983 in a similar response to the inefficiency of AMNLAE to specifically target the needs of women. These projects were still government affiliated but a growing number of European and Canadian non-governmental organization sponsored groups existed as well in the area of health including a midwife training program, health centre and hospital initiated family

planning, natural therapeutic products; and in micro-economy builders in the form of small-scale jam, pottery, and other enterprises (43). Between 1985 and 1986, great strides were made in favour of the acceptance of the women's demands in the final draft of the Constitution because of the research done by a small group of women in the legal department of the National Assembly regarding Open Meeting participation of women (43).

Another major breakthrough for women's resistance to male hegemony came from academic (writers, lawyers, psychologists or feminist researchers) publications in major Nicaraguan newspapers and magazines covering a variety of topics including

the double workload of women [having to do the housework, cooking and childcare as well as having a job outside the home], the need for greater responsibility for childcare on the part of society as a whole, machismo in the media, abuse and violence against women, and sexism in education (43)(p. 217).

Debates over the legalization or decriminalization of abortion raged on two separate occasions during this period, which resulted in the exclusion of a 'right to life of all persons from their conception' clause in the Constitution, supporting future legal amendments.

Even at the height of all of these changes, AMNLAE members were hesitant to publicly proclaim their feminist leanings (despite privately admitting as much) for fear of internecine strife. In their work with the 60,000 member strong ATC, AMNLAE members, in conjunction with the all-male members of the national committee of the ATC agreed that women's role was scant and came to the conclusion that a grassroots study on women's agricultural sector involvement must be undertaken: it was. The results of the study indicated that, because gender-division of labour both originates and is reproduced in the home and said labour is inimical to women's productivity and

participation in labour unions, ‘the totality of conditions in which women lived their lives’ should be acknowledged (43)(p. 217). These conclusions hinted at what was to come: a more inclusive feminist movement that took into account women’s ‘national, class, and other interests’ (43)(p. 218).

Following a 1985 crisis where FSLN dignitaries challenged the very existence of AMNLAE, members began to ‘engender’ AMNLAE resulting in new forums of discussion. However, difficulty persisted as women felt that they could not be both feminist and revolutionary, lest a revolution of the sexes divert from the more critical (in their eyes) contra-revolution. However, gradually the FSLN became attuned, to the extent that Daniel Ortega made his famous reference to *machismo* (discussed below) and *Comandante* Bayardo Arce stated, ‘Nicaraguan women have historically suffered a social discrimination that has put them in a subordinate position in society’(43)(p. 220). Bayardo (43) listed ‘*machismo*, paternal irresponsibility, discriminatory laws and policies, and the subordination of women in families and society’ as impediments to women’s true involvement in revolutionary Nicaragua (p. 220).

The government’s official recognition led to many successes for AMNLAE and the movement in general: a women’s section was included in the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), ‘a national women’s commission was formed in the National Confederation of Professionals (CONAPRO),’ the department of women in the ATC achieved national secretariat status with the secretariat director being appointed as a member of the national executive committee of the ATC, and finally, work carried out by the women’s movement was indoctrinated into all major government organizations and

women were appointed to each national executive committee to oversee the work's implementation (43).

The 1990 election came and went causing the activities of AMNLAE to come swiftly to a halt. A series of events led to the withdrawal of AMNLAE from reactivation and, in February 1991, members held their own national assembly. The other governmental and non-governmental groups (above paragraph), when invited, decided to not participate, turning the women's movement into a less top-down power oriented and more multi-faceted movement.

#### ***4.3 Health Systems in Nicaragua***

This section, again due to the focus of the current study and the page limitations thereon, will briefly outline how healthcare, during and since the last dictatorship, has been doled out to Nicaraguan citizens.

In 1976, the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua had 119 health centres and 152 health posts serving a population of approximately 2.2 million. Few used the facilities with only 14 visits per year on average with the inclusion of repeat visits and the rural population (a significant portion of the population) had very little to no access to healthcare) (44). After the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, the new government formed a unified Ministry of Health (MINSa) that oversaw the nations healthcare systems (in opposition to the fragmented health system of the previous government). Health infrastructure expanded significantly during the years 1980-83 with rapid increases in vaccination doses, and increases in health centres and health posts. Importantly, the amount of visits to the centres likewise increased. Much of the activity of health and education came through the training of voluntary citizen *brigadistas* that

brought mass literacy campaigns to the population as well as basic health and hygiene information (44).

Health-care efficiency, both in terms of the reach of the system and in terms of the amount given, decreased throughout the period of the contra-revolution, especially following 1983. Contra forces purposefully targeted health care infrastructure and workers. Obviously, hospital visits and the extent of reach of MINSA decreased significantly during this time as well. To illustrate, coverage in the program to provide supplemental feedings to malnourished children fell 10 percent between 1983 and 1985, the program for postpartum care for low birth weight births decreased from 52% in 1983 to 33% in 1985. Doctors and nurse employment decreased 2% during 1983-1986. Some of the decreases (if not many) were a result of the mobilization of health care workers to the militia (44).

Following the election of Violeta Chamorro, the Nicaraguan health system was, like other elements of the economy, decentralized (although MINSA remained in place). The processes included the adoption of SAPs and, ultimately, to increased reliance on non-governmental sources for health care. With the economy in shambles and the new restrictions of the SAPs, non-governmental organizations came to be relied on more and more as government expenditure decreased (45).

Again, this short review of the Nicaraguan health system was meant to briefly provide context to the situation of health in Nicaragua. Throughout the remainder of the thesis, I will draw on relevant literature as well as research participants' knowledge in order to provide historical perspective, as necessary.

## Chapter 5: Masculinity

Until recently, there has been lack of research into men and masculinities within gender research and because of the importance of such studies to the restructuring of the hegemony of gender<sup>13</sup> existing in Nicaragua, increased research on the subject of men and masculinities has been proposed in the literature (47, 48). Concurrent with the research on masculinities has been a directed effort to bring gender equity to the forefront of social change. Such is the impetus for the programs surrounding masculinities at the CISAS in León, Nicaragua. The programs are directed around creating an environment that enables men and women to question their own gender paradigms in an attempt to create equity, and consequently, improve both the quality and length of life of Nicaraguans.

Gutmann (47) discusses the current debate surrounding change and resilience in men to their perceptions of masculinity in Latin America, revealing ‘contradictions between modern discourses and so-called traditional practices.’ While it is true that popular culture paints families as needing fathers and as men and boys needing families, it is evident that spaces outside the household, like sports, politics, or the workforce hold more importance in ideals of masculinity (49). However, domestic spaces are crucial to gender equity and the learned behaviours of gender in youth and, in the case of the participants of this study, are incredibly important in defining masculinity. Therefore, my research is founded in an interest to further uncover the interplay between how

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<sup>13</sup> While the concept of gender will be further developed below (and certainly in the thesis), in the current case, it will not be taken to be the biologically determined sex of male and female, but the socially constructed and defined roles inherent in being a ‘man’ or ‘woman.’ Such roles are reinforced and are constantly evolving over time through ‘biological, technological, economic, and other societal constraints.’ For more see 46.

Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice. New York: Oxford University Press; 2001.



masculinities are interpreted and therefore demonstrated, in both thought and deed in the home<sup>14</sup>.

The studies of masculinities can be broadly defined within three main categories: (a) Psychoanalytic and sex role theory, (b) Feminist theory, and (c) Critical men's studies (including social constructionist and post-structuralist approaches). Psychoanalytic theorists, based in Freudian thought, posit that men and women are fundamentally different because of separate inherent biological traits (or drives). Theorists in this realm put forth an 'Oedipal process of identification' and a concomitant 'repression of instinctive desires' as essential to understanding gender divisions (19). By the same token, sex role theorists define masculinity as the differences between men and women (expressed socially), with men and women's success (at being a man or a woman) measured by their ability to conform to socially derived sex prototypes. Namely, to be 'successful' at being a man, one must follow the conventions outlined by a particular society on what it is to be a man. For example, qualities such as strength, capability, rational thinking, and virility are certain qualities that some would attribute to masculinity. Consequently, according to theorists in this area (and in comparison to other theorists), masculinity is only a narrowly defined entity that is dependent solely on a

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<sup>14</sup> An important part of the proposed study is identifying how men in León, Nicaragua interconnect public and domestic performance of masculinity. But how does one delimit public and domestic space? Unquestionably, recent years have seen a politicization of domestic labour in academia (in reaction to functionalist sociology), causing a blur between former societal conceptions of private and public space. More specifically, rather than regarding domestic labour as the 'expression of the love and devotion of women,' it is viewed as a 'socially necessary, concrete activity'. Thus, this study does not conceptualize the household as a socially isolated unit, nor does it view domesticity as being private. In fact, there is a great deal of overlap between the two, each being reliant on the other for survival. For more see, 50. Jelin E. Family and Household: Outside World and Private Life. In: Jelin E, editor. Family, Household and Gender Relations in Latin America. New York: Kegan Paul International; 1991.

society's interpretation of what it is to be a 'male', and men's performance of masculinity is therein limited.

Alternatively, some feminist theorists who wrote during the 'second wave' feminist period attempt to explain masculinities in terms of a hegemonic patriarchy that oppresses and dominates women<sup>15</sup> (51). Importantly, and in contrast to psychoanalytic and sex role theory, feminist theory includes concepts of power, and gender is considered as not inherently biologically created, but rather socially constructed. However, while extremely important in developing the field, it was not until the arrival of post-colonial, post-structural, and 'queer' theory that inter-feminine power relationships and recognition of different forms of masculinity—or masculinities—were developed.

Indeed, those involved in critical men's studies, as a movement sympathetic to the feminist movement, approach the topic of a plurality of masculinities by seeking to understand how masculinities are socially constructed and to better comprehend inter- and intra-gender power relationships. Moreover, research in this area is grounded in the knowledge that, because masculinities are constructions of society they can, therefore, be deconstructed and transformed; while men learn such constructions from a young age, they are not passive recipients of such knowledge but are constantly engaging in behaviour that shifts and changes knowledge in the area.

However, thought in this field is not without contention. While there are many complex theories in existence to explain masculinity, as Máirtín Mac an Ghaill illustrates, they 'fail to connect with individuals' experiences' (52). In a similar strain, many

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<sup>15</sup> It is true, however, that this hegemonic relation is not inherent in current feminist thought, and much of what is discussed in critical men's studies is also addressed in current feminist theory. I only use this form of delimitation, as it is convenient to the discussion.

theorists in studies of masculinity tend to view masculinity and its performance as something innately male. Equally problematic is the binary created through the continuing comparison of ‘male’ masculinity with ‘female’ femininity, that conflicts with poststructuralist thoughts on binary constructions.

Accordingly, my research is rooted in a rejection of the terms masculinity and femininity as being polar opposites, with the traits of bodies being wrapped up in the concepts of ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’. Rather, I approach masculinity as a dynamic spectrum that occupies space beyond the confines of corporeal embodiment. Although the term conjures up concepts of ‘maleness’ (and for lack of a more appropriate word I will continue to use it), the embodiment of masculinity can be attributed to objects, places, and spaces. Similarly, masculinity can be applied to, performed or be embodied by women. However, the present thesis restricts its analysis to solely the corporeal. As it concerns the corporeal—that is, outside of the strictly adjectival sense—I refer to Judith Butler’s prominent concept of *performativity*, or, ‘the anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the anticipation conjures its object’ (53)(p. xv). Butler clarifies this metalepsis by pointing out that the very anticipation of a ‘gendered essence’ by a body will produce it.

Accordingly, my research focuses on masculinity as both something that is a quality of body, object, place, and/or space as well as something that can be performed, or engaged in, through an action process(es). Moreover, Foucauldian concepts of power are implicit to masculinity. McHoul and Grace clarify Foucault’s concept of power:

Power is not to be read, therefore, in terms of one individual’s domination over another or others; or even as that of one class over another or others; for the subject which power has *constituted* becomes part of the mechanisms of power. It becomes the vehicle of that power which, in turn, has constituted it *as* that type of

vehicle. Power is both reflexive, then, and impersonal. It acts in a relatively autonomous way and produces subjects just as much as, or even more than, subjects reproduce it. The point is not to ignore the subject or to deny its existence (as is the case with some forms of structuralism) but rather to examine *subjection*, the process of the construction of subjects in and as a collection of techniques or flows of power which run through the whole of a particular social body.’ (Original emphasis) (5)

The following sections outline the results that emerged from the process of data collection in the form of interviews, participant observation, and the focus group beginning with a discussion on masculinity and followed by discussion on *machismo*. Relevant historical context will be given throughout the sections.

### ***5.1 What the Men had to Say about Masculinity***

When asked what it meant to be a man before the Nicaraguan revolution participants provided a variety of answers depending on the specific period of time they were discussing. It was interesting to note that while men proposed during the focus group that there were three different time periods that demarcated Nicaraguan concepts of masculinity—pre-1979, 1979 revolution and counter revolution, and post contra-revolution—they spoke of masculinities within a historical context during the interviews with respect to only the pre- and post-revolution periods (the contra-revolution was inclusive with the post-revolution). This section will highlight each of these themes according to their historical pairing. With the exception of one man, everyone was old enough to be able to discuss the pre-revolutionary context with sufficient mental recall. Men’s discussion of what it meant to be a man included topics such as work, relationships, morality, religion, divorce, and politics. Furthermore, men overwhelmingly framed masculinity in relation to two opposing notions: first and foremost, men are certainly not women; and in close second, *real* men are not

*machistas*.<sup>16</sup> I have included headings as markers for general categories of discussion throughout this section to aid in reading.

### 5.1.1 *Employment and Equality*

A common and almost invariably primary response to questions of masculinity revolved around men's ability to find work; their facility to define themselves as men was tied to their facility to provide for their family, both in the past and in the present. As Diego responded,

before, it was something very different. When I was young, the men would say that being a man was that you had to know how to work in the country...all types of work in the country: planting corn, planting cotton, wheat, soya, peanuts, plowing with oxen or horses, finding water, using a machete to cut down [firewood] or splitting firewood with an axe or digging holes with a bar, heavy work. If you couldn't do all those things in this time, you weren't a man and you didn't have access to a woman because the men would say, 'and how are you going to maintain her if you are still not a man?'

When compared to the present, Roberto responded that in the past, 'we were more inclined to work.' This statement also alludes to how men embody masculinity. That is to say, their ability to do 'heavy work' or bodily capacity weighed heavily in their abilities to perform as men.

Economic conditions of the time affected men's ability to provide adequately for their family. Roberto described how it was easier to provide for one's family before the revolution because prices were not so high and better produce and meat were more easily accessed.

We didn't have to be thinking that there wasn't enough food or that something was expensive. He [a particular man] was not counting...that one pound of pork cost one córdoba, now it is worth 120...That is the life that we lived before the

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<sup>16</sup> The *machista* is discussed further in Chapter 6 but, in a very simple sense, it can be considered a person who is hypermasculinated.

‘70s... And I was young, I was going to work and I earned my 8 córdobas and we lived only [with] that.

And with the food, for example, we didn’t eat an animal, pig, if it was not fat...that would give at least half a tin of fat, that is, 10 litres of oil. Now, we eat skinny pigs and before if a meat vendor was looking at a pig and it did not give him half a tin to a tin of fat, he didn’t buy it.

Continuing, he described his father’s advice saying, ‘my father told me that life before, when he was a kid, my grandparents would say, ‘it was a wonderful life that I lived.’’

In fact, prior to the 1972 Managua earthquake<sup>17</sup>, the Nicaraguan economy was continuously and rapidly growing as it made the transition from a ‘backward plantation’<sup>18</sup> to a modernizing agro-industrial economy’ (54). The economy spread to become a ‘dynamic agro-based manufacturing centre’ made up of peasant proletariats (54). Despite the nefarious orchestration of the economy that existed during the Somoza dictatorships<sup>19</sup>, some veneer of stability persisted in the production of labour. Progress was of course biased towards the dictators and those rich elite that the Somozas kept ‘in their pockets,’ however the rich still employed a large number of *campesino* proletariats; this employment provided sufficient means for sustenance and basic necessities. Roberto recalls,

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<sup>17</sup> The Christmas 1972 earthquake razed a large 600 square block section of Managua causing economic pandemonium. Hundreds of millions of dollars in aid monies were embezzled by the Somoza dictator using false construction contracts that were supposed to be used in the rebuilding of Managua. For more on the earthquake and it’s repercussions see 54. Weisskoff R. Forty-One Years of Structural Continuity and Social Change in Nicaragua, 1950-1991. *The Journal of Developing Areas* 1994;28:379-92.

<sup>18</sup> While I find Weisskoff’s use of the word ‘backward’ offensive due to his teleological and Western stance on Nicaraguan history (i.e. the present is a constantly evolving and improved version of the past) it is still an accurate description of a historical transition that occurred in Nicaragua.

<sup>19</sup> For more on the economy of Nicaragua during the Somoza dictatorships, please see 38. Walker TW. *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino*. 3rd ed. Boulder: Westview Press; 1991.

even these rich, the rich are like that. One thing, they lived with money. I am talking about the level of the *campesino*, at the level of the worker, at the level of the unskilled worker, at the level of the rich from before...lies. There is an enormous change...the rich don't leave us work. So, only the rich are maintained. So, there is a change, a big change and before...the rich were allowed to develop and develop and those men kept people working, got more people, and they had more people working. But like that, it stopped. Now the wealthy are [not] like that. They can't do something so that this country moves forward. They have us like that, and we, the workers, the unskilled workers, we are those that suffer and we can't do anything because at the level of the union...they can [do] more because they are closer to the government. Well, from there..for there I don't understand it.

Nicaragua's revolutions have certainly impacted the way citizens think about class divides; indeed masculinities differ along those lines. Even still, the poor throughout the country are exasperated by the divide and inequity.

In fact, as my most relied upon method for long distance transport in the city was through taxis, I was able to hear many *taxistas* express their discontent with the current economic situation: two in particular. The first was infuriated by his inability to find fares. Nicaragua underwent a massive economic inflation of more than 26%<sup>20</sup> throughout the last fiscal year due to a large number of factors; inclusive the staggering price of oil and petrol that the world saw during the summer of 2008. Of course, the price of petrol necessarily influences *taxistas* profit margins. As such, many people started walking to and from places when before, they took taxis. The first *taxista* that I will discuss disclosed his desire to go back to the time of the Somoza dictators he grew up with—at least then he had enough money to buy the basic necessities for his family. I cannot overemphasize the man's emotion when he made his statement; he was irate. It was obvious that his ability to provide for his family was central in his life. The second

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<sup>20</sup> This statistic was heard on the Channel 2 News while in Nicaragua

*taxista* deserves some explanation and is provided in the following excerpt from my field notes.

It was hot again today and I visited the community centre. I decided to leave a bit early so that I would have time to chat with the women that ran the centre. It was particularly difficult to find a cab today and I ended up walking all the way to central park. The park was crowded with tourists getting in line to see the famous cathedral that stood gargantuan in the park. I didn't feel like looking for a cab amongst the tourists so I headed South past the Enitel building. I smirked as always at the protest graffiti on the wall: 'GENOCIDAL BUSH. ENEMY OF HUMANITY. DEATH TO THE IMPERIAL INVADOR.' (see photo below) Nicaragua's relationship with the United States is complex: many families have family members living and working there either legally or not, Nicaraguan culture is absolutely affected by USA culture (through music, film, goods, etc) yet the recent contra-revolution financed and organized by the USA as well as the embargo have left a scar on Nicaragua's population and economy. I finally found a taxi on the corner to the South of the spray-painted wall, fitting for the conversation I was about to have.

The taxi driver was in his late 20s and was cold to me as he asked where I was from when I first got in the car. Yet when I told him where I was going, he brightened up considerably. He asked me what I was doing out there and I told him [I talked to him about my thesis]. We began conversing about Canada, as most taxi drivers are interested in the country. Talk very soon came to the horrible inequities seen between our countries. He talked to me about Vicente Padilla, a Texas Rangers baseball player originally from Chinandega that just made the news as he signed a new contract with the Texas Rangers for \$11,000,000 USD and the taxi driver had the newspaper in hand. I expressed my disgust for people who earn such grotesque amounts of money and he was of the same mind. We discussed the importance of sharing wealth and he told me about how difficult it was for him to survive and to pay for the things his family needed and how much more difficult that was for him when he had the knowledge that someone was earning \$11,000,000 for playing a game. This discussion was carried on until we arrived at the community centre. At that point he turned around and I noticed the tears in his eyes. He grabbed my hand and said how refreshing it was to talk to a *chele* that was aware of inequity, that believed in distribution of wealth, and that had a heart.

His raw emotion was not unusual by any means<sup>21</sup>. He was a concerned citizen with ideals that extended beyond his own person, to the greater community. As the graffiti

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<sup>21</sup> Nicaraguan men rarely showed any difficulty in displaying their emotion (as opposed to the stereotypical North American male who is, apparently, emotionless).



message communicated, he was aware of external forces on his country; globalization is understood in a tangible way. The men whom I interviewed all demonstrated, either in their discussion of their leadership roles or in a general discussion of masculinity, similar sentiments of duty to community. Roberto describes, ‘and, not only to them, but also to the communities. I go, sometimes, to the communities. I speak to them and I say to them, look it men, this is bad.’ Benicio expressed his responsibility to any person that he interacts with and a responsibility to be examples for others:

For me, to be a man is to respect the person I have at my side, to help them and collaborate with them, respect them, in whatever I can, right? And to get ahead, the two together, right? With whoever it is, right? With your workmate, your roommate, it is necessary to get ahead, the two together. Because, in fact if I am with someone it is because I want to do good work with someone, right? Or with my partner to form a good family, to be examples and to get ahead in this life that is so hard.



**Figure 1: Graffiti near Central Park, León, Nicaragua**

### *5.1.2 Responsibility*

The relationship of responsibility to the masculine came out during the focus group; men emotionally asserted that to be a man in Nicaragua meant to be responsible.<sup>22</sup> When queried about what it meant to be responsible, the participants provided a multitude of answers. First, as already mentioned, responsibility is making sure your family is provided for as Roberto states:

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<sup>22</sup> It is possible that their word choice is inspired from the 1983 Law on Relations between Mothers, Fathers and Children that was passed in Nicaragua, legally obliging men to care for their partners and children, wed or not 43. Criquillon A. The Nicaraguan Women's Movement: Feminist Reflections from Within. In: Sinclair M, editor. *The New Politics of Survival: Grassroots Movements in Central America*. New York: Monthly Review Press; 1995, 55. Ruchwarger G. *The Sandinista Mass Organizations and the Revolutionary Process*. In: Harris R, Vilas CM, editors. *Nicaragua: Revolution Under Siege*. London: Zed Books Ltd.; 1985..

To be responsible is...it is to know that you are going to get a job, to be responsible with the children...to be responsible...that these kids have their food and...to be a responsible man is that I have to work and not be lazy because if I am lazy, I am not earning money to be better. I am an 'irresponsible'. Because if I am a layabout and I don't like work, because at this stage there are people like that *now* that don't like work.

However, current economic conditions make it much more difficult to find work and, in the case of Roberto, to be responsible (and hence, a man).

Now, in this time, as there is no work, we are all irresponsible in this time. Well, as I told you, the rich they have it like that, and the government that does not do anything.

Interestingly he says, 'We are all irresponsible in this time;' he demonstrates a belief that everyone is responsible for the unemployment rates, hearkening to the Marxist revolutionary ideals that inspired the Sandinista party as well as Nicaraguans for so long<sup>23</sup>, but in the same breath he recognizes the inability of the FSLN to do anything for the people. Men expanded on the importance of responsibility with regard to their wives or partners and in Juan's words:

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<sup>23</sup> While only speculation, I am confident that the inspiration for his phrasing comes from the revolutionary political mass organization of the 80s. During this time the government sponsored a gamut of organizations including the Luisa Amanda Espinosa Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE), Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), the National Union of Farmers and Cattle Raisers/Ranchers (UNAG), that together were set to the task of constructing a new society. The organizations were popular movements and constructed with members from all echelons of society. AMNLAE made enormous achievements in the National Literacy campaign that saw great reductions in illiteracy, promoted daycare, promoted employment projects for women and had a large role in the Popular Health Campaigns that effectively eradicated polio in the country. CDS led the way in community development through defense of the revolution through political-ideological, social, economic, and military means. The CDS helped in the different national campaigns, helped to develop community projects in water, school construction and other projects and also helped to ensure equitable distribution of basic products. Finally, UNAG assisted peasants in land access. For more on the history of the popular movements please see 55. Ruchwarger G. *The Sandinista Mass Organizations and the Revolutionary Process*. In: Harris R, Vilas CM, editors. *Nicaragua: Revolution Under Siege*. London: Zed Books Ltd.; 1985.

There are times there is better responsibility when the man is united with the woman and the two work [together] clearly. Because there is a better income, there is a more comfortable walk [of life] where they live. They can have more things if they are economic... Because if the two are like that, the two have their points of view in the responsibility where they live.

At one point in my time in Nicaragua I was out with my mother and father in-law as well as the owner of the hostel they were staying at (who just happened to be the son of the former mayor of León). At one point, my father-in-law made a very astute observation that he saw very few men of his age (mid-50s) in Nicaragua. He queried as to whether this was due to the loss of life during the revolution. The landlord responded politely that, perhaps yes, however, he confirmed that in fact the reason why so few men of that age bracket are seen is they are all at home 'reading the newspaper, while their wives work.' He talked about how they had become lazy and did nothing all day while their wives managed the duties of the home and worked outside the home to pay for basic living expenses. Roberto confirmed this in the midst of a conversation about responsibility.

The men now order women to work and they [the men] stay in the house, but waiting for the woman to pay them and give them food, and this is not being responsible.

As it happens, I was a roommate with a man who was in charge of one of the important sister-city partnerships with León who reaffirmed the landlord's statements with some anecdotes of his own. He told me of men who kept all the legal aspects of the home in the wife's name so that when bill collectors came around requiring payment for services at the house, they would say that they did not own the house and that they would have to talk to the owner (their wife) who was responsible for the bills. They would therefore 'pass the buck', yet when the wife was at home they would still maintain that they were

in charge of the house, making demands for cleanliness, children's discipline and food preparation.

### 5.1.3 Relationships, Children and the Home

Participants expanded on the roles of men and women in the house that usually fell under traditional lines, i.e. women should be in charge of the house while men should earn the wage.

My woman never has gone to work at the institutions [referring to free zone manufacturers]. My woman, when one of my kids goes to raise a kid, because I am at the farm, when they have just had them, my woman washes their clothes and cares for them. That is her work. But that is not every day, nor months. That is only about 15 or 20 days or a month at the most. My woman has never worked. I cannot lose a day of work...I become used to missing because I know that I have...I know it that I can come closer to sickness, or that I know because we are on earth, and in whatever moment we can need cash. And so, to me, I like to work and we should all be like that, but not all are like that. I don't drink and I work for my woman and if someone arrives and we can eat with him, we eat.

As Roberto demonstrates in the above quote, while he thought women's role was definitely in the home, he also demonstrates a sacrifice that he is making so that she does not have to work at the free zone manufacturers where the work is long and difficult. Moreover, he demonstrates his desire to share with others.

An important aspect of masculinity came out in participant responses to the method that they dealt with family relationships. The main relationships that came out in the interviews were man with sons and daughters, wives, and in-laws. Not only did notions of responsibility come out but, in Juan's words, so did the idea of love: 'love has to be communicative so that there is a good relationship, look it, love happens.' Men emphasized the importance of working *with* women in the home, both in raising children and in either sharing with household duties or, at the very least, recognizing the extent that women worked in the home. The quote at the top of page 52 outlines how two people

that work together can earn more money. Not only is the man more responsible by working *with* his partner, he is also in a more economically advantageous position.

Benicio discussed the consequences for women who are expected to work outside *and* at home through a story regarding some of his colleagues' exploration into the subject.

The problems that present the family is the man, ok? That works, that leaves the house to work. But through all of that, I believe that women play a very important role, ok? Because women, yes well, it is true because women stay in the house assuming, ok, that they stay in the house. The work that they complete is double because how much does it cost to care for a child, to tidy the house, to iron, to clean, all that is unpaid personal work. Last year some of my friends were doing a study because we do professional practice [in our] degree ok? So they completed a study and they asked some questions to some women like, 'what is all of your work that you do worth? Is it equal to men?' So the women came and they did the clothes, so much, so much...looked after the children, so much so much so much, right? All of it, all of it, all of it, the men only, for example, as it goes in the ocean communities, coastal communities, for example Las Peñitas, Poneloya, one can say there, they men say they are going to fish...and upon adding it all up, it resulted that more work was completed by women than by men.

Others discussed the relationship between men and women as equals. One of AMNLAE's largest goals was to achieve equality between the sexes. Despite FSLN strides in this area and the legal precedent set in making the sexes equal, equity remains an enormous issue today. That said, participants unanimously proposed that men and women are equal. Benicio said it well:

but, it is necessary to respect women because they are, as they say, our partner, and they aren't the soft sex, none of that, because we are all equal here, right? And I believe that it is necessary to lean on each other and if you are together with her and, like I told you before, it is to work together for the benefit of the couple or of the family.

The past held a different concept of how husbands dealt with wives for Diego.

Although in my [childhood], they couldn't do it, my mom, because there was no opportunity. My mom had good intentions, but they didn't give her the opportunity that she wanted with us because there is a regime there that said this

didn't do, it didn't do. My mom was a married woman and my grandpa managed her, my dad and mom. What my grandfather said nobody could say anything because it was an order, what he said.

Before the revolution, the feminist movement was practically non-existent. While illiteracy was prevalent throughout the country, illiteracy rates amongst poor rural women were greatest. Educations were not squandered on women who's job it was to stay in the home—the National Literacy Campaign addressed the inequity (55).

Men also outlined the importance of teaching children and, as Roberto states: 'I know that I should educate them, teach them to study.' Their great desire to educate their children showed a strong emphasis on the importance of education. Many of the participants revealed throughout the course of the interviews that they were not able to get an education for whatever reason and, in the following example by Diego, because their grandfather did not see it as important and therefore did not permit it.

Like in my childhood, we barely had school because my grandpa would say, 'what? What are you going to study?' What was that? If, in the farm, there was food, there were beans, corn, there was rice, there was cheese, avocados, 'that is what interests me,' said my grandpa. And my grandpa was a man that had a lot of money but couldn't sign his name [couldn't write]. We didn't escape my grandpa, my grandpa was rigid and we were afraid of him. But my older siblings, some are still in Managua, they are men, they are chemical engineers. They achieved that but the rest of us no, we couldn't. And so I don't want that to happen to my children. I want to improve it for them although I was not raised like that, in this system. But this system that I was raised in, like that, I don't like it. So, I give my children all that they deserve, how I couldn't and thank God I don't have spoiled kids, or drunks. Out of two older male children that I have they don't drink they don't smoke, they are dedicated to their work.

Another topic of interest that arose was spousal dispute. Several of the men discussed how they dealt with spousal disputes and, in turn, how their disputes serve as good examples of how *to* fight (as opposed to how *not* to fight, i.e., violence). Their

discussions also repeatedly confirmed their belief that, while different, men and women are equals. Roberto explains:

I don't want to say that I am a saint, that we don't fight...we fight verbally...things like that, but, not with punching or kicking, no, but with words. She told me that my words are not adequate. Also, I told her to watch, you are arguing poorly, like that, but of beatings no. And for there my children go as well...as I tell you...that it is what I have taught them. To my wife, I have told her to watch with the fact that you are a woman and I am a man. I am not more than you, we are equal, different in that you are a woman and I am a man. To be you is one and to be me is another, but here like that as I can make decisions, so can she make decisions. She makes decisions in the house. As long as there is something that I don't like or that she doesn't like, well then, there are going to be conversations, and that is what I have taught my children as well...that women are not to be hit, that if a woman does something bad, leave her alone. That if the woman hits you, you need to leave her so that you aren't going to hit her...Like that I spoke to them...I taught them and all of them are married with women...They are having their own children. Well, that is what I have taught them, that is how they are going to live. I, I am not going to be, maybe soon, and that is the teaching that I have given to them.

Roberto's comments also allude to a much talked about element of men's activities in Nicaragua—violence, an important aspect to the embodiment of masculinity.

At this point it is important to note that, while the participants agreed that men and women are equal, they still maintained with the exception of one man that the man should be the head of the house. In fact the way they spoke of men and women's roles was contradictory: the speaker above says that yes we are equal, but you must remember that you are the woman, and I am the man with all the traditional patriarchy implied.

When asked who is head of the home Juan responded definitively, the man.

There are times the woman wants to have more authority, more control and the man, most of the time in this field, [men] have to agree. But there are times that that happens and eventually it doesn't have a good result, why? Because she wants to have the command and you know that the man should have certain things in the control of a home, because he is the man.



This individual also mentioned that it was important to show love and that showing love was one way of placating women. Roberto contended that someone has to be the head of the house and it might as well be the man. Philip said that the man is the head of the house unless he is away and then the woman takes over while Diego compared the head of the household to the head of an organization. It does not matter who is the head, everyone shares in the work while the head is just the representative for certain things. That said, in his house he was head.

An important aspect to masculinity, certainly in the literature, is sexuality, however, only Juan brought up sexuality directly.

Many men have been left alone in Nicaragua [when] women emigrate to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica. The man has to do his adventures, to go looking for another woman.

This quote represents two important elements: migration for work and sexuality. The shortage of work in Nicaragua has forced families and individuals to seek work outside of the country, which oftentimes leads them to places like Costa Rica and El Salvador. Moreover, in most cases it is women who are able to find jobs (often illegally) working as maids in middle-class homes. There are a variety of issues that affect women who work in such a way including the pains of leaving one's family behind, legal issues, discrimination, and more.<sup>24</sup> The second part of this quote speaks directly to men's sexuality. Unfortunately, the participants did not discuss this aspect of masculinity a great deal. Often times Latin American men are presented as sexual fiends constantly looking

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<sup>24</sup> For more please see 56. Johnson MJ. Women's Experiences with Migration: Connections Between Globalization and Local Health. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan; 2006.

to satisfy their lust, but academics are finally starting to deal with this subject in greater depth.

Foucault (24) points out that sexuality is historically, culturally, and regionally located, and thus, one part of a continuously changing discourse. Sexual meaning is likewise socially and culturally constructed, however, individual subjectivity also exists. Sexuality is ultimately bound up in power relations and is highly politicized. Nicaragua is no exception as ‘the hysterization of women, which involved a thorough medicalization of their bodies and their sex, was carried out in the name of the responsibility they owed to the health of their children, the solidity of the family institution, and the safeguarding of society’ (57)(p. 146). Certainly, regulation of women’s bodies and the safeguarding of the family institution were critical to post revolutionary political tactics for repopulation (36). Although emblazoned as the struggle of ‘the people’, the Sandinista rejection of the women’s struggle as antithetical to the existing hegemony of the time only served to further entrench women’s gendered role in society (25, 26). However, *Sandinismo*<sup>25</sup> also brought with it legal equality as well as presenting women with important economic and social advances (27-29).

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<sup>25</sup> *Sandinismo* is complicated ideological model based on a blending of Marxist ideology with the symbol of Augusto Cesar Sandino. Sandino was a *mestizo* Nicaraguan born from an aboriginal Nicaraguan and a wealthy landowner that led a small guerrilla unit to defeating US occupying forces in the ‘30s. Together with the Christian faith, *Sandinismo* was a major driving force in the formation of revolutionary individuals. The model was both nationalistic and anti-imperial and planted the individual against the Somoza dictatorship as well as the US. The ideology was created in part by Carlos Fonseca, one of the founders of the FSLN. Fonseca blended Marxist theory with the image of Augusto Cesar Sandino to ‘[understand] Marxian theory in the Nicaraguan context.’(48-58.Reed J-P. Culture in Action: Nicaragua's Revolutionary Identities Reconsidered. New Political Science. 2002;24(2):235-63.

The participants still seemed to be waiting for long-promised change but were unable to initiate that change because of a stagnant economic and political system.

Roberto said,

we are ready. And here as we are able to do, we the small there, we are fighting [for] a change. Yes, here there are people for working, for being responsible, but in reality that is what happens, we have a government...since the government is not responsible, well...And we, through work, we are responsible...There is almost no work and the little that comes is not invested but rather, more...well...they drink it. Cigars, marijuana, drugs. It's like that, brother. In these times, they go a little crazy...so many drugs...they don't eat. They go losing their mind.

## *5.2 Putting it all Together*

The relationship to health flows throughout the above responses. Men's consideration of what masculinity exactly is, brought out a number of different health-related issues. Primarily, the social determinants of health and more specifically income, education and literacy, employment conditions, social environments, life skills, healthy child development, gender and culture (the latter two endemic to the entire study), were found to be important areas of inquiry in this regard.

Income fell and access to employment ranked a top priority for many of the men in terms of satisfying their own concept of being a man. Income is proportionately related to health with individuals receiving less income having poorer health; obviously, it is not possible to obtain income without any form of employment. Men criticized how difficult it was to find employment and, even more difficult, to find employment that offered a sufficient income to adequately raise their children and maintain their

household. Moreover, men related income to their decreased ability to buy good quality food when compared to pre-revolution years.

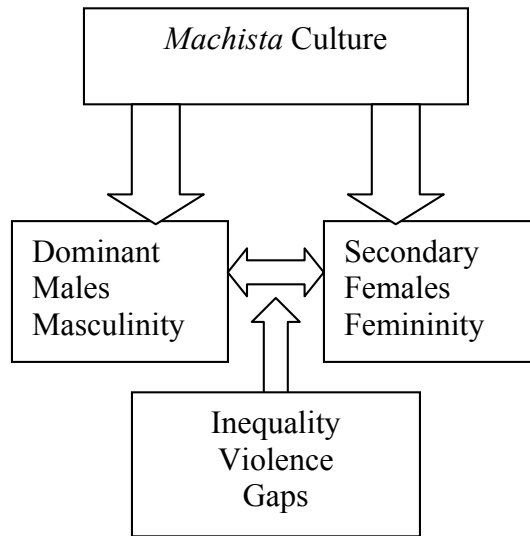
The impact work had on the family was seen in other arenas too—for instance, women's work. Many men were quick to realize the tremendous amount of work many women in Nicaragua face in terms of having to work both at outside the home to earn income as well as conduct most of the unpaid domestic work (raising children, cooking, cleaning, etc.). Even more traditionally male roles such as paying the bills are occupied more and more by women.

Education is another important determinant of health and was addressed by the men in two main ways. First, they addressed the importance of rearing children: they must be taught all proper values so that they become good citizens and understand basic life skills (another important determinant of health). Second, the men recognized the importance of formal education (primary, secondary and undergraduate) in obtaining adequate employment in the future as well as becoming good citizens.

Men also outlined how important it was to have a good relationship with their wives or girlfriends. First, they highlighted how dual-income families earn more money and are able to more effectively operate a household. Second they spoke of other relationships that include violence as a method for dispute. Domestic violence remains a major challenge in gendered health issues. The participants' focus on non-violent means of altercation also highlighted the importance of good relationship skills to overall family health. When considering children, it was important to the participants to demonstrate acceptable methods for quarreling.

During an interview with an academic informant, a model for understanding culture in Nicaragua was presented (Figure 1) using a *machista* cultural model that paired dominant men with secondary women.

Figure 2: *Machista* Culture Model



In this model the social phenomenon of *machismo* is displayed and is crucial to a complete understanding of the many contexts of masculinity that exist in Nicaragua. The particular key informant furthered the idea of masculinity in this model by stating that men are the head of the family, they are superior, self-sufficient (as opposed to women who are not), in control of their emotions (while women are not) and are able to be more free sexually. Each of these statements juxtaposes men's qualities with women's; men are men by virtue of not being women. The informant maintained that Nicaraguan society utilizes this model in its construction of gender. *Machismo*, discussed above, can be defined as a 'cult of the male; a heady mixture of paternalism, aggression, systematic subordination of women, fetishism of women's bodies, and idolization of their

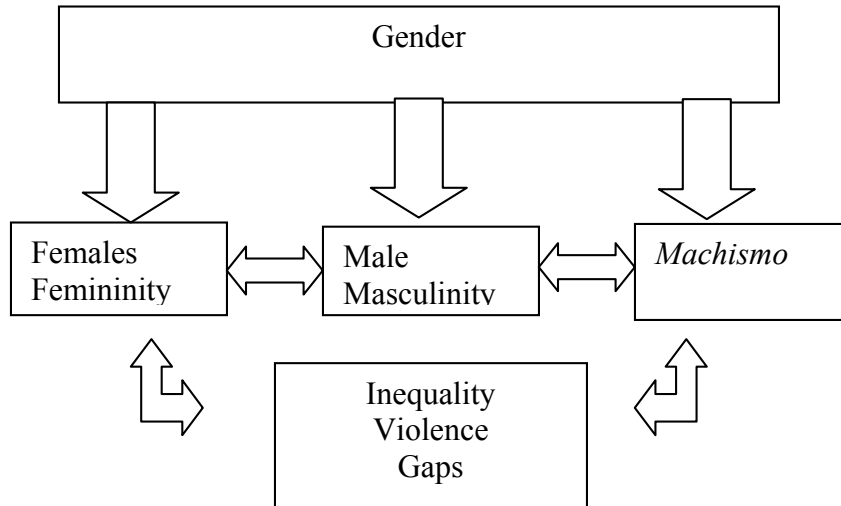
reproductive and nurturing capacities, coupled with a rejection of homosexuality<sup>26</sup> (24)(p. 3). Young children are encouraged and taught from youth to embrace this behaviour (59). Likewise, Nicaraguan women are viewed by society as idealized and desexualized *marianismas*<sup>27</sup> that are frail and in need of protection (59). Women in positions that enable them to exercise power are termed derogatorily ‘*mujer moderna, mujercilla, or, milonguita*. First, while many authors define *machismo* like above as a culture, this thesis will develop the concept in the following chapter. Second, while it may be true that the above model of men’s understanding of the masculine holds true for the majority of Nicaraguans, it is not true for the participants in this study. In fact, the above model does not hold true at all. It is in many ways much more complex as there is a belief in equality between the two sexes. The participants’ understanding is further expanded to include a rejection of *machismo* as being inherently male as will be shown shortly. In fact, a *culture* of *machismo* does not adequately explain the masculine in this case. As will be demonstrated next, *machismo* is part and parcel of something much more complicated. A temporary model would look more akin to Figure 2, however this model will, in the ensuing chapters, also be shown to also be problematic to understanding masculinity with this particular group of men due to the complexities brought out in their discussions.

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<sup>26</sup> Not all authors or Nicaraguans agree that a rejection of homosexuality is necessary to *machismo*. Lancaster shows that men enacting *chingar* (a violent act; offensive terminology used in Mexico) still possess qualities of pertaining to *machismo* and not *cochón* (homosexual, but closer to queer).

<sup>27</sup> *Marianisma* is the female equivalent to *machismo* that relates women to the Virgin Mary. Women are supposed to be morally superior to men.

Figure 3: Temporary Model



Gender constructs are complicated through historical conceptions of masculinity, differing race (*Mestizo* and west coast masculinity as distinct from aboriginal east coast masculinity), and social and economic standing. The above model, precipitated out of the analysis of men's discussion, has created two binaries pitting *machista* males against men just as women are pitted against them. This conceptualization points to an entirely new subject—the *machista*. The following section will expound these ideas through a discussion of *machismo* and the production of knowledge.

## Chapter 6: Machismo

*I was sitting on the bus traveling from Estelí to León after having spent over a month in Estelí. It was a typical Nicaraguan Blue Bird bus driving down the typical wretched road. The bus was full of mainly students making their trips back to León after the weekend, however there were also farmers making their rounds back to their farms with whatever they had picked up in the city. One woman in particular struggled with her heavy buckets when we got on the bus, but the employee that collects money helped her load them onto the floor where they had removed a seat at the back of the bus for this exact purpose.*

*The forested mountains came and went as the bus bumped and bounced along the road. Everywhere was green as the rains had been frequent throughout July. It was early morning. Everyone on the bus was either sleeping or looking very tired. Many were slumped over with their arms and head rested on the seat in front of them. Others were reading, probably preparing for classes that would take place later that day. A young man and a young woman, probably between 20 and 22 years old were sitting in the seat in front of me having a casual conversation. This was not the first trip I had made on this route and so I was becoming used to this different approach to interactions between the sexes. The first time I took the early bus to León in 2007 I was surprised to see young men and women who were obviously nothing more than friends sitting together. In many of my observations in public spaces in Nicaragua, men and women, with some matrimonial exceptions, congregate in sexed groups. But with the youth it was different. They had no inhibitions when it came to interacting with each other. In fact a large portion of the students sitting on the bus seemed to know each other.*

*We drove past a rural school that looked to have been built recently. It had a typical government sign outside advertising that the school had been built 'by the people.' Shortly after, the young woman sitting in front of me got off at her stop. The youth that was sitting beside her turned his back to the window and asked me where I was from. I told him that I was from Canada, to which he nodded in acknowledgement. I asked him if he was a student and he replied that yes he was indeed studying to be an engineer in León. He asked if I was a tourist and I responded no, that I was also a*



*student and was working with CISAS in León on my master's research. He knew about CISAS and was curious as to what I was studying. After having told him he became very serious and told me how important he thinks this type of research is. He described the state of machismo in Nicaragua to being that of an epidemic. He deplored the way many men interacted with others. He talked to me of the importance of women's rights and how he and his group of (co-ed) friends looked at each other as equals. He also indicated how happy he was that someone was working on such a project because it would bring greater understanding of men's behaviour in Nicaragua. I was in agreement with what he said and shared more details of my work and we arrived shortly thereafter at León's bus terminal. We quickly exchanged email addresses, shook hands and then parted ways.*

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Moreover, many men have boasted about *machismo*, and the women are afraid of them. There are times they have had to act in a manner when they are sleeping together, there are times they have become annoyed, why? Because they have reached a limit, [the men] don't put up with the lady. They don't put up with it and so that is common when the man wants to demonstrate that *machismo*. Well, the truth is, that I believe that it should not be like that. In my opinion, but also...to try to arrive...that...that is like an example. We are in a boat, there is sometimes going to be a wave that raises (*levantarse*) you more. Then, there are times the man wants to rise up (*sublevarse*) too much. But, also it is necessary to control oneself by oneself to be able to be in that matter, and to not be that *machismo*, that fury. Because there are men that are too furious and as I tell you, there are women that arrive at a limit and when they explode it is a time bomb, and so when one wants to reflect to be able to better that, they tell you that they had arrived at their limit. But now, as they [the women] say, go die far away, look for another woman (*otra*) that puts up with your reactions because you are an intolerant man, you are an unsocial man. Because all those acts are called unsociable here in Nicaragua. They are parasitic fuckers. (Juan)

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Not a day passed during my time in Nicaragua without at least one reference to *machismo*. It is an idea that I have grown accustomed to without really understanding it. I have read about it. I have witnessed it. I have called people *machista*. I have, in my recent work, become saturated in it. It is talked about *so* much by Nicaraguans and seems to drive the very spirit of Nicaragua; it is pervasive. But what does it really mean? How

do people actually conceptualize this phenomenon? Is it just a quirk about Nicaraguan/Latin American culture or is it something more? Literature regarding gender and sexuality in Nicaragua, with very few exceptions, emphasizes this facet of the culture (24). But while common to many Latin American countries, *machismo* is not homogenous and takes on both national and regional heterogeneities<sup>28</sup> (61). Much of the literature available on the subject deals with Mexican conceptualizations where, as will be discussed below, *machismo* has come to take on different meanings depending on who one speaks with. The etymology and, indeed, the definition of *macho* and *machismo* (*machoism*) are contested, however, Cornwall and Lindisfarne state that *macho* derives from the Spanish term for the male sex<sup>29</sup> (62, 63). Many define *machismo* as a ‘cult of masculinity.’ (64) Others deem it as synonymous with sexism (60). Carranza defines *machismo* as the former, but adds that it is ‘the quality of masculinity associated with ‘manliness,’ and especially virility’ (64). As will become evident in the ensuing discussion, this definition is simplistic and does not come close to approaching the intricacy of the concept.

Castillo expands her *cultural trait* concept of *machismo* in terms of power, saying that it is a demonstration of physical and sexual powers that is essential to self-respect. Castillo goes so far as to trace the roots of *machismo* to the Conquest. She posits that the state of patriarchy in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries influenced the development of *machismo*

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<sup>28</sup> Sara-Lafosse points out that some areas of Latin America do not display *machismo*. For more see, 60. Sara-Lafosse V. *Machismo in Latin America and the Caribbean*. In: Stromquist NP, editor. *Women in the Third World: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Issues*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.; 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Gutmann 1996 also points out that the word history of *machismo* is ‘remarkably short.’ 62. Gutmann MC. *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1996.

and centred largely on Arab influenced Spanish patriarchy as well as Aztec patriarchy (65). Linking the rise of capitalism with the rise of inequity between women and men, she describes the violence associated with the Conquest along with the nine-to-one ratio of Spanish men to women and scorned relations with Amerindian women to be causal factors in the rise of *machismo*, and in fact, its roots (65). In her discussion, Castillo warns of the dangers of rationalizing *machismo* within romantic terms, that is, through the contradistinction of *false machismo* and *authentic machismo* prominent in literature on *machismo* in Mexico (65).

In fact, Vincente T. Mendoza began these two contrasted ideas of *machismo* in his 1962 article on *machismo* in Mexican song. Mendoza describes the *authentic machismo* as being ‘characterized by true courage, presence of mind, generosity, stoicism, heroism, bravery,’ while *false machismo* is ‘the other, nothing but a front, false at bottom, hiding cowardice and fear covered up by exclamations, shouts, presumptuous boasts, bravado, doubletalk, bombast’ (66). He goes on to describe it as ‘supermanliness that conceals an inferiority complex’ (66). Mirandé, in an extensive study on masculinity in Mexico, traces the lines of *machismo* conceptualizations, creating a contrasting and complex picture. It is worth noting some of his results. First, Mirandé acknowledges that those individuals that elected to complete interviews in English and those individuals that were from higher socio-economic standings were more likely to associate the *macho* with positive qualities while individuals that completed the interviews in Spanish and with a lower socio-economic standing viewed *macho* as negative. Second, Mirandé reported no *statistically significant* difference in regional conceptions of *macho* and at many points uses the general *Latino* to refer to conceptualizations. Third, he concludes that the

supposed existence of Mexican cultural value of the *macho* is fallacious. Fourth and finally, Mirandé argues for two models of masculinity: one based on a ‘compensatory model [that] sees the cult of virility and the Mexican male’s obsession with power and domination as futile attempts to mask feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and failure’; another based on a ‘code of ethics that organizes and gives meaning to behaviour’ (61). While literature pertaining to Mexican *machismo* usually deals with the apparent two sides to Mexican *machismo*, literature regarding Nicaraguan *machismo* does no such thing, nor do Nicaraguans (bearing evidence against a pan-Latino *machismo*); *machismo* is regarded as negative, perhaps for the same reason as Paredes gives in his ratiocination of Mendoza’s ideas. Paredes describes Mendoza’s descriptions of *true machismo* as nothing other than the qualities originally described—courage, presence of mind, generosity, etc. are all values celebrated in many nationalities’ folksongs (67). Paredes further describes the characteristic traits of *machismo* as: ‘the outrageous boast, a distinct phallic symbolism, the identification of the man with the male animal, and the ambivalence toward women – varying from an abject and tearful posture to brutal disdain’ (67).

The above authors describe *machismo* in terms of *qualities* and *cultural traits*. They provide synonymic and behavioural explanations but, aside from an attempt to describe its origin, none of the authors actually *explain* the phenomenon. Sara-Lafosse creates her own theory of what *machismo* is by describing it not solely as masculine traits, but also as a subculture within a larger culture of patriarchy. Linking the ubiquity of family desertion by fathers to *machismo*, Sara-Lafosse argues that the difference between patriarchy and *machismo* lies in the man’s development of ‘an authority based

on fatherhood'(60). Additionally, Sara-Lafosse highlights that 'it must be remembered also that behind each 'macho' man in Latin America, there are women willing to accept his behavior, which includes sexual advances and even violence' (60). Moreover, the law and judicial apparatus, reinforce men's behaviour through ambivalence towards punishing men for things like evading spousal restitution and domestic violence.

Sara-Lafosse's ideas are interesting conceptualizations of *machismo*, however, her culture/subculture framework never satisfies the explanation she purports to give; men behaving within a subculture of *machismo* is a classification not an explanation. In addition, her idea suggests that patriarchy is the dominant culture while *machismo* is but a subculture. My work in Nicaragua is supported by other authors' claims that *machismo* is the dominant culture<sup>30</sup> and that responsible men are few and far between.

Welsh posits a more complex conceptualization of *machismo*, calling it 'an ideology built upon the erroneous supposition that men are naturally physically and intellectually superior to women' (68)(p. 178). Furthermore, he classifies it as an inherited socio-cultural model that determines the attitudes, values, and behaviour of men towards women, children and other men in both domestic and public spaces. Welsh likewise acknowledges that *machismo* is a 'universal *system* of male values, attitudes and behaviour whose development in a country like Nicaragua is intimately related to its specific cultural reality and social history' (68)(p. 178). Further, because *machismo* is a 'paradigm of masculinity to which all men must aspire' multifarious masculinities result

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<sup>30</sup> I have chosen to label *machismo* as a culture at this juncture in order to engage in the discourse set out by Sara-Lafosse. My conceptualization of *machismo* will emerge shortly.

as individual manifestations of that ideal are developed, thus creating the explanatory framework that Sara-Lafosse sought.

While Welsh alternately labels *machismo* an ideology, socio-cultural model, and system, Lancaster elucidates a singularly more polished version. Lancaster claims two competing categories of masculinity: the first set out and defined through the values of *machismo* and the second through the ‘ideals of the revolutionary New Man’ (69)(p. 40). Masculinity as defined through *machismo* is similar to the above authors’ descriptions, insofar as ‘hard drinking, excessive gambling, womanizing and wife beating’ prevail (69)(p. 39). Dissimilarly, the ‘New Man’ is ‘hardworking, devoted, and family oriented’ (69)(p. 40). Often-times the former and latter masculinities are obscured. Lancaster would position *machismo* as a Marxist political economy: political as one’s hierarchical standing substantiated by particular performances of *machismo*, economic as value assigned to an inflated symbolic currency of discretionary power. Lancaster (69) deplores *machismo*’s relegation to a cultural or ideological superstructure (as the previous authors have done), for it ‘is not a set of erroneous ideas that somehow got lodged in people’s heads’ (p. 236). To Lancaster (69), *machismo* ‘is an organization of social relations that generates ideas. *Machismo*, therefore, is more than an ‘effect’ produced by other material relations’ (p. 236). Its resilience should not, hence, be viewed in terms of the tendency for ideological systems to lag behind systems of economic production, as if *machismo* were only a reflection of economic practice, but should be viewed as its own signifying economy within the arena of the complexity involved in a classist, social, and racial hegemonic *machismo*. Values are both produced and circulated in terms of men and women’s social standing; ‘[*machismo*] conceives myriad politics and inscribes all

bodies with power. *Machismo* is a real political economy of the body, a field of power entailing every bit as much force as economic production' (69)(p. 236).

Lancaster explains further that *machismo* is not simply a method to organize power between the sexes but also between and among men. Each nefarious performance of *machismo* is meant to captivate two audiences: 'first, other men, to whom one must constantly prove one's masculinity and virility; and second, oneself, to whom one must also show all the signs of masculinity' (69)(p. 237). Every aspect of life is seen as being either 'masculine' or 'feminine' and loss in this economy results in a loss of status.

Lancaster, without a doubt, puts forth the most convincing description of and explanation for *machismo*'s omnipresence in Nicaragua. What has emerged in both the literature and my own work is the beginning of an *archive* that defines the limits and forms of *expressibility, conservation, memory, and reactivation* for a 'given period and definite society' (70). The documentation that is presented above and will be presented throughout this thesis discloses said archive to reveal the limits and forms of a discursive formation rather than a political or signifying economy of *machismo*; that is to say *machismo* is not an ideology, it is not a culture or subculture, nor is it an economy. Lancaster was right when he discussed *machismo* as 'having its own power to create effects,' but those effects are not created from a political economy, but rather through power and its creation, knowledge.

### **6.1 What Men had to Say about Machismo**

I would like to reiterate at this point that at no time in Nicaragua or with any of the participants was *machismo* ever presented as positive. The themes that came out of my analysis of what the participants had to say about *machismo* were similar to other

authors' *negative* conceptions: (a) male dominance/authoritarianism, (b) violence/aggressiveness, and (c) self-centredness. Moreover, *machismo* was perceived to affect the health of both the *machista* as well as others. Interestingly men noted that the *machista* has *always* been present but is *currently* ubiquitous.

A key theme observed in the analysis was that of male dominance, male chauvinism and misogyny. In terms of relationships both within and without the family, *machistas* are authoritarian. Juan explained *machista* relationships accordingly:

They say to her, 'look it, you are going to devote yourself to the house, to doing the cleaning, to washing my clothes.' If there are kids they say to her, 'watch the kid, you are going to take the kid to school' and, how, like that *machismo* started...yes...in those years. So the woman says 'aaaah,' and the mess starts like that. So there wasn't a stable relationship...he has his *machismo* here in this country. So at this stage [present-day] they [women that work] may have husbands, but maybe they have someone responsible, like their fathers or the mother of the husband or some sister they trust, so they work in a more united manner and plenty of the tyranny has disappeared so they still look well.

Men are the primary and last voice in decision making in the home. Roberto reflected on men's control, 'when I was young, there was machismo. For example there were some that were jealous and kept a woman as, that is to say...the man takes possession [of the woman].' Men's descriptions of what is acceptable for men and women revealed a double standard. For example, it is perfectly acceptable for a man to get drunk, but completely unacceptable for a woman. Likewise, in discussions with some men of my own age, sex, for the *machista*, was seen as an inherently male act; men can have many partners outside the family, while women are expected to be virgins until they are married and sex outside the marriage is strictly forbidden. Embodiment seems to be a key aspect to masculinity within the *machista*'s role in society both in consumption of alcohol as well as in sex.



Violence and aggressiveness (other aspects of embodiment) came up a great deal in discussions on *machismo*. The following statement from Juan's interview calls attention to the multiple sexual partners discussed above as well as the violent aspects of *machismo*.

This, look it. Here there have been many cases. An example is that there are men that believe in subjecting women to daily beatings. Because here there are many men in Nicaragua that want to have up to two or three women and the women don't like that, so the men beat them.

*Machista* men frequent the bars where they drink large amounts of alcohol and then return home and beat their wives or children. Such behaviour has obvious implications on the health of the *machista* as well as on those they are violent with (physically and otherwise). Roberto explained that *machista* homes were very evident to outsiders: the man 'would say something and the women shook. That was *machismo* and they even sometimes mistreated them...yes, there was *machismo*.' Philip stated, '*machismo* is very elevated' in Nicaragua. According to the same participant Nicaraguans are in a period of *machismo*: 'We are now in what is *machismo* and the violence, there is violence as well.' He also talked about how individuals under the influence of drugs can be extreme examples of *machismo*. Again, the implications towards physical and mental health are clear from each of these statements.

I witnessed a great deal of aggressive behaviour during my time in Nicaragua, especially by those under the influence of alcohol. A typical event occurred while riding the bus home to León from Las Peñitas, a small fishing village on the Pacific Ocean that is frequented by individuals from León for weekend getaways and day-trips. I was in an area of the village that is mostly hotels and beachside houses. The buildings line both sides of a road that follows the beach. The main means of transport is an hourly bus that

picks people up as it drives down the road. On the return trip, shortly after getting on the bus, we picked up a group of young men (early 20s) that were obviously drunk. They were being very loud and pushing each other around as they found their seats. At our next stop a group of girls who were around fifteen years old got on the bus. As they walked down the aisle the young men, that were each sitting on the edge of their own seat facing the aisle, hooted and hollered while simultaneously grabbing at the girls' posteriors, arms, and hands. Once the girls had found their seats two of the young men started looking around the bus and making fun of people. They were generally offensive and would not leave people alone even when they ignored them. They even went so far as to yell at an elderly man who wanted to get off the bus. They were irritated that he was making the bus stop before we arrived in León. This type of behaviour was not uncommon and was not isolated to those using alcohol or to young people. It also exemplifies the embodiment of masculinity in the way the men used aggressive and borderline violent behaviour to exemplify they were men.

*Machismo* fuels relationship instability. Many of the research participants and Nicaraguans that I interacted with in general discussed it as being detrimental to relationships. As an agreed upon component of *machismo* includes infidelity, argument often erupts between partners over a man's devotion to his family. Benicio explained that domestic violence spurs instability:

I believe that what makes a difference is the training or the knowledge that we actually have of what is *machismo*, what is domestic violence. I believe that in this aspect, yes, there is a difference, knowledge. But they keep giving higher indices of domestic violence, of rights violations of women. That is always being given. I don't know if it is worse or better but if it continues I...even...I see in the news the mistreatment that always happens to women. Despite the fact that

there is a *Comisaria de la Mujer*<sup>31</sup>, that defends the rights of women and of men also because of the men right? And for society. So, I believe that they keep giving indices and there is knowledge and we don't respect what they tell us and teach us and we don't put it into practice.

Infidelity has implications on the health of the family unit in terms of mental health as well as in terms of potential sexually transmitted infections that can be spread.

The third component of *machismo* that came out in the interviews was self-centredness. In his discussion on how *machista* men behave, Philip referred to the *machista* males' creed: 'If I want it, it is there, if I don't want it, it won't be.' Sentiments such as this were expressed in many contexts. Men often talked about how *machistas* go around spending their money in the ways that they wanted, often in bars, rather than spending it on essentials to the house or on what their partners or children wanted.

Benicio discussed the issue at an international level:

I believe that in Latin America, that we are very *machista* and the principle problem [is] we don't feel equal, we don't have an equal society. We have problems in that we don't attend to equality, to our necessities and we don't help nor do we collaborate in attending to the necessities.

Many of the participants linked it to men's asserting control. This can be at the workplace, in community groups, or most often at home.

At this point in the thesis, I would like further delineate the terms *machismo* and *machista*. Earlier, I showed the convoluted nature of the concept of *machismo*. The very suffix<sup>32</sup> of *machismo* articulates a complex mass of possible conceptual frameworks. For instance, Carranza's definition of *machismo* as a belief system equates it to other belief

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<sup>31</sup> The *Comisaria de la Mujer y la Niñez* is a pilot project created in 1993 within the Nicaragua National Police force and in coordination with governmental and non-governmental organizations with the intent of bringing more attention to issues particular to women, children, and adolescents.

<sup>32</sup> *-ismo* is the Spanish equivalent of the suffix *-ism*.

systems such as Hinduism; Sara-Lafosse's description of *machismo* as sexism puts it up as a basis for prejudice; Sara-Lafosse furthers her description and paints *machismo* as a theory on the same level as structuralism or orientalism; Mendoza and many of the research participants liken it to a practice thereby equating it to things like exhibitionism or voyeurism; one of the research participants discussed it as an action, 'to not *be* that *machismo*' (emphasis added) making it equivalent to other action -isms like, terrorism; finally, an overall theme in the majority of authors' opinions is that *machismo* is something that requires treatment, or as Benicio said, '*that* is the epidemic', connecting it to other disease states like rheumatism. Moreover, the sheer meaning behind some -isms is enormous. For example, *Marxism* at once expresses theory and praxis. What has been established is a '“unique dialogue’ [and]...the mindless phenomenologies of understanding mingle the sand of their conceptual desert with this half-baked notion’ of what is *machismo* (71). Like *le couple médecin-malade* in Foucault's 'The Birth of the Clinic (71),' discussion on *machismo* contains a 'feebly eroticized vocabulary' that in no way accomplishes the feat of understanding 'the relationship of man to himself and of language to things' (p. xvi).

The *machista*-singular-connotes exactly that: a relationship of man to himself and of language to things. Specifically, the *machista* creates a method for man to define what is normal through understanding the subject-much as women operate in figure 1 above. The specter of the *machista* is individuated, like Foucault's madman, and represents for men in Nicaragua a perversion of the normal, an epidemic. But the question remains, 'how is the *machista* formed?' I would like to draw your attention back to the second quote in this chapter. There a research participant discussed *machismo* as,

‘that fury’ that men sometimes become; he described the *machista* as at once ‘intolerant’ and ‘unsociable’—‘they are parasitic fuckers.’ Shortly after discussing the pandemic of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, another participant stated—as just noted—with regard to *machismo* that ‘*that* is the epidemic here.’ The same participant described himself as sometimes being ‘left the Indian’ and becoming a *machista*. This person labels his temporary self an *other*.

The basis of this formation comes through a rejection of the philosophical standpoints of structuralism and hermeneutics and a concomitant disbelief that ‘‘reality’ is constructed out of human consciousness and its ability to perform interpretations;’ on the contrary, *the individual* and *subjectivity* are created through discrete historical and spatial disciplinary processes that serve the dual purpose of constraining individuals from thinking variably (5)(p. 2). As Foucault (6) put it in a 1980 lecture:

In a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth, which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (p. 59).

So too is masculinity prescribed in Nicaraguan thought, through disciplinary power.

Foucault uses his famous example of the panopticon to describe how disciplinary power creates the criminal, however, the process through which the *machista* is formed is inherently more difficult to describe as it does not exist within any particular social device such as the jail, but is purported to exist in all social spheres. I do not presume to describe the *exact* methods through which the *machista* is formed, for it is far more

complicated than this thesis can possibly explicate. However, I will attempt to demonstrate an approximation.

Discipline transpires through four vital techniques: spatial distribution of individuals, control of activities, stages of training, and coordination of parts (5). The first, spatial distribution of individuals, is frequently established through enclosure but can also be accomplished by distributing space or placing ranks. Women's place is, according to the participants, in the main, within the home; men's place is likewise head of the home but also provider, with all social sphere whereabouts implied; but the *machista* is *different*: the *machista* neither provides, yet still sustains socially-positioned vocation, nor has a fixed position in a particular *home*, yet is still *the* decision maker in the *house*, sometimes *houses*. Without doubt, rank and spatial distribution of men and women both in the home, the workplace, and other private and public spaces, helps to establish 'one's place' in the general economy of space associated with disciplinary power' (5)(p. 69).

The second technique occurs through control of activity. Again, women, men and *machista* each have their own assigned activities whether established as juridical or otherwise. These assignments are copious: control over women's bodies has already been discussed as juridically choreographed, women's place in the home; control over men's provision for the family (also juridical in the case of separation or divorce); control exerted through use of the body for *machistas* in terms of violence, sex, posturing, etc. Discipline is not 'guided by a 'false' or ideological conception of the human body, rather it actively seeks to cultivate a certain type of body on the basis of knowledge considered

‘true’”(5)(p. 69). The language that the participants used also related to control; wives and partners were referred to as ‘*my woman*,’ a possession.

Third, the stages of training of the body relate directly to the praxis of pedagogy. Granted, the training of women, men, and *machistas* is inherently involved; however, parenting, formal education, and social training all serve to create these individuals. Children are taught from a young age by society at large to conform to the ideals of the *machista* (59).

The final technique lies in the coordination of all basic procedures. Foucault (7) relates this to military tactics as quoted from a 1772 French tactician,

because they teach how to constitute troops, order them, move them, get them to fight; because tactics alone may make up for numbers, and handle the multitude; lastly, it will include knowledge of men, weapons, tensions, circumstances, because it is all these kinds of knowledge brought together that must determine those movements (p. 168).

‘Tactics’ in the creation of the subject in Foucauldian terms are critiqued by many academics because they do not believe that individual agency is taken into account—those academics believe a Foucauldian world dispossesses individuals from ‘conscious agency’ (5, 72). However, Foucault argues that within these tactics lie institutionalized wars whereby individuals exert divergent forces. In disciplinary systems, individualization functions more so on those who undergo the exercising of power: for the research participants, that disciplinary system dictates that *machista* and woman are more individuated<sup>33</sup>. Moreover, knowledge created through disciplinary power is devised according to norms:

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<sup>33</sup> I realize I have paired women with *machistas* here, but in no way am I inferring that they are in equal social positions, nor am I inferring that the power on each of them is the same, only that each are *individuated*.

In a system of discipline, the child is more individualized than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and the non-delinquent. In each case, it is towards the first of these pairs that all the individualizing mechanisms are turned in our civilization; and when one wishes to individualize the healthy, normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking him how much of the child he has in him, what secret madness lies within him, what fundamental crime he has dreamt of committing (7)(p. 193).

Accordingly, when one wishes to individualize men, it is always by asking how much of the woman is in him, what *machista* values does he exemplify.

Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.) (7)(p. 199).

Here, those binaries are given as man/woman and man/*machista*. All of who he is, where he must be, and how he is to be characterized are interpreted through this same vocabulary of *machista* and woman. The constant surveillance occurs from the individual research participants themselves; each loathed the *machista* and was careful to differentiate themselves from them. In fact, the term *machista* in Nicaragua generally, is an insult. Peter Sternberg states, 'in Nicaragua, the accusation '*machista*' is leveled at men and women who behave in ways which are particularly and unacceptably overbearing and aggressive'(26). So,

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-à-vis* of power; it is, I believe one of its prime effects (6)(p. 98).



How is the concocted idea of the *machista* any less *taboo*, any less a sign taken to have more value in exchange with other signs, than the actual identity of a man related to other actual things?

The Enlightenment produced the archaic as a repudiation of the modern; the modern cannot exist without the contrast of the bygone. Modernity elaborates similar binaries, positing a negative off a positive for the negative cannot exist without the positive and vice versa. Certainly this is the case when considering individuation above. So too is it the case when considering other anthropological cases.

When discussing the Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia's west coast anthropologist Philip Drucker notes, "It is an anthropological truism that development of complex or 'high' culture among primitive peoples is linked with, or better, results from the notable increase in economic productivity that accompanies the invention or acquisition of agricultural techniques, and within limits, the domestication of animals." Drucker questions the forming of a complex culture without the accomplishment of the above truism. His solution, nature's abundance allowed the "savage civilization [to achieve] by indolence what civilized civilizations accomplish by toil." (Bracken) The excess of nature provides them opportunity to create culture.

Bracken presents Paul Tennyant's outline of another example of excess from Tennyant's book *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics* where he claims "the coastal peoples could not have created their complex and sophisticated civilizations" without the abundance and enormity of the cedar tree that allowed them to produce canoes for exploiting British Columbia's natural resources as well as large houses.

In another recent example, Bracken tells the story of the Nisga'a peoples struggle for treaty and land claims with both the Canadian and British Columbia governments. The story is rife with the specter of excess. Bracken illustrates the discourse surrounding the Nisga'a struggle (and by extension all Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia) as a binary in terms of an inverse ratio: any amount added to the small side of the ratio (the minority) takes away from the large side (the majority). That is to say, if the governments of Canada and/or British Columbia are to concede that the Nisga'a (the minority) indeed have a claim to land, they will be taking away from the people of British Columbia (the majority). Moreover, the minority is trying to claim an excess of land and resources from the majority.

Bracken expands the concept of the ratio referencing Hegel, who describes the inverse ratio as corresponding to a double limit. The first is that each side of an inverse ratio determines the quality of the other. In the case of the "ordinary" people of British Columbia representing 97% of the population, and the "native Indians" representing 3% of the population, the two sides represent the whole 100%: 97 being 100 less 3 and 3 being 100 less 97. However, the second limit is described, as Hegel puts it, by the opposition between the two sides of the ratio. As one side describes the other, if one ceases to exist, so too does the other.

Basically, what has been described by Bracken and myself are examples of signs (excess and *machista*) developing into things that are greater than what they represent. In the case of *machismo*, why has a meaning, a definition, of what supposedly a Latin American man is, taken on more value than the actual man in so many cases? It is because savage philosophy is still practiced, where the philosopher 'value[s] the sign

over the thing itself,' where they 'dare traffic in signs that grow into things' (1) (p. 4, 21).

The thing in the present case is the individuated *machista*. What has emerged is an inadequate portrayal of gender relations, one that has created and/or sustained intra-discourse resistance, accordingly incapable of dealing with the issues at hand, but most especially—inequality.

## 6.2 Masculinity as Discourse

Peter Sternberg discusses masculinity in Nicaragua as being comprised of five competing and or complimentary discourses<sup>34</sup>: a Catholic discourse, a pro-feminist discourse, a Western progressive (liberal feminist) discourse, a medical discourse, and a traditional patriarchal discourse (what he labels *machismo*). His study revealed that many men believe sexual conquest of women; difficult-to-control sexuality, that must be 'reined in' to prevent harm to either themselves or women; and an unwillingness to accept women who are not passive (i.e. women who initiate sexual advance) are central tenets to Nicaraguan male sexuality. In fact I agree whole-heartedly that an understanding of masculinity can be summed up very well by discourse but with the

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<sup>34</sup> Discourse in this thesis will be taken to be more than language as an avenue of superficial expression of more complex thought; than simply the unique psychology of an individual; than just a supplementary aspect of "the mind": so that 'the operations are all carried out prior to discourse''(3)(p. 50). I understand discourses in Foucauldian terms: they are "limited practical domains" that have their own 'rules of formation' and 'conditions of existence''(3)(p. 50). Moreover, monodiscourses are not units of some polydiscourse: discourses are not to be deciphered for the purpose of uncovering some larger 'guiding' discourse. The subject is neither deleted (like in some versions of structuralism) nor regarded as autonomous (and in no way do I refer to the autonomous Kantian individual, acting according to moral duty as opposed to desire) and unconstrained. Finally, like Foucault, I do not look at history as extending from some connected but forgotten radix, but rather as a complex amalgam of discourses that each has an equally complex crescendo and decrescendo of existence within their own discrete historical periods.

addition of knowledge (the individual) created through discipline, however; in the area of traditional patriarchal discourse, Sternberg's discourse analysis is, in fact, lacking; and, while I can not speak to the themes that emerged from his own data, I believe there are more discourses at play than the five that he supports.

The Catholic discourse is something that came out of my research as well. Sternberg associates Nicaraguan men's understanding of sexuality with Catholic Church discourse on the matter. Participants in my research were quick to identify women's place as being in the home with the children while men were to be the providers as biblically based. It is important to note here that Christian discourse in Nicaragua should not be limited to solely the Catholic Church as a number of protestant churches have large diocesan numbers in Nicaragua. Therefore, religious matters surrounding masculinity are equally not limited to only Catholic Church discourse.

The pro-feminist discourse was also seen in every participant's responses: they were critical of men that maintain too much control over women. The discourse, like Sternberg's participants, led men 'to think more about the needs and aspirations of their female partners'(73)(p. 163).

The Western progressive or liberal feminist discourse that Sternberg discusses was not something that came out in the interviews necessarily, but certainly came out in discussions with men in their twenties. The participants discussed their observation that women are not putting up with men's negative behaviour nor is the Nicaraguan government (as evidenced by the criminalization of domestic violence). While some participants did discuss men's involvement in household duties as important, many of the

non-participant Nicaraguan youth that I talked to were pro-feminist and thought that other generations' ideas surrounding gender were archaic (bus example above).

Medical discourse was not something that came out in my participant responses however, Sternberg noted that some of his participants' explanation of homosexuality's derivation from hormone shortage as well as their belief that masturbation can lead to physical or mental harm was evidence of a medical discourse playing into men's conception of sexuality.

Sternberg puts traditional patriarchal discourse up to: first, the social construction of the modern woman based on the juxtaposition of being simultaneously whore and virgin; and second, the social construction of modern man as *Gügüense* and *machista*. He traces symbolism of women as whore back to *La Malinche*<sup>35</sup>, a Nahuatl woman that was *given* to Hernan Cortez as a means of placating him, during his 16<sup>th</sup> century conquest and exploration. The virginal aspect comes from, of course, the Catholic Church and the Virgin Mary. The *Gügüense* comes from Nicaraguan identification with the protagonist of a late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century play (entitled '*El Gügüense*') that Nicaraguan men supposedly identify with (26). *El Gügüense* represents the *machista* in his fathering of many sons with different women and his 'overt masculinity'(26)(p. 52). Moreover, Sternberg discusses historical dualities of culture clash before Columbus as being strong bases for current sexuality and gender discourse.

There are two aspects to this discussion that are lacking: historic specificity and misconstrued discourse. The former lies in Sternberg's use of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century examples as axioms on which a hypothetical, traditional, patriarchal, and modern-day

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<sup>35</sup> This reading of *La Malinche* is Sternberg's and not my own. More complex readings of this illustrative story are possible.

Nicaraguan discourse is based; while the latter lies in that same assumed discourse. At what point does Catholic, or for that matter, *Christian* patriarchal discourse in general, become different from *traditional* patriarchal discourse? It is true that Christianity, since the conquest, has been vital to the formation of culture and state in Central America, but certainly 500 years of Christianity cannot be the same—especially when considering liberation theology and its influence in the revolutionary processes<sup>36</sup>—nor could its effects on discourse be the same. Likewise, the examples given lack Nicaraguan specificity as the story of *La Malinche* is based in what is now Mexico and not Nicaragua. Too, the Nicaraguan Catholic Church has preached woman as either pure, virgin or whore and man as patriarchy since its inception, and is still a mainstream characterization of gender maintained by Catholic Church discourse and not part of some separate *traditional* patriarchal discourse (73, 75).

Furthermore, Sternberg mislabels *machismo* as traditional patriarchal discourse, but as it has already been demonstrated, *machismo* is neither traditional nor discourse. *Machismo* is part of that ‘feebly eroticized vocabulary’ created through the liberal feminist discourse that came into the Nicaraguan political scene, to a great extent during and shortly after the 1979 revolution (71).

To terminate this discussion on discourse, I think it necessary to discuss at least one other discourse that is missing from Sternberg’s model of discursive masculinity, that

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<sup>36</sup> Liberation theology within the Nicaraguan Catholic Church and, indeed much of the Latin American Catholic church, was a ‘political theology of liberation that addressed the specific conditions of social and economic oppression under capitalism.’ 74.

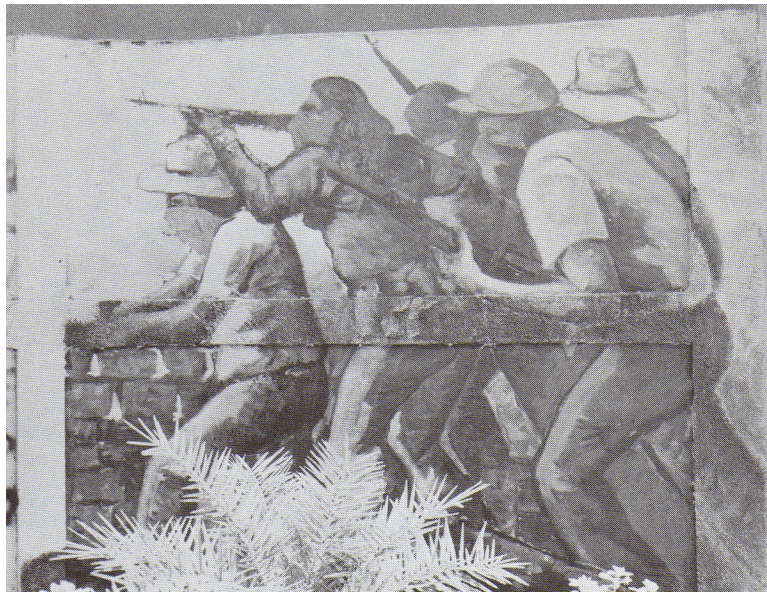
Chidester D. Christianity. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco; 2000. (p. 526) The theology was aimed at the poor and it utilized Marxist analysis of class in order to restate Christian dogma in terms of social structures rather than sin and salvation

of the revolutionary man. For that, I return to Lancaster's anthropology, *Life is Hard*.

Jaime, one of Lancaster's informants aptly puts it:

'These ideas have changed a lot, and are still changing, since the revolution. Some people have the old ideal, other people have the new one, so it's hard to say. The new idea of a good man—that is the revolutionary New Man—is someone who studies to improve himself and his country, who works hard, who is responsible toward his compañera, his children, and is generous with those around him. The old idea of a good man—the ideal of machismo—was someone who could drink, fight, gamble, and have a large number of sexual conquests' (69)(p. 175).

Jaime puts forth a simplified portrayal of what he later admits to be a more complex occurrence for the average man; men are not idealized representations of the 'New Man' nor are they simply *machistas*, but a mixture of the two. However, it is, as Sternberg has shown, still more complicated by a mixture of other discourse. In the spirit of Foucauldian discourse analysis I would like to present the reader with an example of the type of gendered rhetoric evident in Sandinista propaganda from the 1980s that speaks to the types of discourses that were present during the time.



**Figure 4: From Walker (26) Mural of the Popular Insurrection. (p. 132)**



**Figure 5: From Walker (26) ‘Today the new dawn ceased to be an illusion.’(p. 132)**



**Figure 6: From Walker (26) ‘Your milk is not substitutable and it arrives with love.’ (p. 133)**

Figure 2 proudly depicts a group of so-called ‘New Men’ rising up in arms in defense of their country. Notice the people in this mural are only men. Figure 3 shows Sandino and Fonseca as two ‘New Men’ leading the people of Nicaragua in their struggle against the oppressor. Finally another billboard propaganda piece, figure 4 contrasts the revolutionary ‘New Man’ pieces by depicting women in their ‘place’ as good mothers.



Each of these pieces are evidence as to the discourse surrounding what the idealized man and woman should have been in the mid-1980s in Nicaragua as well as indicate more evidence towards that other socialist 'New Man' discourse that was and still is at play in Nicaragua.

### 6.3 Resistance

The section to follow refers to the history of the women's movement (an important component to the history of gender in Nicaragua) in Chapter 4 and is meant to conjure a very brief—but certainly not comprehensive (something well beyond the purpose of this study)—look at the process of *resistance* to (a) the production of the individuated *machista* and (b) the consequences of counterdiscourses.

A principal task of this thesis is to define how men's conceptualizations of masculinity have changed in Nicaragua. For the research participants at least, the machinations of masculinity as defined through ill-defined *machismo* and the *machista* have changed significantly. According to the participants, never before has the *machista* been such a dominant force or in the words of one participant, 'before, it was something very different;' or as another participant quantified the *machista*, 'they were few. They were more responsible, better. Now no.' The dividing line is always discussed as the revolution in terms of what was *before* and what was *after*. What specifically has changed though?

Ilja Luciak (76) asserts the position that, because normal social rules do not apply during times of war, 'there were no children or households to take care of,' gender

equality is encouraged, but the return of normal social engagement allowed ‘*machismo* and male chauvinism<sup>37</sup> to ‘blossom’ (p. 170).

There is consensus among authors on *machismo* that its etymology is difficult to trace and its word history is short (61, 65, 69). In fact the Oxford English Dictionary gives its pejorative roots as likely Anglophone and not Spanish. Sternberg (26) states that the usage of *machista* was first developed from anthropologists and later,

the *machista* [became] a representative of the values, not of Latin American men, but rather of commentators on Latin American men’s behaviour. Through the feminist movement, their *discourse* has found its way into Nicaraguan culture (p. 53). (emphasis added)

Croquillon (43) claims the first explicit reference to *machismo* at ‘an official public event’ took place on November 8, 1986 when Daniel Ortega read from the Sandinista proclamation stating, ‘the FSLN commits itself to guarantee the rights of women and to struggle with determination against the rights of women and to struggle with determination against the vestiges of *machismo* left us by the past’ (p. 219). It is not as if there were not opportunities to discuss gender issues in Nicaragua in terms of *machismo* prior to this date. In a lengthy 1982 speech by Tomás Borge (one of the co-founders of the Sandinista movement) on women in the Nicaraguan revolution, *machismo* was not mentioned once. He discussed many of the issues facing women, including referring to women as superexploited as well as making many statements towards the disparity of human rights that women possess relative to men. But *machismo* itself was never referred to (77). Likewise, Magda Enríquez in a famous speech on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, 1984, discussed the deep-seated extent of women’s subjugation in Nicaragua, ne’er a

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<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that Luciak makes a distinction between *machismo* and male chauvinism; another instance of *machismo*’s ambiguity.

reference to *machismo* (78). How can something so impossible to avoid in conversations only loosely associated with gendered topics be completely neglected in speeches regarding the emancipation of women? Could it be that the term *machismo* was not yet mainstream, that this variegated appellation was still simply an anomaly concocting in the musings of some few Western anthropologists?

The short history of AMNLAE and the women's movement in Nicaragua puts up for display the critique of women in Nicaragua—its focus, the hegemonic patriarchy that existed at the time. Women aimed their efforts at a top-down, 'universal binary division of struggle' (79)(p. 29). Despite the obvious advances in *some*<sup>38</sup> aspects of the legal status of women in Nicaragua, domestic violence, women abandoned with children, women's double workload, and many other power creating instances still dominate the gendered landscape; modern resistance, in many cases, seeks expeditious results to said instances. Those critiques come from individually diverse roles:

Depending upon where one is and in what role (e.g. mother, lover, teacher, anti-racist, anti-sexist) one's allegiances and interests will shift. There are no privileged or fundamental coalitions in history, but rather a series of unstable and shifting ones (79)(p. 30).

While agreeing with existence of class and/or state power (what the feminist movement struggled simultaneously for, within, and against), Foucault (6) contends that it would be better to place the aim of resistance on those local struggles that are the very basis of everyday interactions.

One must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have

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<sup>38</sup> Obviously, the recent changes in women's control over their own corpus stand in gargantuan opposition to my statement. Moreover, while juridical change has occurred, the process of actually enforcing law does not necessarily prove advantageous to women.

been—and continue to be—invested, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended, etc., by even more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination. It is not that this global domination extends itself right to the base in a plurality of repercussions (p. 99).

Foucault's opinion is that struggle is best placed against, not power itself, but the techniques of power, a task that requires understanding society as a complexity of relations of force, not simply of class and/or gender struggle. The feminist writer Judith Butler (53) champions this point, 'it was and remains my view that any feminist theory that restricts the meaning of gender in the presuppositions of its own practice sets up exclusionary gender norms within feminism, often with homophobic consequences' (p. viii).

The women's movements main struggle was to fully incorporate women into the language and politics of Nicaragua, something that was in many ways achieved, however because women were represented as 'the subject' of feminism,

the juridical formation of language and politics...of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics. And the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation...In such cases, an uncritical appeal to such a system for the emancipation of 'women' will be clearly self-defeating (53)(p. 3).

And so it seems the performative subject of female, as it stands before the law, legitimates the hegemony that regulates that law. For feminist critique to truly emancipate women, it must do more than involve women within the discourses inherent in hegemonic patriarchy, it must simultaneously understand 'how the category of 'women', the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought' (53)(p. 4). Butler points towards novel

possibilities in the feminist struggle that point critique outside the realm of traditional discourse on the matter.

## Chapter 7: Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning, and adult education in general, has a rich history of scholars with a complexity of different theories and viewpoints. The following chapter sums up *some* of the theory, especially in consideration of the type of language I have been using up to this point in the thesis. This section is in no way a comprehensive review of literature in the area, however, I rely a great deal on the work of Jarvis for the theoretical discussion as he: (a) deals with the process of lifelong learning as it relates to globalization; (b) draws on authors like Amartya Sen, Michel Foucault, and Paulo Friere (authors that have both inspired me and were utilized for this study) and; (c) links well to my discussion in terms of comparing and contrasting.

An important theme that became clear very quickly in the participant interviews was an interest in being positive contributors to their communities and society at large through the process of self-improvement. Lifelong learning as encouraged and facilitated by CISAS and other organizations was an important aspect of self for the participants. But how do men negotiate relationships of power to navigate the lifelong process of learning? How does one go from those individual relationships of power elicited earlier to better understand what men are learning on a grander level? What social models of learning can demonstrate the process through which participants develop? Finally, what evidence do the men provide towards a better understanding of how they negotiate power in a lifelong process? Similar to the previous chapters, I will provide some context to the process of lifelong learning within the perspective of power that I have already provided prior to discussing the men's provision of evidence.

Peter Jarvis, presents a model of such a process, however, before delving too deeply into it, we will critique his analysis of power to better align it with what has preceded. In what I deem a misreading of Foucault, Jarvis enters into his discussion on power stating that Foucault does not locate power within classes, but within individuals. While it is true that Foucault saw individual relations of power as more important in terms of overall impact, he did not deny that class, race, and other structural systems of power exist (80). Foucault's analysis of power as a 'network of relations within our life-world, but...one that is constantly in tension, in activity' is the very essence of the foundation of lifelong learning (80)(p. 14). This tension produces what Jarvis labels disjunctures that are key to challenging individuals' concepts of normal. This idea will be brought up in more depth shortly.

Jarvis goes on to compare Lukes with Foucault stating that Foucault's idea that 'practices of self' that are 'proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' is nonsense and already established in sociological theory:

But with this answer the ultra-radicalism of Foucault's view of power dissolves. For it amounts to restating some elementary sociological commonplaces. Individuals are socialized: they are oriented to roles and practices that are culturally and socially given: they internalize these and may experience them as freely chosen; their freedom may, as Durkheim likes to say, be the fruit of regulation—the outcome of discipline and controls. (81) (p. 97)

But Foucault's analysis is not a restatement of sociological commonplaces; Foucault critique's other outlooks of power because (a) they posit a contractual agreement between sovereign and agent and/or (b) that power is operated through discursive methods. Foucault's analyses blend the juridical and discursive methods into a 'juridico-discursive' outlook that assumes the existence of the subject and sovereign (him that exercises power) *prior* to exercising power (5). Moreover, Lukes and Jarvis do not grasp the

different methods that contribute to disciplinary power as I discussed earlier. Finally, Jarvis lays down the oft-claimed critique against Foucault that individuals are forever glued within the discourses and power relations that make up society with no hope for escape. Again, while Foucault does say that traditional resistance aimed at directly opposing power relationships (rather than techniques of power) are very difficult to escape from and, in the case of women above, often these resistances serve to negate the subjugated individual's position more. Despite their differences, Lukes and Foucault do agree it is through power relations that knowledge is produced and, hence, learning occurs. Moreover, one's ability to make decisions and be sure the desired outcome is maintained is exercising power whether political, through delivery of learning material, curricula or other means.

Jarvis defines lifelong learning as:

The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person—body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values emotions, beliefs and senses)—experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person (80) (p. 1).

In light of the recent discussion on power, power relations can replace the social situations as the experiential transformative method that catalyzes learning. Jarvis proposes a cycle of learning that begins with individuals living in a stasis whereby their thinking is in equilibrium due to pre-categorized fields of knowledge. However, in new situations, individuals do not have the prescribed categories to deal with the new information and must, thus, enter into a state of 'disjuncture': 'the situation when our biography and the meaning that we give to our experience of a social situation are not in harmony' (80)(p. 3). These disjunctures create a two-fold questioning process based on:



first, not having the ability to give meaning to a new phenomenon; and second, being unsure of how others in the social matrix give meaning to it. Jarvis goes on to explain that disjunctures can take place as:

- a slight gap between our biography and our perception of the situation to which we can respond by slight adjustments in our daily living which we hardly notice since it occurs within the flow of time;
- a larger gap that demands considerable learning;
- in a meeting between persons for it takes time for the stranger to be received and a relationship, or harmony, to be established;
- wonder at the beauty of the cosmos, pleasure and so forth at the experience. In some of these situations, it is impossible to incorporate our learning from them into our biography and our taken-for-granted. These are what we might call 'magic moments' for which we look forward and hope to repeat in some way or other (80) (p.3).

Basically whenever the equilibrium between an individual's past experiences and present experience is interrupted and needs to be readjusted, that is when learning occurs, through disjuncture.

A variety of means can lead to the final resolution: lessons from others that are important in an individual's life, formally through teachers, incidentally, self-directed learning, or more. While Jarvis labels the answers as social constructs, I think it is safe to say that mostly, answers are discursive. After a disjuncture is resolved, individuals return once again to an equilibrium or stasis of thinking. This process occurs over short periods of time, but extending it into a lifelong process is not quite so simple. The learning process imparts culture onto the subject, but culture cannot be regarded as some monolithic entity, standing alone and influencing thought monochromatically on the negative of one's biography. Culture, is a complex and diverse phenomenon that comprises an ocean of interlinking and opposing discourses, a superabundance of power relationships, all of which are fluid and must be engaged by the subject on a continual

basis. Consequently, learning is a continuous process, employed over a lifetime that requires individuals to constantly shift their understanding of their social reality, which in turn, changes how they will engage in subsequent situations.

Jarvis posits three transformations: sensations, individuals, and social situations. As individuals progress through their life process they gain a sense of self and self-identity that can also impact their ability to learn. Basically, Jarvis puts forward a model that includes a number of components. First, an individual with all their sense of self and self-identity experiences something in their daily lives that elicits (a) emotions, (b) actions, and (c) thought and reflection. Each of these three components influences the other. Moreover, they influence the way the individual will memorize the interpreted experience to create a new, changed individual.

Throughout the interviews, participants discussed in one way or another how they are constantly learning, changing, and striving to be better. Additionally, many of the participants shared how CISAS, among other NGOs, has helped them to learn more in their daily lives about parenting and what it is to be a man. While, it would be both useful and interesting to try to understand the impact CISAS itself has had on the participants, no attempt will be given here, as neither the study questions nor the design were implemented in a method allowing it. The following section will highlight a few of the key statements discussed by men regarding (a) their desire to constantly change and improve themselves and (b) their thoughts on how CISAS has contributed to this. One can see much of (a) in participant quotes in the previous sections on masculinity and *machismo* as well.

Some men thought very moralistically when they discussed personal change, as evident in Roberto's statement emphasizing the 'surveillance' point discussed in the chapter on *machismo*, 'we aren't perfect but we are learning...and we are learning every day to better ourselves to separate ourselves from the bad.' Diego discussed the mentality of the group of leaders as being very open to change,

when someone critiques us it is good because it is constructive and we look for ways to improve, we sit, we talk and we watch where it is that we are wrong and we try to make it better. That has been the idea of our directive.

He also discussed the importance of being attentive to your surroundings to encourage learning and to be able to help, 'because one learns to hear. Well since you pay attention, you are learning because you are hearing...If you don't hear you don't listen, you are not going to learn anything, that is my source.' Juan shared his thoughts on always growing and learning, 'but through the process, the process of life we go getting all that knowledge and we have to go improving.'

When asked about how CISAS has influenced their lives, all of the men discussed on one level or another how they have learned a great deal from CISAS on the topics of gender and parenting. Benicio shared that he thought what CISAS teaches was very important, 'I believe that CISAS has helped us a great deal because I believe that it is necessary to put what they tell us into practice.' Roberto shared his thoughts on the importance of CISAS in his life,

In reality, CISAS has satisfied more of what I have been: of the responsibility of gender and what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman. I, for there, I have been more aware of what is gender, masculinity. I say it sincerely, there it is. I have learned more in CISAS, of what it is to be a woman and what it is to be a man, but also CISAS has taught me about abuse so that I have not lived it. I have told them in the workshops because they create an evaluation of what [abuse] is and what gender is and of women and men. I have been saying that, for me, my wife is the same. That, they have taught me in CISAS, that women are equal to

man, they have the same rights, the same pleasures, the same love, the same feelings. All that they have is equal to men, only they wear dresses and different shoes. That is the difference, but in things of love, it's the equal. That I have been learning with CISAS. Before, I was more foolish. I wouldn't have talked like this to you, or confessed this. That is to say, I would not have told you of these things if I did not have those workshops from CISAS. But with those workshops even the communities learn because I have taught them. I do not miss a workshop with CISAS. Never have I missed them because, in the first place, I recognize what they have taught me, that I didn't know. That which is gender I didn't know [how] to separate men and women but through CISAS I have been studying, it has lifted me up. But to speak better...as I was telling you, CISAS has passed on this teaching of learning and I have put my will and attention to what they have taught us and that has served to confirm what I have been and to confirm what I am going to do in the future where I am going to go.

This quote shows a remarkable gratitude and indebtedness to CISAS for lifelong learning that enables this man to negotiate his life better. CISAS has enabled him to understand the concept of gender and more importantly, CISAS has provided this man with the ability to share his thoughts and feelings and provided an empowering environment that allows him to share these teachings with others. This same participant elaborated on what and how he engages in learning and teaching in the community,

Truly, to teach and if you want to share because like that, as I didn't know what CISAS has taught me, many do not know. CISAS has gone so far as to supervise us in the communities, to make us invite 30 people, and 20 or 15 of these people show up. We tell them what he have learned and I say that I have improved because before I only did this with my children and my family, my nephews and nieces, and siblings, or those close to the family. Today no. Today CISAS has involved us with the community, as I say we invite 30 because if we invite 50 or 60, maybe we won't be able to teach them well because they don't stop talking to each other. But if we invite 30, 15 come and of these 15 if we grab them, that is what we learn.

The participant's use of 'we' in this context is interesting as a notable instance of collaborative efforts towards improving community. Not only did men discuss the importance of implementing their newfound knowledge in their own lives, they also

emphasized the importance of sharing the information with others in the community as well as in their family. Roberto continued with regard to his own children,

We have all had a great communication with them. In the first place, I communicate God's things with them, the church, the church, new apostolic, that spiritual, but I also taught them that which is good and that which is bad. For example, I say to them, 'watch me, I don't drink, I don't smoke.' That I taught them and you, they learned how they are like me. And they are going to live like that as I lived all my life like that. They are going to live it, they are the teachings, well, that the drugs I taught them also, the bad sheaves, because if you are going to walk in a bad sheaf, it's better to not walk, better to walk alone like that. I tell you, I spoke to them, I taught them if you are going to walk with a good friend, walk, but if you are going to walk with a friend that is taking you to a bar, they are teaching you the drugs, you better move away. That has been my teaching, my example, and the example, well, that god has given us that we should live on earth respecting the authorities. I am a little over seventy years old and I have never been in jail. They are already older than 30 years old and up until now they have not been to jail. They have not got involved with politics. I have never been involved in politics. Like that go my children as well, I taught them. In womanly things, I taught them as well to watch me. I don't hit your mother.

At the base level, this motivation to learn, to continually engage in self-change, to engage one's neighbour in the same, is what ultimately leads to conceptual change. Each of the men that interviewed exemplified this desire to be a better individual, a better family member, community member, and citizen. The leaders that these men are in their communities and their passion for sharing their knowledge with their neighbours is what makes the difference. As the old African proverb goes, 'it takes a community to raise a child.'

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

The process of learning is important to understanding how power is instituted on the social level. Glimpses of independent incidents of power do little to illustrate the complexity of the goings-on of a society; however, the culmination of a lifetime of power interactions and their consequences (read, lifelong learning), multiplied by the constituents of a society can at the very least begin to shed light on the complexity of the explication of events like the unnecessary passive euthanizing of the pregnant woman described at the beginning of Chapter 1 and the process of learning engaged in by men at CISAS. For that is the true essence of this thesis: we are dealing with a society and government that has seen fit to sit by, in many occasions idly, while women are the ones suffering and who's rights are neglected. This is not to say that there are not good people working around the clock to prevent these issues, just that the country generally has elected, and continues to support the officials that create and officiate laws that condemn women to the periphery.

This thesis explored a variety of topics all linked to masculinity and health. As we have seen from the studies mentioned in Chapter 3 and throughout the text of participant responses, the social construction of what it is to be a man is intimately related to the health of all. If I could emphasize one point on this issue, it would be the enormous need for more studies and development programs that involve men's participation on gender issues as gender issues involve men too. As the research participants stated, alcoholism, drug addiction, and violence are regarded as being major problems among men in Nicaragua and therefore, programs addressing these issues with

men are vitally important. Equality necessarily incorporates all members of a society; change cannot pass if half of the population is not addressed.

While I had expected to see a more detailed structuring of constructions of gender based on Nicaragua's unique historical periods, participants' responses showed that the only mentionable historical period was the most current revolution and differences in masculinity were discussed in terms of *before* and *after* that revolution—wording not dissimilar to other studies. Moreover, participants deemed that history to be vital to Nicaragua's construction of gender.

Embodiment crept up in several instances throughout the study. Oftentimes men are idealized as a disembodied human norm opposite to the so-called emotional female, but this viewpoint has only maintained a divide between the sexes (82). Therefore, it is important to look at men as embodied emotional beings as well. Evidence of this embodiment was seen in many of the men's statements especially when considering the effects of alcohol consumption and violence. Juan commented on how he was 'left the Indian', speaking of how emotion just got the better of him. Looking at men as embodied is an important component to deconstructing masculinity and perhaps a great way to continue the present study.

What emerged through the amalgamation of the participants' voices and relevant literature was an analysis of the consolidation of power, of the 'polymorphous character of relations of force' (5)(p.64). Moreover, participants' conceptions of masculinity each differed according to the individual. Despite similarities, there was no *one* conception of masculinity or evidence that *one* social construction of masculinity exists. Popular views of *machismo* as a universal noun surrounding Latin American masculinity(ies) and the

*machista* as *the* quintessential male were, in short, debunked. Additionally, resistive forces acting within the same discourse that subjugates women in the first place has served to do two things: (a) create new knowledge in the form of a power relationship that constructs an individuated subject, the *machista*, while simultaneously creating a new vocabulary to try to conceptualize what this individual is exactly; and (b) as Foucault (53) has pronounced (about humanist efforts but put slightly different here) about ‘[feminist] efforts at [gender] reform, the [female] subject who gets emancipated may be even more deeply shackled than the [feminist] originally thought’ (p. 130).

I began the thesis with a portrayal of savage philosophy; I think it only fitting that I end on the same note. Bracken’s analysis of literature (both fiction and non) deals with not what discourses *mean*, but what they *do*. Likewise, I think it important to look at what discourse in the area of Latin American masculinities has done.

It is not that savages actually exist, just that what can emerge through discourse generally, and what *has* transpired through discourse surrounding Latin American masculinities, is the emergence of a sign—the birth of the *machista*.



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## Appendix I: Sample Question Framework

Question Type	Private	Public	Historical <sup>39</sup>
<b>Locating Information</b>	<p>Describe for me what your role is at home.</p> <p>Who engages in the most domestic work (child care, cleaning, cooking, food acquisition, fuel acquisition, water acquisition)?</p> <p>Tell me about your relationship with your male and female family members (wife and/or ex-wives, daughters, sons, step-daughters/sons, and extended family).</p>	<p>Describe for me what your role is in the community.</p> <p>Who engages in the most paid work?</p> <p>Tell me about your relationship with your friends, with your family's friends, with your co-workers, with other community members?</p>	<p>How have your home and community roles changed?</p> <p>Has your home or paid work changed?</p> <p>In what way have your individual relationships been altered over the course of these historical periods?</p>
<b>Patterns of Identification and Identity Formation</b>	<p>What does it mean to be a man? What about to be a female?</p> <p>What does it mean to be a father? How about a mother?</p>	<p>How are men and women's roles in the community different? Should this be the case?</p>	<p>In what way has growing up affected your desire to be each of these things?</p> <p>How have men and women's roles changed?</p>
<b>Aspects of Self</b>	<p>Which of these thoughts really belong to you?</p> <p>Which just conventional action?</p> <p>Which come from outside of you? From where?</p> <p>How do you react to stress at home?</p>	<p>Which of these thoughts really belong to you?</p> <p>Which just conventional action?</p> <p>Which come from outside of you? From where?</p> <p>How do you react from stress outside the home?</p>	<p>How have these particularities changed over time?</p>

<sup>39</sup> Interviewees were asked to consider all questions in the historical section with regard to the specific historical periods I have discussed as well as, or, with the initiation of the program at CISAS. That is, I asked a question with specific regard to certain historical periods.

<p><b>Morality</b></p>	<p>What is good or bad behaviour for a man? For a woman? For a father? For a mother? Etc.</p> <p>Why are these behaviours bad?</p> <p>What feelings or consequences result from these actions for each individual?</p> <p>What sorts of things do you want to do but refrain from doing? Why?</p> <p>How have you been embarrassed in your life? Why was it embarrassing?</p> <p>Have you ever felt guilt for certain actions?</p> <p>What is your opinion about justice in the home?</p>	<p>What is good or bad behaviour for particular societal roles?</p> <p>Why are these behaviours bad?</p> <p>What feelings or consequences result from these actions for each individual?</p> <p>What is your opinion about justice in society?</p>	<p>Have your or societies concepts of what is good or bad in these roles changed or been impacted by Nicaragua's history?</p>
<p><b>The Body</b></p>	<p>What sorts of food do you eat?</p> <p>What is your opinion about the value of cleanliness for men and women?</p>	<p>How do you feel about pollution?</p>	
<p><b>Stress, Illness, and Healing</b></p>	<p>Tell me about why you think there is domestic violence? What causes it?</p> <p>How do men deal with other family members being sick? What do they do?</p> <p>Tell me about depression?</p> <p>How do people become sick?</p> <p>How does one prevent domestic violence, sickness?</p> <p>Do (pointing out individual determinants for health) any of these things determine your</p>		<p>Has public perception of domestic violence changed?</p> <p>Is there more domestic violence now than before?</p>

	ability to become sick?		
<b>Death</b>	How do you feel about death?  How do Nicaraguans deal with the death of a close family member?	Tell me about death in Nicaragua?  How do Nicaraguans deal with the death of community members?	Have these ideas changed?
<b>Emotion</b>	What sort of emotions do you or family members portray?  Are there emotions specific to men and women?	Are emotions portrayed in public?  Is this appropriate?	Have public or private emotions changed?
<b>Religion and the Supernatural</b>	Are you religious?  Do you believe in an afterlife?	What is it to be religious in Nicaragua?  Do you take your family to church?	How has the influence of the Catholic church on Nicaragua changed?  How has it impacted your life differently?
<b>Fantasy, Creative Art, Dreams</b>	Do you dream?  Do you have fantasies?  What sort of creative things do you do?  Is dreaming, fantasizing, etc. something inherent to men or women?		
<b>Children</b>	Tell me more about what it is to be a child?  Are there differences for boys and girls?  How should children behave?  What sorts of experiences do children need to mature?		



## Appendix II: Translations

Page	Spanish	English
45-6	<p>Antes era una cosa muy diferente. Cuando mi chabalada, ser hombre decían los señores ante era que tenias que saber trabajar en el campo... todo tipo de trabajo en el campo; sembrar maíz, sembrar algodón trigo, soya, maní, arando con bueyes o con caballos, jalar agua, ir con un machete a chapodar o estar rajando leña con un hacha o estar abriendo hoyos con una coba o una barra, trabajo pesado. Si usted, en ese tiempo, no podía hacer todas esas cosas usted no era hombre y no tenia acceso a una mujer, por que los señores le decían, ‘y como la va a mantener usted si usted no es hombre todavía?’ (A)</p>	<p>Before, it was something very different. When I was young, the men would say that being a man was that you had to know how to work in the country...all types of work in the country: planting corn, planting cotton, wheat, soya, peanuts, plowing with oxen or horses, finding water, using a machete to cut down [firewood] or splitting firewood with an axe or digging holes with a bar, heavy work. If you couldn't do all those things in this time, you weren't a man and you didn't have access to a woman because the men would say, ‘and how are you going to maintain her if you are still not a man?’</p>
46	<p>Nos inclinábamos mas al trabajo</p>	<p>We were more inclined to work.</p>
46	<p>No teníamos que estar pensando que no había comida o que algo estaba caro. No le estaba contando...de que una libra de cerdo costaba un córdoba ahora vale 120...Esa es la vida que vivíamos antes de los 70... Y yo estaba chavalito me iba a trabajar y me ganaba mis 8 córdobas y solo que vivíamos.</p>	<p>We didn't have to be thinking that there wasn't enough food or that something was expensive. He [a particular man] was not counting...that one pound of pork cost one córdoba, now it is worth 120... That is the life that we lived before the '70s... And I was young, I was going to work and I earned my 8 córdobas and we lived only [with] that.</p>
46	<p>Y con la comida, por ejemplo, no nos comíamos un animal cerdo si no estaba gordo...que diera por lo menos media lata de manteca ósea 10 litros de aceite. Ahora nos comemos los chanchos flacos y antes no si una comerciante miraba que el chanchito no le daba de media lata a una lata de manteca no lo compraba.</p>	<p>And with the food, for example, we didn't eat an animal, pig, if it was not fat...that would give at least half a tin of fat, that is, 10 litres of oil. Now, we eat skinny pigs and before if a meat vendor was looking at a pig and it did not give him half a tin to a tin of fat, he didn't buy it.</p>

46	Mi papa me contaba que la vida de antes cuando era chavalito el mis abuelos decían que era una vida maravillosa como la que viví yo	My father told me that life before, when he was a kid, my grandparents would say “it was a wonderful life that I lived.”
47	Incluso los ricos, los ricos también están así. Una cosa que vivían con dinero. Yo le estoy hablando a nivel campesino a nivel obrero a nivel trabajador a nivel de rico de antes...mentira. Hay un cambio enorme...no les dejan trabajar a los ricos. Entonces, los ricos solo lo que están es mantenido. Entonces, hay un cambio, un cambio grande y antes...los ricos los dejaban que superaran y superaran y esos hombres mantenían gente trabajando, agarraban mas gente, y tenían mas gente tenían trabajando. Pero como eso se termino. Ahora los adinerados solo así están. No pueden hacer algo para que este país siga adelante. Nos tienen así y nosotros, los obreros, los trabajadores somos los que sufrimos y nosotros no podemos hacer nada porque el nivel el gremio...ellos pueden mas porque están mas cerca del gobierno. Bueno de ahí...para allá no lo entiendo yo.	Even these rich, the rich are like that. One thing, they lived with money. I am talking about the level of the <i>campesino</i> , at the level of the worker, at the level of the unskilled worker, at the level of the rich from before...lies. There is an enormous change...the rich don't leave us work. So, only the rich are maintained. So, there is a change, a big change and before...the rich were allowed to develop and develop and those men kept people working, got more people, and they had more people working. But like that, it stopped. Now the wealthy are [not] like that. They can't do something so that this country moves forward. They have us like that, and we, the workers, the unskilled workers, we are the ones that suffer and we can't do anything because at the level of the union...they can [do] more because they are closer to the government. Well, from there..for there I don't understand it.
49	Y, no solo a ellos, sino a las comunidades. Yo voy, a veces, a las comunidades. Yo les hablo y les digo miren hombre esto es malo.	And, not only to them, but also to the communities. I go, sometimes, to the communities. I speak to them and I say to them, look it men, this is bad.

49	<p>Para mi, ser hombre es respetar a la persona que tengo al lado, ayudarle y colaborarle, respetarle, en lo que pueda pues? Y salir adelante, los dos juntos, verdad? Con quien sea, verdad? Con tu compañera de trabajo tu compañera de hogar, hay que salir adelante, los dos juntos. Porque, de hecho pues si yo me junto con alguien es porque quiero hacer un buen trabajo con alguien, verdad? O con mi pareja para formar una buena familia, ser ejemplo, y salir adelante de esta vida que esta tan dura</p>	<p>For me, to be a man is to respect the person I have at my side, to help them and collaborate with them, respect them, whatever I can, right? And to get ahead, the two together, right? With whoever it is, right? With your workmate, your roommate, it is necessary to get ahead, the two together. Because, in fact if I am with someone it is because I want to do good work with someone, right? Or with my partner to form a good family, to be examples and to get ahead in this life that is so hard.</p>
51	<p>Ser responsable es...es saber a lo que se va a meter uno, ser responsable con los hijos...Ser responsables de que estos hijos tengan su comida y...Ser un hombre responsable es que tengo que trabajar y no estar de balde, porque si yo estoy de balde pudiendo ganar dinero para estar mejor. Soy un irresponsable. Porque si yo soy haragán y no me gusta el trabajo, porque en este altura la ahora así hay gente que no le gusta el trabajo.</p>	<p>To be responsible is...it is to know that you are going to get a job, to be responsible with the children...to be responsible...that these kids have their food and...to be a responsible man is that I have to work and not be lazy because if I am lazy, I am not earning money to be better. I am an 'irresponsible'. Because if I am a layabout and I don't like work, because at this stage there are people like that <i>now</i> that don't like work.</p>
51	<p>Ahora en este tiempo, como no hay trabajo, todos somos irresponsables en este tiempo. A bueno, a como le digo a los ricos los tienen así y el gobierno que no hace nada.</p>	<p>Now, in this time, as there is no work, we are all irresponsible in this time. Well, as I told you, the rich they have it like that, and the government that does not do anything.</p>
52	<p>Hay veces hay mejor responsabilidad cuando el hombre esta unido con la mujer y trabajan los dos claro. Porque hay un mejor ingreso, hay una forma mas cómoda de la marcha donde habiten. Pueden tener sus cosas mas si son económicas...porque si los dos son así los dos tiene sus puntos de ver en la responsabilidad donde ellos vivan.</p>	<p>There are times there is better responsibility when the man is united with the woman and the two work [together] clearly. Because there is a better income, there is a more comfortable walk [of life] where they live. They can have more things if they are economic...Because if the two are like that, the two have their points of view in the responsibility where they live.</p>

52	<p>Los varones ahora mandan a las mujeres a trabajar y ellos se quedan en la casa, pero esperando que a la mujer le paguen y les de la comida y eso no es ser responsable.</p>	<p>The men now order women to work and they [the men] stay in the house, but waiting for the woman to pay them and give them food, and this is not being responsible.</p>
53	<p>Mi mujer nunca ha ido a trabajar a las instituciones. Mi mujer, cuando una de mis hijas va a criar un hijo, porque estoy en la finca, cuando acaban de tener mi mujer les lava la ropa y las cuida. Ese es el trabajo de ella. Pero eso no es todos los días ni meses eso es solo unos 15 días o 20 días o un mes lo mas, mi mujer nunca ha trabajado. Yo no puedo perder un día de trabajar me hace falta porque se lo que tengo y se lo que me puede venir mas adelante una enfermedad, o que sé yo porque nosotros aquí estamos en la tierra y en cualquier momento podemos necesitar reales. Y entonces a mi me gusta trabajar y así deberíamos de ser todos, pero no todos somos así. Yo no tomo y yo trabajo para mi mujer y si alguien llega y podemos comer con el, comemos.</p>	<p>My woman never has gone to work at the institutions [referring to free zone manufacturers]. My woman, when one of my kids goes to raise a kid, because I am at the farm, when they have just had them, my woman washes their clothes and cares for them. That is her work. But that is not every day, nor months. That is only about 15 or 20 days or a month at the most. My woman has never worked. I cannot lose a day of work...I become used to missing because I know that I have...I know it that I can come closer to sickness, or that I know because we are on earth, and in whatever moment we can need cash. And so, to me, I like to work and we should all be like that, but not all are like that. I don't drink and I work for my woman and if someone arrives and we can eat with him, we eat.</p>
53	<p>El amor tiene que ser comunicativo que haya buena relacion mira amor pasa.</p>	<p>Love has to be communicative so that there is a good relationship, look it, love happens.</p>

54	<p>Las problemas que presente la familia es el hombre, verdad? Que trabaje, el que sale de la casa a trabajar. Pero a pesar de eso creo que las mujeres juegan un papel muy importante, verdad? Porque las mujeres, si bien, es cierto porque se quedan en la casa, suponiendo pues que se quedan en la casa. El trabajo que ellas realizan es doble porque cuanto cuesta cuidar a un niño, asear la casa, planchar, lavar, todo eso es un trabajo no remunerado por parte personal. Unos compañeros míos estuvieron realizando el año pasado que hicimos practicas profesionales en la carrera va pues? Entonces ellos realizaron un diagnostico y le realizaban unas preguntas a unas personas de que a unas mujeres como, 'cuanto vale su trabajo de todo lo que hacen de todo. Es igual a los hombres?' Entonces vinieron las mujeres y le pusieron la ropa...tanto, tanto...cuidar niños/as, tanto, tanto tanto, verdad, todo todo, todo, de que los hombres solo, por ejemplo como fue en las comunidades del mar, en las costas, por ejemplo Las Peñitas PoneLOYA, puede decir alla, los hombres decían ir a pescar y al sumar todo, resulta que es mas el trabajo que realzan las mujeres que el de los hombres.</p>	<p>The problems that present the family is the man, ok? That works, that leaves the house to work. But through all of that, I believe that women play a very important role, ok? Because women, yes well, it is true because women stay in the house assuming, ok, that they stay in the house. The work that they complete is double because how much does it cost to care for a child, to tidy the house, to iron, to clean, all that is unpaid personal work. Last year some of my friends were doing a study because we do professional practice [in our] degree ok? So they completed a study and they asked some questions to some women like, 'what is all of your work that you do worth? Is it equal to men?' So the women came and they did the clothes, so much, so much...looked after the children, so much so much so much, right? All of it, all of it, all of it, the men only, for example, as it goes in the ocean communities, coastal communities, for example Las Peñitas, PoneLOYA, one can say there, they men say they are going to fish...and upon adding it all up, it resulted that more work was completed by women than by men.</p>
54	<p>Pero hay que respetar a las mujeres porque son, como dicen, nuestra pareja, y no son el sexo débil, nada de eso, porque todos somos iguales aquí, verdad? Y creo que hay que apoyarse y si te juntas con ella, como te dije anteriormente, es para trabajar juntos en beneficio de la pareja o de la familia.</p>	<p>But, it is necessary to respect women because they are, as they say, our partner, and they aren't the soft sex, none of that, because we are all equal here, right? And I believe that it is necessary to lean on each other and if you are together with her and, like I told you before, it is to work together for the benefit of the couple or of the family.</p>

54-5	<p>Aunque en mi, no pudieron hacerlo, mi mama porque no había la oportunidad. Mi mama tuvo la buena intención pero no le daban la oportunidad que quisiera con nosotros porque hay un régimen ahí decía esto se hace no se hace Mi mama era una mujer casada y la manejaba mi abuelito, a mi papa a mi mama. Lo que el abuelito decía nadie podía decir nada porque esa era una orden lo que el decía</p>	<p>Although in my [childhood], they couldn't do it, my mom, because there was no opportunity. My mom had good intentions, but they didn't give her the opportunity that she wanted with us because there is a regime there that said this didn't do, it didn't do. My mom was a married woman and my grandpa managed her, my dad and mom. What my grandfather said nobody could say anything because it was an order, what he said.</p>
55	<p>Yo sé que debo de educarlos, enseñarle a estudiar. Así en mi chabalada no tuvimos colegio casi porque mi abuelito decía '¿qué? ¿que cosa era estudiar? ¿Que cosa era eso?' Si, en la finca, había comida había frijoles, maíz, había arroz, había queso, cuajada, 'eso es lo que a mi me interesa,' decía mi abuelito. Y mi abuelito era un hombre que tenía mucho dinero pero no sabia ni poner su nombre No escapamos de mi abuelito, mi abuelito era rígido y le teníamos miedo. Pero mis hermanos mayores, algunos están todavía en Managua, ya están señores, son ingenieros químicos. Lo lograron pero el resto de nosotros no, no pudimos. Y entonces eso yo no quise que le pasara a mis hijos. Yo quise lo mejor para ellos, aunque yo no había sido criado así en ese sistema. Pero ese sistema a pesar que yo me crié, así no me gusta. Entonces yo les di a mis hijos todo lo que se merecían a como yo podía y gracias a Dios no tuve hijos corrompidos ni borrachos. De dos hijos varones mayores que tengo no beben, ni fuman son dedicados a su trabajo.</p>	<p>I know that I should educate them, teach him to study. Like in my childhood, we barely had school because my grandpa would say, 'what? What are you going to study?' What was that? If, in the farm, there was food, there were beans, corn, there was rice, there was cheese, avocados, 'that is what interests me,' said my grandpa. And my grandpa was a man that had a lot of money but couldn't sign his name [couldn't write]. We didn't escape my grandpa, my grandpa was rigid and we were afraid of him. But my older siblings, some are still in Managua, they are men, they are chemical engineers. They achieved that but the rest of us no, we couldn't. And so I don't want that to happen to my children. I want to improve it for them although I was not raised like that, in this system. But this system that I was raised in, like that, I don't like it. So, I give my children all that they deserve, how I couldn't and thank God I don't have spoiled kids, or drunks. Out of two older male children that I have they don't drink they don't smoke, they are dedicated to their work.</p>

56	<p>No quiero decir que soy santo que no peleamos...peleamos verbalmente...cosas así, pero no a golpes ni patadas no sino que con palabras. Me dijo ella a mi palabras que no son adecuadas. También yo le dije mira estas haciendo mal pleitos así pero de golpear no. Y por ahí van mis hijos también...como le digo yo...eso es lo que yo les he enseñado a mis hijos. A mi esposa yo le he dicho mira con el hecho que vos seas mujer y yo soy hombre. Yo no soy mas que vos, somos iguales, diferentes de que vos sos mujer y yo soy hombre. Tú ser es uno y el mío es otro, pero aquí así como yo puedo decidir ella también puede decidir. Ella decide en la casa. Siempre y cuando haya una cosa que a mi no me guste o que a ella no le guste entonces ahí van las dialogaciones y eso es lo que yo les he enseñado a mis hijos también...que a la mujer no se le pega, que si la mujer hizo una mala accion ahí dejela, que si la mujer se la pego hay dejela para que no la va a golpear...asi les hablo yo eso les enseño y ellos todos se han casado con sus mujeres hay estan teniendo sus hijos. Bueno, eso es lo que les he enseñado eso es lo que van a vivir. Yo quizas pronto ya no voy a estar y esa es la enseñanza que yo les he dado a ellos</p>	<p>I don't want to say that I am a saint, that we don't fight...we fight verbally...things like that, but, not with punching or kicking, no, but with words. She told me that my words are not adequate. Also, I told her to watch, you are arguing poorly, like that, but of beatings no. And for there my children go as well...as I tell you...that it is what I have taught them. To my wife, I have told her to watch with the fact that you are a woman and I am a man. I am not more than you, we are equal, different in that you are a woman and I am a man. To be you is one and to be me is another, but here like that as I can make decisions, so can she make decisions. She makes decisions in the house. As long as there is something that I don't like or that she doesn't like, well then, there are going to be conversations, and that is what I have taught my children as well...that women are not to be hit, that if a woman does something bad, leave her alone. That if the woman hits you, you need to leave her so that you aren't going to hit her...Like that I spoke to them...I taught them and all of them are married with women...They are having their own children. Well, that is what I have taught them, that is how they are going to live. I, I am not going to be, maybe soon, and that is the teaching that I have given to them.</p>
56	<p>Hay veces la mujer quiere tener mas potestad mas dominio y el hombre muchas veces en ese campo tienen que llegar a ponerse de acuerdo. Pero hay veces se va dando eso que al final no tiene un buen resultado, ¿porque? Porque ella quiere tener el mando y usted sabe que el hombre es el que debe tener cierta cosa en el dominio en un hogar, porque es el hombre</p>	<p>There are times the woman wants to have more authority, more control and the man, most of the time in this field, [men] have to agree. But there are times that that happens and eventually it doesn't have a good result, why? Because she wants to have the command and you know that the man should have certain things in the control of a home, because he is the man.</p>

57	<p>Muchos hombres han quedado solos en nicaragua. Unas mujeres emigran a Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica cuando miran que ya ni viene. Entonces el hombre tienen que hacer sus aventuras ir a buscar otra mujer.</p>	<p>Many men have been left alone in Nicaragua [when] women emigrate to Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica. The man has to do his adventures, to go looking for another woman.</p>
58-59	<p>Estamos listos. Y aquí como podríamos hacer nosotros los pequeños ahí estamos luchando con un cambio. Si, aquí hay gente para trabajar para ser responsables pero en realidad eso es lo que pasa tenemos un gobierno...desde el gobierno no es responsable, va pues. Y ya nosotros que por medio del trabajo somos responsables...no hay casi trabajo y lo poco que le llega no lo invierten sino mas bien se lo beben. Cigarro marihuana, droga. Eso si esta hermano. Ya en estas alturas ahí andan un poco e locos Tanta droga, ellos no comen. Andan perdido de la mente.</p>	<p>We are ready. And here as we are able to do, we the small there, we are fighting [for] a change. Yes, here there are people for working, for being responsible, but in reality that is what happens, we have a government...since the government is not responsible, well...And we, through work, we are responsible...There is almost no work and the little that comes is not invested but rather, more...well...they drink it. Cigars, marijuana, drugs. It's like that, brother. In these times, they go a little crazy...so many drugs...they don't eat. They go losing their mind.</p>
63	<p>Además, muchos hombres que se las han dado de un machismo, y las mujeres les tienen miedo hay veces han tenido que actuar de una manera cuando están dormidos hay veces hasta los han fregado por que? Porque ya llegaron hasta a un limite ya no soportaron la dama. Ya no soporto entonces eso se da cuando el hombre quiere demostrar ese machismo. Entonces la verdad es, que yo creo que no debe ser así. En mi opinión sino que tratar de llevar aquella eso es como un ejemplo nosotros ponemos un barco hay va a ser a veces una ola te levanta mas, entonces hay veces que el hombre quiere sublevarse demasiado. Pero también hay que controlarse uno mismo. Para poder estar en esa cuestión y no existir ese machismo, esa furia. Porque hay hombres que son demasiados furiosos y como le digo hay mujeres que llegan al limite y cuando explotan es una bomba de tiempo y entonces cuando ya quiere reflexionar poder mejorar aquello te dicen ya no tuviste llegaste a tu limite. Pero ahora como dicen anda mori lejos búscate otra que te aguante tus reacciones. Porque sos un hombre intolerante, sos un hombre no social. Porque a todos esos actos le llaman insociable aquí en Nicaragua. Son parásitos jodidos.</p>	<p>Moreover, many men have boasted about <i>machismo</i>, and the women are afraid of them. There are times they have had to act in a manner when they are sleeping together, there are times they have become annoyed, why? Because they have reached a limit, [the men] don't put up with the lady. They don't put up with it and so that is common when the man wants to demonstrate that <i>machismo</i>. Well, the truth is, that I believe that it should not be like that. In my opinion, but also...to try to arrive...that...that is like an example. We are in a boat, there is sometimes going to be a wave that raises (<i>levantarse</i>) you more. Then, there are times the man wants to rise up (<i>sublevarse</i>) too much. But, also it is necessary to control oneself by oneself to be able to be in that matter, and to not be that <i>machismo</i>, that fury. Because there are men that are too furious and as I tell you, there are women that arrive at a limit and when they explode it is a time bomb, and so when one wants to reflect to be able to better that, they tell you that they had arrived at their limit. But now, as they [the women] say, go die far away, look for another woman (<i>otra</i>) that puts up with your reactions because you are an intolerant man, you are an unsocial man. Because all those acts are called unsociable here in Nicaragua. They are parasitic fuckers.</p>



70	<p>La dicen, 'mira, vas te vas a dedicar a la casa a hacer la limpieza a lavar mi ropa.' Si hay hijos la dicen, 'mira al chavalito, llevalo al colegio,' y como el machismo empezó...sí...en esos años. Entonces la mujer decía, 'aaah,' y así empecé el desorden. Entonces no había una relación estable...Tenía su machismo aquí en este país. Entonces, estas alturas puede que hayan maridos y mujeres que trabajen, pero tal vez tienen a una persona de responsables ya sean sus padres o la mamá del marido o alguna hermana de confianza, entonces trabajan de una manera más unida y ha desaparecido bastante el imperio entonces se mira pues todavía.</p>	<p>They say to her, 'look it, you are going to devote yourself to the house, to doing the cleaning, to washing my clothes.' If there are kids they say to her, 'watch the kid, you are going to take the kid to school' and, how, like that <i>machismo</i> started...yes...in those years. So the woman says 'aaaah,' and the mess starts like that. So there wasn't a stable relationship...he has his <i>machismo</i> here in this country. So at this stage [present-day] they [women that work] may have husbands, but maybe they have someone responsible, like their fathers or the mother of the husband or some sister they trust, so they work in a more united manner and plenty of the tyranny has disappeared so they still look well.</p>
70	<p>Cuando yo era joven, había machismo. Por ejemplo habían unos que eran celosos y mantenían a la mujer como, que es decir...el hombre se apodera.</p>	<p>When I was young, there was machismo. For example there were some that were jealous and kept a woman as, that is to say...the man takes possession [of the woman].</p>
71	<p>Este, mire. Aquí han habido muchos casos. Un ejemplo que hay hombres que creen que por estar sometiendo a una mujer a golpes a cosas diario. Porque aquí hay muchos hombres en Nicaragua que quieren tener hasta dos o tres mujeres y a la mujer no le gusta y entonces las golpean.</p>	<p>This, look it. Here there have been many cases. An example is that there are men that believe in subjecting women to daily beatings. Because here there are many men in Nicaragua that want to have up to two or three women and the women don't like that, so the men beat them.</p>
71	<p>Decía algo y las mujeres temblaban, eso era machismo y a veces hasta las maltrataban...sí había machismo.</p>	<p>The man would say something and the women shook. That was <i>machismo</i> and they even sometimes mistreated them...yes, there was <i>machismo</i>.</p>
71	<p>Aquí esta tan elevado el machismo.</p>	<p><i>Machismo</i> is very elevated, right.</p>
71	<p>Estamos ahorita en lo que es el machismo y la violencia, hay violencia también.</p>	<p>We are now in what is <i>machismo</i> and the violence, there is violence as well.</p>

72	<p>Creo que lo que puede hacer diferencia es la capacitación o el conocimiento que tenemos actualmente de que es machismo que es violencia intrafamiliar. Creo que en ese aspecto si hay diferencia, conocimientos, pero se siguen dando altos índices de violencia intrafamiliar, de violación de los derechos, de las mujeres. Eso siempre se sigue dando no sé si peor o mejores pero si se siguen dando yo incluso veo en las noticias de que ocurren maltrato de las mujeres siempre. A pesar de que haya una comisaría de la mujer que defiende los derechos de las mujeres y el hombre también porque, del hombre verdad? Y para la sociedad. Entonces creo que (laughter) se sigue dando y hay conocimientos y no respetamos lo que se nos dice y enseña y no lo ponemos en practica.</p>	<p>I believe that what makes a difference is the training or the knowledge that we actually have of what is <i>machismo</i>, what is domestic violence. I believe that in this aspect, yes, there is a difference, knowledge, but they keep giving higher indices of domestic violence, of rights violations of women. That is always being given, I don't know if it is worse or better but if it continues I, even, I see in the news the mistreatment that always happens to women. Despite the fact that there is a women's station that defends the rights of women and the men also because, of the men right? And for society. So, I believe that they keep giving indices and there is knowledge and we don't respect what they tell us and teach us and we don't put it into practice.</p>
73	<p>Si quiero, hay, si no quiero, no hay.</p>	<p>If I want it, it is there, if I don't want it, it won't be. (SELFISH)</p>
73	<p>Creo que en Latinoamérica que somos bien machistas y el principal problema no sentimos igual, no tenemos una sociedad igual. Tenemos problemas que no atendemos igualdad ni nuestras necesidades no ayudamos ni colaboramos en atender las necesidades.</p>	<p>I believe that in Latin America, that we are very <i>machista</i> and the principle problem [is] we don't feel equal, we don't have an equal society. We have problems in that we don't attend to equality, to our necessities and we don't help nor do we collaborate in attending to the necessities.</p>
73	<p>Creo que esa es la epidemia aquí.</p>	<p>I believe that that is the epidemic here.</p>
98	<p>No somos perfectos pero estamos aprendiendo... Y estamos aprendiendo cada día mejor para apartarnos de lo malo.</p>	<p>We aren't perfect but we are learning... And we are learning every day to better ourselves to separate ourselves from the bad.</p>
98	<p>Cuando alguien nos critica es bueno por que es constructivo y busquemos como mejorar, nos sentamos, platicamos y miremos donde es que estamos mal y tratemos de hacerlo mejor. Esa ha sido la idea de nuestra directiva</p>	<p>When someone critiques us it is good because it is constructive and we look for ways to improve, we sit, we talk and we watch where it is that we are wrong and we try to make it better. That has been the idea of our directive.</p>
98	<p>Porque uno aprende a oír. Bueno desde que vos pones atención estas aprendiendo porque estas oyendo...no oís no escuchas no vas a aprender nunca, esa es mi fuente.</p>	<p>Because one learns to hear. Well since you pay attention, you are learning because you are hearing...you don't hear you don't listen, you are not going to learn anything, that is my source.</p>

99	Pero a través del proceso del proceeso de la vida vamos obteniendo todo ese conocimiento y tenemos que ir mejorando.	But through the process, the process of life we go getting all that knowledge and we have to go improving.
99	Creo que CISAS nos ha ayudado bastante porque creo que hay que poner en practica lo que nos dicen.	I believe that CISAS has helped us a great deal because I believe that it is necessary to put what they tell us into practice.
99	En eralidad en CISAS me han asegurado mas de lo que he sido yo: de la responsabilidad del genero de que es ser hombre y que es ser mujer. Yo, por ahí, he venido conociendo mas lo que es genero, masculinidad. Ahí es, donde sinceramente digo yo. He aprendido yo mas en CISAS, de lo que es la mujer lo que es el hombre, pero también en CISAS me han enseñado del maltrato que eso yo no lo he vivido. Yo les he dicho a ellos en los talleres, porque nos hacen una evaluación de lo que es uno en lo que es genero de la mujer y el hombre, y yo le he venido diciendo que mi esposa para mi es lo mismo. Eso me han enseñado en CISAS que la mujer es igual al hombre, el mismo derecho tiene, el mismo gusto, el mismo amor, el mismo sentimiento. Todo lo tiene en todo es igual al hombre, unicamente que ella se pone vestidos y zapatos diferentes esa es la diferencia pero en lo que es la cosa del amor es igual. Eso yo lo he venido aprendiendo con CISAS. Antes, yo era mas tonto me daba no se que hablar con usted así, o le confesaba. Es decir yo no le hubiera dicho nada a usted de estas cosas si no hubiera tenido estos talleres de CISAS. Pero con estos talleres hasta en las comunidades aprenden porque yo les he enseñado. Yo no me pierdo un taller de CISAS. Nunca me los he perdido porque en primer lugar yo reconozco mi vida como ha venido y reconozco lo que me estan enseñando, que no sabia yo. Lo que era genero no sabia dividir pues lo que es el hombre y la mujer, pero CISAS a pesar que no he sido estudiado me ha levantado. Para diaologar mejor... como le dijera yo me ha transmitido esa enseñanza de aprender y he puesto voluntad y atención a lo que nos enseñan y eso a mi me ha servido para confirmar lo que yo he sido y confirmar lo que voy a hacer mas adelante hasta donde voy a llegar pues.	In reality, CISAS has satisfied more of what I have been: of the responsibility of gender and what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman. I, for there, I have been more aware of what is gender, masculinity. I say it sincerely, there it is. I have learned more in CISAS, of what it is to be a woman and what it is to be a man, but also CISAS has taught me about abuse so that I have not lived it. I have told them in the workshops because they create an evaluation of what [abuse] is and what gender is and of women and men. I have been saying that, for me, my wife is the same. That, they have taught me in CISAS, that women are equal to man, they have the same rights, the same pleasures, the same love, the same feelings. All that they have is equal to men, only they wear dresses and different shoes. That is the difference, but in things of love, it's the equal. That I have been learning with CISAS. Before, I was more foolish. I wouldn't have talked like this to you, or confessed this. That is to say, I would not have told you of these things if I did not have those workshops from CISAS. But with those workshops even the communities learn because I have taught them. I do not miss a workshop with CISAS. Never have I missed them because, in the first place, I recognize what they have taught me, that I didn't know. That which is gender I didn't know [how] to separate men and women but through CISAS I have been studying, it has lifted me up. But to speak better... as I was telling you, CISAS has passed on this teaching of learning and I have put my will and attention to what they have taught us and that has served to confirm what I have been and to confirm what I am going to do in the future where I am going to go.

100	<p>Claro que si para enseñar y por quieres compartir porque asi como yo no sabia nada de lo que CISAS me ha enseñado muchos no saben. CISAS nos llega a supervisar a las comunidades, hacen que nosotros invitemos 30 personas y llegan 20 o 15 y esas personas. Nosotros ya les decimos lo que hemos aprendido, yo digo que he mejorado porque antes yo solo lo hacia con mis hijos con mi familia mis sobrinos y hermanos o cercanos a la familia. Hoy no. Hoy CISAS nos ha involucrado con la comunidad, como le digo invitamos 30 porque si invitamos 50 ó 60 talvez no vamos a enseñar bien porque no dejan de platicar unos con otros. Pero si invitamos 30 llegan 15 y a esas 15 si las agarramos, eso es lo que aprendemos.</p>	<p>Truly, to teach and if you want to share because like that, as I didn't know what CISAS has taught me, many do not know. CISAS has gone so far as to supervise us in the communities, to make us invite 30 people, and 20 or 15 of these people show up. We tell them what he have learned and I say that I have improved because before I only did this with my children and my family, my nephews and nieces, and siblings, or those close to the family. Today no. Today CISAS has involved us with the community, as I say we invite 30 because if we invite 50 or 60, maybe we won't be able to teach them well because they don't stop talking to each other. But if we invite 30, 15 come and of these 15 if we grab them, that is what we learn.</p>
100	<p>Todos hemos tenido una gran comunicación con ellos. En primer lugar yo les comunico las cosas de Dios la iglesia la iglesia nueva apostólica eso espiritual pero yo también le enseño lo que es bueno y lo que es malo. Por ejemplo yo les digo a ellos 'miren a mi no tomo no fumo. Eso les enseño yo y usted aprendan sean como yo'. Y van a vivir así como yo viví todo mi tiempo así. Lo van a vivir ustedes son las enseñanzas pues que las drogas les enseño también las malas gavillas porque si usted va a andar en mala gavilla mejor no ande mejor ande solo así. Le digo, les hablo, les enseño si se va a andar con un buen amigo, ande, pero si usted va a andar con un amigo que lo esta llevando a una cantina le esta enseñando las drogas mejor apártese. Eso ha sido mi enseñanza mi ejemplo y el ejemplo pues que Dios nos ha dado que así debemos e vivir terrenal respetándonos las autoridades tengo sesenta y pico de años y yo nunca he estado preso. Ellos ya están mayores de treinta años y hasta la fecha no han estado preso. No se meten con políticos. Yo nunca he andado en política. En cosa del mujer les enseño también mírenme, mi, yo a su mama no la golpeo.</p>	<p>We have all had a great communication with them. In the first place, I communicate God's things with them, the church, the church, new apostolic, that spiritual, but I also taught them that which is good and that which is bad. For example, I say to them, 'watch me, I don't drink, I don't smoke.' That I taught them and you, they learned how they are like me. And they are going to live like that as I lived all my life like that. They are going to live it, they are the teachings, well, that the drugs I taught them also, the bad sheaves, because if you are going to walk in a bad sheaf, it's better to not walk, better to walk alone like that. I tell you, I spoke to them, I taught them if you are going to walk with a good friend, walk, but if you are going to walk with a friend that is taking you to a bar, they are teaching you the drugs, you better move away. That has been my teaching, my example, and the example, well, that god has given us that we should live on earth respecting the authorities. I am a little over seventy years old and I have never been in jail. They are already older than 30 years old and up until now they have not been to jail. They have not got involved with politics. I have never been involved in politics. Like that go my children as well, I taught them. In womanly things, I taught them as well to watch me. I don't hit your mother.</p>

## Appendix III: Ethics Consent Form



### Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

### INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study entitled:

“Changing Masculinities in León, Nicaragua”

Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

#### **Researcher**

Adam Wiebe, BSc MSc (candidate)

Department of Community Health and Epidemiology

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Canada (A local phone number will be provided)

Visiting Researcher, Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud (CISAS)

León (*Contact Number will be made available upon arrival*)

#### **Purpose and Procedure**

This study is the thesis component of a master’s project. The purpose of this study is to understand masculinity within the particular historical context of Nicaragua as well as the differences and/or similarities between concepts of masculinity in the home and in public. The study will use interviews and group activities with a number of different people.

If you choose to participate, a time will be arranged that is convenient for you to meet with the researcher for an interview. The interview will be casual and like a conversation. I would like to learn about your understanding of masculinity in both historic national and personal terms. The interview will be recorded with your consent and will last no more than 90 minutes. No personal identification information, such as your home address, will be required for the interview. There is a possibility that you may be contacted after the interview to make sure that I have understood what we talked about in the interview. You will also be invited to participate in a group activity after your interview. You do not have to participate in this activity if you do not wish to do so.

#### **Potential Risks**

There are no known risks involved for people who participate in this study.

### **Potential Benefits**

The results of this study may provide information for policy in gender programs in health. Such policy might improve the quality of life of people from León and Nicaragua in general. While the benefits to the communities of León may not be seen immediately, there may be longer-term benefits as a result of the information gained. Of course, there is no guarantee that this study will result in these benefits.

### **Storage of Data**

All interview recordings will be labeled with a code that will not be identifiable by anyone but the researcher. The interview recordings and the consent forms will be kept under the protection of the researcher for the standard time period (5 years) after which the records will be destroyed. Any individuals who may assist with transcription or analysis will be required to sign a confidentiality form and to return all original data and project files to me, and to destroy any electronic or hard copies remaining on their personal computers or in their offices.

### **Confidentiality**

The data from this study will be compiled for a thesis document and will be published and presented at conferences; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Although I will report direct quotations from the interview, you will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (name of institution, clinical or administrative position, or status as service recipient) will be removed from any report. The information from your interview may be used again at a later date for further analysis or publication, but your identity will be kept secret and confidential at all times.

### **Confidentiality and Focus Group Sessions**

The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

Because the participants for this research project have been selected from a small group of people, all of whom are known to each other, it is possible that you may be identifiable to other people on the basis of what you have said.

After you interview, and prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of you interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as you see fit.

### **Right to Withdraw**

Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. There is no guarantee that you will personally benefit from your involvement. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team. You may withdraw from the research project for

any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the research project at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request.

**Questions**

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact Adam Wiebe at the numbers provided above if you have questions at a later time.

This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board \_\_\_\_\_ (Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services by email ([curtis.chapman@usask.ca](mailto:curtis.chapman@usask.ca)) or phone (1-306-966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

**Consent to Participate**

I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I have received a copy of the consent form for my records: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I wish to review the transcript of this interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I wish to be contacted to participate in a group activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Participant Name _____	Participant Signature _____
Researcher Signature _____	Date _____

I understand that my contact information will be used only to arrange for transcript review OR to participate in the group activity (as indicated above):  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix IV: Knowledge Translation

The following section shows the English version of the work that I sent back to CISAS for the organization to see the conclusions of my work in an abbreviated form.

### Masculinity

The question that remains a large focus and, indeed, motivating factor for this thesis is how does masculinity relate to health? Throughout the process of writing my thesis, I began to think more about the issue and expanded my search of the literature. I noticed how difficult it was to come across studies that enlist men in affecting social change in terms of gender—that is not to say such studies do not exist, only that they are few and far between. Moreover, it quickly became apparent that I was doing what many of my predecessors have done—and what I personally believe to be a half-cocked approach—not addressing the male side of gender issues. Studies and programs on gender must necessarily incorporate *both* men and women into their studies. For example, when studying violence against women and/or gender-based violence, why are there not more programs and studies that involve males? Barker et al (17), in a World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned study, directly acknowledge that ‘the social expectations of what men and boys should and should not do and be directly affect attitudes and behaviour related to a range of health issues,’ and ‘gender, interacting with poverty and other factors, directly affects how health systems and services are structured and organized and how and which individuals are able to access them’ (p. 3-6). A wide range of health outcomes and behaviours are affected by social constructions of gender and their corresponding gendered inequity including: prevention of HIV transmission and other sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive use, physical violence towards

women and between men, domestic work, parenting and health-seeking behaviour (17-23). Of course, gendered health risks do not only negatively affect women—the same studies and others recognize that masculinity affects both women and men. It is not difficult to see in whatever cultural context you may find yourself in and notice that males often involve themselves in certain risk-taking behaviours that can include things like violence, substance use, unsafe driving, sexual ‘adventurism’ (and more) in an effort to assert their own manhood. Additionally, social constructions of men and boys as being invulnerable to harm impair them from seeking physical and/or mental help when it is needed.

Throughout the process of interviewing men involved in capacitación talleres and witnessing the talleres myself, it was immediately obvious that CISAS is already aware of these issues and that significant steps have been taken towards addressing them. As members of CISAS are already familiar with the work that Peter Sternberg completed there, I would like to begin where he left off. Sternberg discussed the importance that men’s interest in family planning and sexual and reproductive health as well as women’s empowerment be relayed to men. CISAS has coordinated efforts to direct men to information they could utilize in order to better understand men’s ‘behaviour, attitudes, and the context of these, in order to develop an awareness of the social and cultural norms defined by *machismo*, and the way these norms create a certain model of ‘acceptable’ male sexual behaviour, and a particular set of attitudes’ (26)(p 90). Sternberg’s study examined men’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in sexuality, reproduction, and fatherhood. It was obvious from Sternberg’s research that men garner certain attitudes and behaviour towards sexuality, reproduction and fatherhood, but as an agency for

development it is vital to understand to a greater extent exactly how these attitudes have changed. While CISAS (and perhaps other NGOs) recognized this point many years ago, it is not until most recently that this idea has started to work its way into mainstream development fields.

Sternberg wrote about the importance of several different discourses in the development of men's performance of masculinity: a Catholic discourse, a pro-feminist discourse, a Western progressive (liberal feminist) discourse, a medical discourse, and a traditional patriarchal discourse (what he labels *machismo*). To be brief, I will not relay these discourses but would like to add, what I think to be a missing discourse—that of the revolutionary new man. In an anthropological study by Lancaster, Jaime, one of Lancaster's informants aptly explains:

'These ideas have changed a lot, and are still changing, since the revolution. Some people have the old ideal, other people have the new one, so it's hard to say. The new idea of a good man—that is the revolutionary New Man—is someone who studies to improve himself and his country, who works hard, who is responsible toward his compañera, his children, and is generous with those around him. The old idea of a good man—the ideal of machismo—was someone who could drink, fight, gamble, and have a large number of sexual conquests' (67)(p. 175).

Jaime puts forth a simplified portrayal of what he later admits to be a more complex occurrence for the average man; men are not idealized representations of the 'New Man' nor are they simply *machistas*, but a mixture of the two. It is, as Sternberg has shown above, still more complicated by a mixture of other discourses.

Undoubtedly, the most significant finding of my study came about through the investigation of *machismo* and the *machista*. Through my (admittedly short) five months of experience in Nicaragua, I came to embrace this term as a taken-for-granted element of the culture, however, upon further reflection and reading I realized there is no common

idea of what *machismo* or the *machista* is, especially when considering other Latin American ideas of *machismo*. In fact, the meaning varied so greatly that the term has been used (both in the literature and throughout my interviews) as a belief system, as prejudice, as a theoretical framework, as a practice of manliness or an action, and even as a disease of Nicaraguan culture. Additionally, the origin of the word (especially in the negative sense) is thought to have originated not from Spanish speakers, but from English speakers.

What is important about the use of *machismo* amongst the research participants is their demonstrable disdain for anything *machista*. The participants conceptualize whom they are, where they must be, and how they are to be characterized and interpreted through how they are not women or they are not *machistas*, but *responsible* men. This form of being an individual comes through what Foucault has labeled systems of discipline. That is to say, men are constantly checking themselves against what are societal checks: the man must earn the money, the man must not beat his wife, the man must be a good example to his children, etc. The *machista* is just one way men check themselves.

On a different note, the thesis brought up several apparent contradictions in thought by the men. All the men would say at one moment that, yes, women were equal to men yet, nearly at the same time, they would insist that women's place was in the home. There were several different contradictions regarding gender roles. However, it seemed to me that these really were not contradictions in their minds, but rather they saw each sex as being equal but having different roles.

Throughout the interviews, participants discussed in one way or another how they are constantly learning, changing, and striving to be better. Additionally, many of the participants shared how CISAS has helped them to learn more in their daily lives about parenting and what it is to be a man. While, it would be both useful and interesting to try to understand the impact CISAS itself has had on the participants, no attempt will be given here, as neither the study questions nor the design were implemented in a method allowing it. The following section will highlight a few of the key statements discussed by men regarding (a) their desire to constantly change and improve themselves and (b) their thoughts on how CISAS has contributed to this.

Some men thought very moralistically when they discussed personal change, emphasizing the ‘surveillance’ point discussed in the chapter on *machismo*, ‘we aren’t perfect but we are learning...and we are learning every day to better ourselves to separate ourselves from the bad.’ Another participant discussed the mentality of the group of leaders as being very open to change,

when someone critiques us it is good because it is constructive and we look for ways to improve, we sit, we talk and we watch where it is that we are wrong and we try to make it better. That has been the idea of our directive.

This same individual discussed the importance of being attentive to your surroundings to encourage learning and to be able to help, ‘because one learns to hear. Well since you pay attention, you are learning because you are hearing...If you don’t hear you don’t listen, you are not going to learn anything, that is my source.’ Another participant shared his thoughts on always growing and learning, ‘but through the process of life we go getting all that knowledge and we have to go improving.’

When asked about how CISAS has influenced their lives, all of the men discussed on one level or another how they have learned a great deal from CISAS on the topics of gender and parenting. One participant shared that he thought what CISAS teaches was very important, ‘I believe that CISAS has helped us a great deal because I believe that it is necessary to put what they tell us into practice.’ Another participant shared his thoughts on the importance of CISAS in his life,

In reality, CISAS has satisfied more of what I have been: of the responsibility of gender and what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman. I, for there, I have been more aware of what is gender, masculinity. I say it sincerely, there it is. I have learned more in CISAS, of what it is to be a woman and what it is to be a man, but also CISAS has taught me about abuse so that I have not lived it. I have told them in the workshops because they create an evaluation of what [abuse] is and what gender is and of women and men. I have been saying that, for me, my wife is the same. That, they have taught me in CISAS, that women are equal to man, they have the same rights, the same pleasures, the same love, the same feelings. All that they have is equal to men, only they wear dresses and different shoes. That is the difference, but in things of love, it’s the equal. That I have been learning with CISAS. Before, I was more foolish. I wouldn’t have talked like this to you, or confessed this. That is to say, I would not have told you of these things if I did not have those workshops from CISAS. But with those workshops even the communities learn because I have taught them. I do not miss a workshop with CISAS. Never have I missed them because, in the first place, I recognize what they have taught me, that I didn’t know. That which is gender I didn’t know [how] to separate men and women but through CISAS I have been studying, it has lifted me up. But to speak better...as I was telling you, CISAS has passed on this teaching of learning and I have put my will and attention to what they have taught us and that has served to confirm what I have been and to confirm what I am going to do in the future where I am going to go.

This quote shows a remarkable gratitude and indebtedness to CISAS for lifelong learning that enables this man to negotiate his life better. CISAS has enabled him to understand the concept of gender and more importantly, CISAS has provided this man with the ability to share his thoughts and feelings and provided an empowering environment that allows him to share these teachings with others. This same participant elaborated on what and how he engages in learning and teaching in the community,

Truly, to teach and if you want to share because like that, as I didn't know what CISAS has taught me, many do not know. CISAS has gone so far as to supervise us in the communities, to make us invite 30 people, and 20 or 15 of these people show up. We tell them what we have learned and I say that I have improved because before I only did this with my children and my family, my nephews and nieces, and siblings, or those close to the family. Today no. Today CISAS has involved us with the community, as I say we invite 30 because if we invite 50 or 60, maybe we won't be able to teach them well because they don't stop talking to each other. But if we invite 30, 15 come and of these 15 if we grab them, that is what we learn.

The participant's use of 'we' in this context is interesting as a notable instance of collaborative efforts towards improving community. Not only did men discuss the importance of implementing their newfound knowledge in their own lives, they also emphasized the importance of sharing the information with others in the community as well as in their family. As one participant put it with regard to his own children,

We have all had a great communication with them. In the first place, I communicate God's things with them, the church, the church, new apostolic, that spiritual, but I also taught them that which is good and that which is bad. For example, I say to them, 'watch me, I don't drink, I don't smoke.' That I taught them and you, they learned how they are like me. And they are going to live like that as I lived all my life like that. They are going to live it, they are the teachings, well, that the drugs I taught them also, the bad sheaves, because if you are going to walk in a bad sheaf, it's better to not walk, better to walk alone like that. I tell you, I spoke to them, I taught them if you are going to walk with a good friend, walk, but if you are going to walk with a friend that is taking you to a bar, they are teaching you the drugs, you better move away. That has been my teaching, my example, and the example, well, that god has given us that we should live on earth respecting the authorities. I am a little over seventy years old and I have never been in jail. They are already older than 30 years old and up until now they have not been to jail. They have not got involved with politics. I have never been involved in politics. Like that go my children as well, I taught them. In womanly things, I taught them as well to watch me. I don't hit your mother.

At the base level, this motivation to learn, to continually engage in self-change, to engage one's neighbour in the same, is what ultimately leads to conceptual change. Each of the men that interviewed exemplified this desire to be a better individual, a better

family member, community member, and citizen. The leaders that these men are in their communities and their passion for sharing their knowledge with their neighbours is what makes the difference. As the old African proverb goes, 'it takes a community to raise a child.'