

Analysis of the
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masculinity in
relationship to
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and girls in
the state of
Tlaxcala

Melissa A. Fernández Chagoya
Mauro Antonio Vargas Urías



GENDES
género y desarrollo a.c.

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Introduction

The objective of this text is to identify and analyze the different ways in which men from the southern area of the state of Tlaxcala in Mexico, participate in the trafficking of women. This book was developed within the project “Changing minds, changing behaviors: a model to prevent men from trafficking women and girls”, financed by the National Institute of Social Development (INDESOL, for its initials en Spanish). It was important to develop this analysis from a gender perspective with particular emphasis on the study of the construction and reproduction of masculinity.

To achieve this goal, we present the main sociocultural elements related to the construction and reproduction of gender, masculinity and the phenomenon of trafficking of women, as well as the conditions

that facilitate the participation of men in this problematic. Based on our results, we also share some suggestions that the non-profit sector can incorporate into their daily work, and that may help identify, prevent and reduce men’s participation in trafficking of women.

Human trafficking in Mexico is an illegal activity that generates great amounts of money. In this project, we understand human trafficking as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or reception of persons, by means of the use of threats, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person; having control over another person,

for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs”, as is stated in the third article of the Protocol To Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (ONU, 2004)¹.

This modern day form of slavery produces more money than drug trafficking: in 2010, around 6.6 billion dollars, according to data from the United Nations. This data was provided by Patricia Olamendi in the event “Migration and Human Trafficking, a complex problem” which took place in 2011 in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, in the state of Chiapas in Mexico. She of course knows what she’s talking about, since she coordinated the study “Trafficking of Women in Tlaxcala” in 2008, as a result of the deposition of 57 trafficking victims. Some interesting information from these statements are that in 90 percent of the cases, the girls had a maximum schooling of middle school, 46 percent of them were underage; they were all from different states of Mexico; and the crime took place in the Mexican states of Tlaxcala (46%), Puebla (23%), the Federal District (20%), Baja California, Chihuahua, Morelos and the US (3% each).

The General Director of the non-profit organization *Centro Fray Julián Garcés Derechos Humanos y Desarrollo Local, A.C.*, based in Tlaxcala, states that his organization has dealt with 31 cases of human trafficking networks, and they have found that both men and women from the southern region of Tlaxcala are implicated in the process, and that their *modus operandi* is always the same: seduce, romance, cheat, blackmail and exploit the girl. He adds that the most worrisome aspect is that human trafficking is increasing even if there is a current law that supposedly punishes this crime. This preoccupation increases if we consider the data provided by the dissertation “Pimping as a Life Project for Boys and Adolescents in Tenancingo, Tlaxcala” (UAT, 2010); this data states that 20.7 percent of boys and adolescents from third to ninth grade express interest in becoming a pimp, because of the prestige and the high income pimps receive.

In this context, the importance of providing integral actions from different social and government sectors becomes obvious. If we analyze this

¹ The Law to Prevent and Punish Human Trafficking, in its 5th article states: “the person who practices human trafficking is he/she who promotes, solicits, offers, facilitates, transports, delivers or receives, for himself or a third party, another person, by means of moral or physical violence, deceit or abuse of power to submit her to sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or analogous practices of slavery, service, organ or tissue removal.”

phenomenon from masculinity studies with a gender perspective and adopt a preventive position, it is important to generate and impact on different population groups, including for example, boys and male adolescents (traffickers² usually abandon school after ninth grade in order to 'learn their craft'); men who demand sexual services (those who usually judge sex workers as women who have a good time, and ignore the exploitation they are subjected to); family leaders (usually the father, who considers that when the daughters marry, they become property of another man, and the girls are left without a social support network). Because of these reasons, it is crucial to analyze the relationship between the construction and reproduction of masculinity with the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls in the south of Tlaxcala. This will help identify elements that may lead to the prevention of active or passive participation of men in the phenomenon. This is important when we consider that trafficking of women and girls started as an isolated and not accepted process in Mexico; nowadays, some young men start to perceive it as a quick way to make money and gain social and political status.

After GENDES, A.C. spoke at the Second Encounter for the Right to Live Free of Violence and Sexual Exploitation that took place in Tlaxcala in 2010, NGOs that work on that very topic proposed GENDES, A.C. to unite forces with them in order to incorporate a masculinities perspective in their preventive and community-based work, and thus develop more comprehensive and effective actions and strategies.

Women and girls are frequently victims of human trafficking, which takes place in the south of the state of Tlaxcala. Different organizations have dedicated years of their work to provide protection and support to those women who require it; however, up to now, these organizations have not been able to carry out their work with those who may be involved in the crime of human trafficking, or participate in it in a passive manner (boys and young men that live in the region) in a systematic form.

Furthermore, men involved in this phenomenon face different problems; traffickers carry out illegal activities with everything that this implies, such as violence and the effects on the perception that new generations have on this activity. Young men from the region see trafficking women as a way to make money easily because their social context does not provide them with dignified and adequate labor opportunities; this in turn, has important effects on the construction of their life project. Consumers of

² In this text, the terms "trafficker" and "pimp" will be used indistinctively.

women's sexual exploitation, who are co-participants of the phenomenon may face the acquisition of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) due to the precarious conditions that female sex workers are forced to work in, thus exposing their sexual partners to risk. All these characters (and others who participate silently in the phenomenon, such as cab drivers, waiters, hotel employees, etc.) must be carefully observed in order to find ways that can lead to solutions for this social problem.

We know that this phenomenon is multifactorial, which requires integral and multidisciplinary approach. Through the present analysis we pretend to provide elements that can help design future lines of intervention with and for men in a problem whose roots have deeply penetrated fundamental dimensions of our national reality. This project was carried out thanks to the support of INDESOL as a co-responsible social actor.

Methodology

This text was developed using categories of gender theory as its base, and paying particular attention to the analysis of the construction of masculinities. We use gender perspective as a conceptual tool to analyze our qualitative data. The instruments used were participant observation, and the specific analysis of the qualities involved in the phenomenon.

We chose this type of methodology because the topic we work with responds to subjectivities and realities that are not easily quantified. We are dealing with interpretable elements that provide data on a particular situation. In other words, on the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls and men's position in this topic. If we understand social phenomena as complex and dialectic processes, studying men involved in human

trafficking is a useful way to understand social constructions that motivate their behaviors as well as orient us to the formulation of solutions.

We carried out a series of individual semi-structured interviews, as well as group interviews in order to obtain information regarding the construction of masculinity in men of the state of Tlaxcala and the relationship this construct has with trafficking of women and girls. Understanding the perceptions that compose the imaginary of masculinity, will help us identify men's participation in the topic at hand, and at the same time, find elements that may be prone to prevent young men's immersion into the world of trafficking be it as traffickers or as consumers.

In qualitative methodology, the size of the sample is not particularly

relevant. What usually conditions the results and their analysis is the correct selection of informants (they should be key informants that have broad empirical knowledge of the topic of interest) and the quality of the variable. From this, we are confident that we have obtained scientific data through semi-structured individual and group interviews with strategic social actors, and sustained by a hermeneutic analysis that led us to find comparative axis that helped determine the factors that affect the construction of masculinity and trafficking of women and girls.

We enlist the criteria that guided our fieldwork and analysis:

Universe:

Privileged informants from the state of Tlaxcala that knew of the topic and/or had some sort of relation with it, such as public officials of the state or municipality, representatives of NGOs and experts on the subject, representatives of spiritual or religious groups, and finally, persons that were direct or indirectly related to the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls in Tlaxcala.

Population size:

1 Group interview:

Between 8 and 12 public servants from the following sectors: health, public safety, social development, economy and tourism. All these sectors are involved in the networks of trafficking.

8 semi-structured individual interviews:

- 2 representatives of NGOs.
- 2 representatives of the community (citizens).
- 1 expert on the subject of trafficking in Tlaxcala (academia).
- 1 representative from spiritual or religious groups (church).
- 2 people related direct or indirectly with the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls in Tlaxcala (persons that are linked to the phenomenon or hold broad knowledge on it).

Sampling criteria:

For the group interview, participants were recruited through NGOs, and for individual interviews, the technique known as “privileged informant” in anthropology, or “strategic actor”³ in sociology, was used.

The data gathering technique used for this research project were:

- Semi-structured interviews, which provided information on collective subjectivity and how this impacts at an individual level.
- Group interviews with public servants, which allowed us to analyze.

The analysis techniques used were:

- Transcription and codification.
- Theoretical saturation (repetition of data)⁴.
- Content analysis (discursive).

The following table shows the main characteristics of the participants. For the group interview, 8 people participated:

Group interview	Women 34 years, man 42 years, woman 24 years, woman 26 years, woman 31 years, woman 25 years, man 25 years, woman 33 years.
Social sectors	NGO staff, officials of the National System for Family Development, Public Security, Women's Institute, and Health.
Place	Tlaxcala City, Tlaxcala.

Below we present characteristics of the privileged informants who we individually interviewed.

³ These terms refer to the selection of a person that fulfills the characteristics of the universe under study: “privileged” in the sense that he/she is considered “key” by those who investigate, because he/she complies with the sought out characteristics, for being an able narrator and having enough experience on the topic. The privileged informant is considered as such when others legitimate him as a person that “knows what he/she’s talking about”. Another indicator that the informant is a “privileged” one is the interest he/she demonstrates on the topic, in such a way that the informant is both part and judge of the work that the researcher undertakes and of the final product. The privileged informant lead to other persons considered strategic for the same reasons.

⁴ Data saturation or theoretical saturation happens when: a.) new data in a certain category ceases to appear, b.) the category is well developed in terms of its dimensions and properties, and c.) relationships between categories are well established or validated (Strauss & Corbin, 2002).

Characteristic	Citizen	Citizen	NGO	NGO	Expertise/ relationship with the topic	Expertise/ relationship with the topic	Expert	Spiritual/ religious group
Sex	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Man	Woman	Man	Anonymous
Age (years)	39	27	32	31	33	40	49	
Occupation	researcher	professor	NGO staff	Human rights advocate	Researcher	Human rights		
Schooling	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	PhD	Bachelor's degree	PhD	High school
Main economic provider	Partner	Father	Father	Father and himself	Him	Her	Him	Partner
Monthly income (ap- proximated to USD)	350	700	800	2,100	650	1,800		
Living in household	Partner (40 years); son (4 years)	Father (71 years); Mother (70 years)	Father (61 years); Moth- er, 59 years); brother (38 years)	Partner, grandfather, mother, father	Partner (33 years); Daughter (10 months)		Daughter (13 years); daughter (14 years)	Partner (50 years), daughter (16 years), son (19 years)
Place of residency	Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala	Puebla	Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala
State of residence		Father's property	Rents	Rents	Rents	Rents	Rents	Family property

Units of analysis (variables):

The table below shows the diagnostic variables that correspond to the order in which the results are presented:

Sociocultural construction of gender	Social and cultural factors	Conditions that facilitate the phenomenon
Notions of gender	Public place	Social
Attitudes towards gender	Private place	Education
Cultural adscriptions	Spheres where power is exercised	Work and economy

The chapter that deals with the sociocultural construction of gender presents the important notions around gender in Tlaxcala. In other words, what the participants understand by “man” and “woman”, paying close attention to social expectations and what “must be”. We also present gender practices, or what refers to behaviors that men and women carry out in order to understand themselves as social beings; the activities that men and women relate to and the meanings they give to these activities in the practice of social reproduction.

The second chapter deals with the social and cultural factors that allow the existence of the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls in the region; we analyze the association between the public and private spheres. It is important to make this distinction in analytical terms because it facilitates the analysis of debatable social perceptions regarding the public or the political, and what apparently is not, because it is perceived to be private (the individual). These notions take us towards an analysis of power and how power is configured and by whom.

The last chapter discusses the conditions that facilitate the phenomenon of trafficking, which we divided into three groups: social conditions, educational conditions, and economic conditions. Next, we present a few suggestions that may help guide initiatives of action in order to prevent, identify and reduce trafficking of women and girls. Finally, we discuss our final reflections result of the entire analysis.

Sociocultural construction of gender

The sociocultural construction of gender refers to the traditional definitions and attributes recognized as masculine and feminine, as well as the value that each society gives to these attributes (INMUJERES, 2009; 32).

Analyzing the sociocultural construction of gender allows us to articulate a strong critical view regarding the social assignment of roles and activities for men and women.

In this sense, in this chapter we want to identify the main elements that compose this construction; this identification will then help us pinpoint what components are part of the cultural apprehension and social reproduction of what it means to be a man.

Notions of gender

Considering the qualitative data from the interviews, we believe that the notions of gender that sustain the meanings of “man” and “woman” for the residents of Tlaxcala responds to hegemonic models of gender. These models are based upon the heterosexual regimen and dualistic form of thinking, which subordinates what is considered feminine under what is considered masculine. This construction’s manifestations are rooted upon patriarchy, in the production and reproduction of institutions such as the traditional family.

For instance, these representations allow the permanence of inequalities, domination of men over women, and an inclination to overvalue masculinity.

One of the experts we interviewed stated:

“There is a patriarchal structure that manifests itself in a mixture with the Tlaxcala culture. We can't say that Tlaxcalan culture has the fundamental elements that will later on become the formation of pimps. We are talking about a particular phenomena expressed at a local level, and for different reasons. Masculinity has power, rationality that expresses itself in a higher status, where males can use others. And in the social construction of femininity, where it's passive, sweet, she has to be willing and more development of sensibility than reason. Cultural constructions that are expressed everywhere and in all social levels” (Extract of interview with expert. 08/18/11).



Domination of men over women is expressed in religious traditions in Tlaxcala, or civic-religious positions. In this system, men are those who generally occupy prestigious positions, while women are subdued to work around those positions, mostly within the private sphere where they carry out household chores such as cleaning and child rearing.

This gender structure is also expressed in sexuality, where women are understood as passive, and men are seen as sexually unstoppable, so they have a free pass to carry out many sexual practices. The social construction of manhood is what allows other social practices to be carried out. Regarding the practices of pimping, it is common to hear boys say that they want to be “the second” (the first is always the father), because “the second” is the man who goes after the “girls”, grooms them and develops a fake relationship with them. Women, within these practices must be the seduced girls. In other words, romantic love is the cultural element used by pimps to carry out their exploitation. The traditional “kidnap of the bride” is also common. Within catholic marriage, this robbing is symbolic because it represents the father “turning in” her daughter to the new husband.

The character of the pimp has become a figure of status within the Tlaxcalan community, because he unites all sorts of powers: economic, respect, provision, and seduction of women. In this sense, masculinity, or the aspiration of exercising the socially expected form of manhood is in the model that pimps represent. Other forms of alternative masculinities

become diluted, unclear, and maybe not as present as we would hope. In this tenor, it is important to show young men that there are other forms of being a man, forms that do not need violence or exploitation of other bodies for its construction, forms that use respect, self-knowledge and affection.

In this region of Tlaxcala, becoming an adult is a social process expressed in rituals such as marriage and reproduction. The interviewees argued that a girl ceases to be one when she gets married, when she is captured by traffickers for them to exploit her, or when she becomes a mother. In the case of young men, they are considered adults once they get married, when they “get together with a woman”, or when “women start working for him”: “a teacher once told me that a student came up to him and asked him: ‘what’s up? I already have three girls working, do you want in?’” (Interview extract of an NGO representative. 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



When we asked interviewees about the embodied characteristics of masculinities in males in Tlaxcala, we received answers such as the following:

Lack of values and education in middle and low income classes as the main cause of machismo in Tlaxcala (Group interview extract. 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

We need to go back to pre-hispanic history, where there are no women in power. These women only worked in the domestic sphere. With the conquest, Tlaxcala becomes a Spanish ally. With the church, the situation is still very linked to the pretention that women serve men. Besides, nowadays Tlaxcala is thought of in geopolitical terms, but in reality, the problem of trafficking also considers the north of the state of Puebla, and the south of the state (of Tlaxcala). It’s not only the state of Tlaxcala, in ancient times, the states weren’t divided like that, and it’s this region that I’m telling you about where the problem is (Group interview extract. 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

The man is macho. He sees women as inferior, he is very violent since childhood and in girlfriend-boyfriend relationships. Violence goes from psychological, expressed in limitations he imposes on women, to physical violence (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

We are dealing with a machismo that is based on the power of money and decision-making. The way in which men have access to this money is not questioned. Capitalism is presented as a means in itself, with no regards to the ways in which intrinsic violence is produced. This power machismo is very much engrained in culture (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

To talk about men in the south of Tlaxcala is to talk of men from a rural zone with a high population density that is almost urban, with elements that are very indigenous, but they're mestizo, there is a mix. Product of migrations to cities and then back to their communities, since pre-hispanic times, there was a lot of movement, a lot of people who traveled from place to place. Now they know that they can't live exclusively from agriculture. They abandoned their lands in the south to work in commerce or workshops (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



It seems like the roots into pre-hispanic culture are the cause of this quasi intrinsic relationship between machismo, violence and power over others in the phenomenon of trafficking of women. This is how the interviewees perceive the complex problem of trafficking. This speaks of a multiple perception; on one hand, violence against women is justified as an ancestral practice, and on the other, as an innate aspect of the construction of manhood in the region.

When we asked about the characteristics of femininity materialized by and in women, we obtained the following information:

Women in Tlaxcala must carry the enormous weight of traditions that deny the possibility of developing as an individual person. Women in Tlaxcala, even though they are independent, have the implicit role of serving others (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

Another characteristic of women here is the guilt with which they face life. In general, in any situation of violence of subordination, they seldom blame themselves. Even other women point to her, in the case of trafficking, to women as the ones to blame, in things such as “why don’t they report it? If they don’t like it, then what are they still doing there?” (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

Ninety percent of girls in Mexico state that they want to go to college and have a career. However, girls in the south region of Tlaxcala say that they want to contribute to their father’s network of trafficking. Young women see this as an economic benefit, a way to protect themselves, as power. And that from the fact that nobody punishes them, young boys have never seen pimps arrested or detained by police. And when they are arrested, pimps bribe judges and are free of charges (Group interview extract 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



For the present analysis, it seems that “the woman” is essentialized into one being rather than plural subjectivities, and they seem to be product of social and cultural conditions. In this case, interviewees did not identify supposed characteristics of their own gender, but prioritize cultural attributions.

In my case, for instance, with my father, because I’m the oldest daughter, the place we oldest children occupy can be a good or bad example. As an elder, you can start to open doors, but at a cost. So then, the first barrier I had to jump was with my dad, because since he’s older, I had to demonstrate that I was good at school, and if I did well at school, I could make my own decisions. From then on he had no elements to say “don’t do this, don’t do that”, because I was doing well in school (Interview extract from female citizen. 08/18/11. Tlaxcala).



We face victimization as a feminine condition; women are perceived to be unprotected and with social fears, legitimating masculine power in all

contexts. In the same way, there is practically no report of the social and generic subordination and no gender solidarity—in words of Marcela Lagarde, sorority—in this situation.

Thus, promoting affective and equalitarian relationships between men and women is fundamental. On the other hand, working on the topic of feminine empowerment in congruence with the work towards the construction of anti-hegemonic masculinity construction is also fundamental if we wish to change social notions on gender, because these are directly related to gender practices.

Gender practices

For West and Zimmerman (1999), gender is made, we, as subjects build it and reproduce it in our bodies, our bodies are the base on which it is materialized. In other words, every one of our actions, attitudes and daily practices is in reference to a gender imaginary (notions of gender) that allow us to understand ourselves as men and women. It is a constant act or performance that is naturalized as part of our way of relating to others. Acts that are always judged by others.

With this in mind, pimp practices in this region are a result of gender practices, of traditional hegemonic masculinity. In this regard, we find:

(Trafficking) responds to a complex local phenomenon. Anthropologists say that it started in the sixties, with men with good reputations in their communities, because they contribute to the religious celebrations. They started to build political power within their communities. Starting in the nineties, we start identifying public officers as traffickers. If you add that they contribute to their communities, and that even though it is a crime, no one punishes them, then their social image is good. It was a slow and long construction, a product of an industrial crisis that left a lot of unemployment, which in turn allowed for migration to bigger cities where prostitution was seen as a mean to...After that, came the generational education of pimps (Interview with a person related to the topic. 08/18/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



Gender is made throughout our whole lives, it is even conditioned by pre-discursivity of bodies; in other words, it responds to what is expected of people even before they are born. Gender is a culture, and at the same time it is the way in which the body exists (Muñiz, 2002). We mean to say, there are no human bodies with no gender. And for the case of gender construction for men, the elements that motivate boys' and young men's incursion into pimping respond to the following:

(Two factors,) the social imaginary of power, and of masculine competition. Sexuality is that masculine competition which helps declare the multiplication of powers. It is a challenge, with the "second" (sons of pimps), making a girl fall in love in the least amount of time, because the material elements to make this happen are lent by the pimp and they need to return them. Seduction, coercion, and exploitation. The point is to make the best use of romantic love in order to exploit the girl. It's about falling in love without falling in love. This produces competition between men and it becomes compulsive.

It's very linked to the emotional construction of communities and families. If there was research on how money is spent, we would notice that part of the money is used to dress the girls, to bribe so they can operate. Another part is to build their houses, buy dogs and contribute to the community and the big celebration. The houses are related to the parental system and inheritance for children. What configures the community emotionally, where the figure of the absent father is so common, is now in crisis. Use of money helps build the hero that finances the community celebrations and parties. Thus, the double emotional link between community and family (Interview with a person related to the topic. 08/18/11. Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



Another element that contributes to the construction of gender among men in this area of Tlaxcala is paternity, which is seen almost exclusively in relationship to economic provision:

Through providing economically. However, when they participate in domestic labor, it helps, but that doesn't mean

that they take care of them. Demonstrations of affection are not common in fathers, and only girls are aloud to show affection, not boys (Group interview extract. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).

With no affective content, they're limited to providing economically and taking relevant decisions in their children's education. With daughters, there is no investment in their education because they're destined to marry. In the youngest fathers you can notice more participation in paternity. There's no parenthood planning. (Extract of interview with citizen. 08/18/11, Tlaxcala).



Fathers wish to have male children because they will continue with the pimping practices, they will be trained for it. It is also true that women contribute to this phenomenon in hooking the girls, in teaching them how to take care of the exploited girls, but these practices carried out by women are done under the pimp's supervision. They are the ones who make the decisions and delegate tasks to other pimps and women, to the exploited girls and the ones who are no longer exploited but carry out other functions that have greater prestige among them:

There is a preference for having sons. And, in fact, you can find families with four daughters and the last is a boy, which means they were waiting for a son. Especially in regions where there is a lot of agriculture, in the south. Yes, they will carry out their dad's traditions (Group interview extract. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala).



The authority that women are subjected to is another form of conditioning them. This authority is reflected in the exaggerated practices of the pimp:

Well, they're machista. They don't like that a women can give them orders. I remember, for example, when Beatriz Paredes was governor, there was a saying that went "Tlaxcala, place of submissive men and mad cows" (Extract of interview with citizen. 08/18/11, Tlaxcala).

The pimp has all the power, what he says is carried out, not only within the family and with his women, I mean, with the ones who are exploited, but also at a municipal level, with the bribes to government and community workers, for paying for the traditional celebrations, they build the churches, they pay for the parties (Extract of interview with citizen. 08/18/11, Tlaxcala).

They are very loved and protected in the community. They put together the church, pay for the festivities. It was to be expected (Extract of interview with citizen. 18.08.11 Tlaxcala).

The purchasing power as well as the seductive qualities are part of the gender culture, and in the same way, of the pimp's practices.

They hook them through romantic love: the guy tries to pass as someone with a good economic position in schools, clubs, in popular parties, or in indigenous areas. This women from the municipality, the one from the DIF (System for Family Development, for its initials in Spanish), she said that pimps were now looking for women in indigenous areas, because a woman from that region would prefer even more to change her way of life, to move from a house with plate roof, or palm roof to a house with concrete roof. That's why I think that this woman knows what she's talking about, this is what she does, she is a trafficker, or she helps her husband, because she gave very concrete data.

So then, these guys, what they do is introduce themselves until they become their boyfriends. At three months, they promise them love and they get married, they get married in different parts of the country (and in fact, we need social policy to coordinate civil registration). Imagine, if they marry in an indigenous area. I think we women have always been told that marriage is forever, we never think that it could be for a little while. If it doesn't last it's a moral blow. Marriage is until death, like the church says. And they get even more hooked when they have kids. Anyway, traffickers in Tlaxcala make the girls fall in love (Extract of interview with citizen. 08/18/11, Tlaxcala).



One of the social practices that gives way to trafficking of women in the south region of the state of Tlaxcala is also seen as cultural inheritance. According to the interview data, being a pimp is, amongst pimps, something to be proud of, in great measure do to the interconnection of powers that we have listed thus far: authority, paternity, economic power, and seduction.

When fathers are traffickers, and it's something they inherited from parents, uncles, grandparents, a cultural dynamic is produced where boys are told that women are only objects, and that's something that forms them, that women are only good for that (trafficking), and in some sort of way, boys start idealizing that "I want to be like my dad", and it's only a way of making a living (Extract of interview with NGO representative, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala).



Another important aspect that defines gender practices amongst men in this region is the use of violence, particularly violence against women. Relationships between pimps are also violent, competitive, dangerous and life threatening. The type of violence they use against women is multifactorial, and it seems that women have naturalized these violent manifestations to the degree of not being conscious of the fact that they are being victims of gender-based violence or even subject to a form of slavery, human trafficking.

And do women identify that they are victims of violence? Not always. Most of the times, they do not, until they are victims of strong physical violence. In fact, when victims of trafficking know they're being trafficked, they swear that they work because they want to and not because they're being forced. There is a strong psychological influence, they think they're the pimps girlfriend, their wife, that they work to help him build their home, that when they stop working on the streets they will live with their happy family (Group interview extract. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax).



The people interviewed agree that when cases of gender violence and trafficking are presented to judicial authorities, they're ignored, and become part of the problem of corruption and impunity:

It's a dead end, because once the pimp system becomes part of the community, it forms part of the justice system and there is nothing much to do. Pimps say that the bad pimp is the one that ends up in jail, because he hasn't understood the rules of the game. In other words, he hasn't adapted or changed his ways of operating so he doesn't get caught (Extract of interview with someone related to the topic 08/18/11, Puebla, Puebla.)

In general, government officials do what's possible to resolve family violence disputed. Only when women are taken to the hospital because of the gravity of the aggression, there is a different procedure (Group interview extract. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)

Working in the ISSSTE (Institute for Social Security and Services for the Government Workers, for its initials in Spanish), I noticed that women are embarrassed to report violence because of the stigma they face. I know the case of a congressman who had a mistress, and the mistress left him for other man. The congressman beat and raped her. The women went to the police department. And there, the police called the congressman, the woman was exposed as a prostitute while everything got resolved under the table and he left, like nothing had happened (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax).

There is no access to justice, no will to prosecute traffickers. The congressmen's corruption makes it impossible. It's really common, when the justice department organizes a field intervention of revision, there is always someone who warns the traffickers in advance. And if they take them to jail, they'll pay from a quarter of a million (approximately 22,000 USD) to a 1 million (approximately 90,000 USD) pesos and they're free. In reality, the whole community gains from this network. This municipality has become the rich area of the state because they loan money with a very low interest rate (Extract of interview with a person related to the topic, 08/18/11, Puebla, Puebla).



The scenario of gender practices related to pimps is very complex. As the reader may have noticed, there are elements that are produced within masculinity, in men's gender and their performances, perceptions and attitudes. The weight of institutional impunity and the networks of bribes help the economical sustainment of this phenomenon and the *modus operandi* of the pimps. In this sense, a way of manifesting that judicial authorities have the power and tools to eradicate trafficking would be through careful research inside these institutions that can help visualize the practices of corruption and impunity, and the lack of political will. In what regards to organized civil society, we have the tools to achieve cultural and social change that can be strengthened with an alliance of the different social sectors.

Social and cultural determinants

We will present some of the social and cultural factors related to the construction and reproduction of gender and trafficking of women and girls. In order to do this, we will talk about the perception of the public and private spheres, arguing that personal relationships are political and that the phenomenon of trafficking of women crosses these spheres abruptly, and links interests that go from abuse of power, to psychological violence between the trafficker and the exploited woman, to massive sexual exploitation of women victims of trafficking. In this sense, we present a picture of the different spheres of power that allow, promote and reproduce trafficking of women in the region.

Public and private spaces

Donna Haraway (1995) points out that the public and private are idealized positions in advanced capitalist societies, such as the home, the market, paid work, the state, school, hospitals and churches, that they're intertwined through what she calls "women in the closed circuit". That which belongs to the "private" sphere, and what concerns the "public" has suffered historical changes and transformations. In this sense, feminist struggle has made a call to recognize that power relationships in the private space must be made visible, debated, normed and agreed upon, they must become political.

Thus, private relationships are political; the body, sex, and sexuality are also political because they are product of a normative discourse and a gender culture created and reproduced by everyone. In this sense, a public space, such as the yearly carnival that takes place in the south region of Tlaxcala, helps see aspects related to the construction and reproduction of masculinity and trafficking of women.

In the carnival in Tlaxcala, the ones in Tenancingo and Papalotla, a ritualistic fight between traffickers takes place. Traditionally, they beat each other, the carnival is very violent. Two groups face each other off, hitting each other with whips until they break their skin, their backs, their legs, until the organizers need to intervene in order to stop them. It's a ritual to see who is strongest. There are also the trafficker's women that celebrate the rite. It has to do with becoming a man (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).

The carnival is pre-hispanic, it seems that even then there were pimps, or something like that, because they have always been the main characters of the dispute of power, it has always been this violent, trying to show who is the strongest, fighting between groups to impress women... (Extract of interview with citizen 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



Even though the objective of this text is not to analyze the Tlaxcalan cosmivision, it is important to note that, from the information provided by the participants, the possible relationship between the current phenomenon of trafficking of women and ancestral, pre-hispanic, and indigenous practices that the participants find similar or correlated, may respond to a forced interpretation. Forced because they are named from modern categories (like the use of the concept of trafficking), to other practices that today, do not have a symbolic place because they are no longer carried out with the original meaning and sense. We must remember that narratives of pre-hispanic events and traditions pass through an analytical filter produced from social sciences that are embedded in an occidental, binary and positivistic way of thinking that may have little concordance with other forms of thought, like indigenous cosmivision.

Do you know how the network operates? Recruitment, transportation and exploitation. First, they make them fall in love, then they take them to a different place from where they recruited them to then exploit them in prostitution. They take advantage of indigenous traditions like bride kidnapping to recruit women, as well as the little government coordination regarding marriage registers (Extract of interview with citizen 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



Participants find a link between indigenous rites and the phenomenon of trafficking that may correspond to an association of spaces of power, not necessarily to inherited practices. The pimps' practices become socially and culturally adapted to their context, and in this case, they use bride kidnapping. The *modus operandi* of the trafficker can adapt itself, not only with current practices but with ancestral ones as well.

In relationship to what is considered private, like family life and the home, there are women who after being sexuality exploited, go back to their homes to look after their children; some of them, to take care of other young girls who are victims of trafficking. In this practice, women use violence against other women to "teach" them:

"Yeah, I lived this for a while and now it's your turn", and yes, they treat them really bad, but they teach them too. They fight amongst themselves because they all belong to one man, I mean, they're partners. Polygamy is common in Tlaxcala, polygamy that only benefits the pimps (Extract of interview with person related to the topic, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



In regards to stopping practices of trafficking and the use of public spaces and the policy that is intertwined:

Do pimps "retire"? To say it in some way? At some point in time? I have never seen such a case. I know that they propose women to come back to the home so they take care of other girls. However, I think that men do it because they

train the youngest ones for initiation. They train their sons and other people, so I don't think they ever retire. They also see trafficking as a means to an end: to save money and build a different business. So it's not really a business that sustains itself. But we do have a case of a pimp that is 50 years old and is still recruiting girls. I don't know how he does it. Before, he would do it with promises of marriage, now I don't know how (Extract of interview with person related to the topic 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax).



In simpler terms, the fact that women “work” on the street—a public space—as prostitutes, seems to break the dichotomy of public and private in the *modus operandi* of the pimps from Tlaxcala. However, the fact that they are sexually exploited is related to the private sphere. In other words, that sphere that is supposedly not public, that is not up for debate, or in the worst case, responds to decisions taken by the women themselves.

The general perception of trafficking and prostitution of women in Tlaxcala is perceived as something the women decided to do, exploited women also share this perception. In fact, participants agreed that the term “trafficking of women” is a well known concept among citizens; however, when they try to analyze what happens in the state, people perceive it as prostitution and a willing decision: “they chose a life of easy money”:

If you say that trafficking is a form of modern slavery, and you paint a picture of a women being beaten by a pimp, you're not clicking with real women, because you paint them as a monster, when they are the ones that are exploiting the sense of humanity in these women, they become their protectors and the ones who provide most affection. If you analyze the women's perspective, that they're living a life of extreme violence, for example, of providing more than 20 sexual services in one day, so all this violence is structuring a world foreign to what they aspire to, it is a motive for them, when they go back home to see their husband, the man who loves them even if they are prostitutes, like a refuge against shame and stigma. This puts them in a situation of double vulnerability: the one that took them to their recruitment, and the one linked to social stigma, because she likes it, because

she wants money, so the guilt is always on her. One of the things that bothers me about these TV campaigns that pretend to shut down this phenomenon, is that they never go to the real point of what these women live everyday. They portrait a man that they know. But if they just thought on how exploitation operates: love, seduction, protection, maybe then this ideal that they have about their man like a god, could be dismantled (Extract of interview with person related to the topic 08/18/11, Puebla, Pue.).



Mass media that tries to represent and prevent trafficking of women are not meeting their objective because the particularities of the phenomenon in this region are much more subtle than what is known at a general level. Just like the interviewer stated, neither women victims of trafficking, nor the community in general feel that this situation is reflected in mass media.

In this sense, the advertisement used to identify this phenomenon as a crime, does not reach the pimps themselves or the accomplices, and must reflect the region's reality. In other words, it is important that mass media show the local practices of cooptation, identifying the physical characteristics of the people involved, and the different ways they use to "hook" girls, such as seduction, and that they don't rely on psychological or symbolic violence to do it.

When we use the concept of "accomplice", we refer to the social actors such as cab drivers, that transport the pimps to recruit girls, hotel employees that recognize and are aware of the phenomenon, the young men who patrol the areas where the women work and are "hooked", as well as the women who were previously exploited and now train the younger girls. In this tenor, actions of social interventions oriented to identify and decrease trafficking of women and girls in Tlaxcala must consider these actors who make this network function.

We once again must realize that we are immersed in a multifactorial social problematic in which focusing on one actor (victim or trafficker) is not enough. Those actors that we have named accomplices are an important part of this machinery that must be looked into.

Spheres of exercise of power

One of the elements that characterize social relationships, is precisely, relationships of power. In this chapter, we analyze the spheres of the construction of masculinity that are linked to trafficking of women as a political arena for the use and abuse of power.

One of those spheres is violence against women. By definition, this violence is any action or omission, based on gender, that causes damage or psychological, physical, patrimonial, economic or sexual suffering, or death, both in the private or public contexts. Threats to carry out any of these acts or omissions, depriving of liberty, or any other action directed towards the victim without her consent, and goes against her dignity, is also considered violence (INMUJERES, 2009; 131).

The types and modalities of gender violence are:

1) Economic violence: action or omission committed by the aggressor that affects the economic survival of the victim.

2) Violence in the community: individual or collective acts that transgress women's fundamental rights and motivate their degradation, discrimination, migration or exclusion from the public sphere.

3) Family violence: abusive act of power or intentional omission, directed to dominate, subordinate, control, or violate physically, verbally, psychological, patrimonial, economically or sexually, in or outside the family home.

4) Femicide violence: extreme form of violence against women, a product of the violation of their rights in the public and private spheres; it is the group of misogynous behaviors that may lead to social and State impunity and end in homicide and other forms of violent death of women.

5) Physical violence: act that not only accidentally harms women, using physical force, or an arm or object of some kind that may produce or not produce internal or external injuries, or both.

6) Institutional violence: acts or omissions from public officers from any state office that discriminate, or have the objective of impeding the exercise of human rights by women.

7) Work or teaching violence: exercised by people that have a work or teaching relationship with the victim, regardless of the hierarchic relationship, and consists of an act or omission of abuse of power that harms

the self-esteem, health, integrity, liberty, and security of the victim, and impedes her development and attempts against equality.

8) Patrimonial violence: act or omission that affects the victim's situation of survival, it is manifested in the transformation, subtraction, destruction, retention or distraction of objects, personal documents and values, patrimonial rights or economic resources destined to satisfy her needs and may include harm to common goods or belonging exclusively to the victim.

9) Psychological violence: act or omission that harms the psychological stability, it may consist of: negligence, abandonment, repeated neglect, pathological jealousy, insults, humiliation, devaluations, marginalization, indifference, infidelity, destructive comparisons, rejection, restriction to self-determination, and threats that may lead the victim to depression, isolation, to the devaluation of her self-esteem, or even suicide;

10) Sexual violence: any act that degrades or harms the body and/or sexuality of the victim, and that therefor attempts against her liberty, dignity, and physical integrity. It is an expression of abuse of power that signifies masculine supremacy over women in conceiving her as an object (INMUJERES, 2009; 131-136).

In regards to family violence:

The main source of pressure was the children. She has two children who are under the custody of the pimp's family. When she quits sex work and gets her kids back, the pimp grants her liberty, but she couldn't take her children. So then, the woman reports it and sues in Tlaxcala and in Puebla. When the pimp hears of this, he agrees to give up her children if she stops the plaint. Once the woman has her children and retires the plaint, the pimp goes to her house and takes her kids again. So the way to pressure the women is through their children. And he still has the children under his custody, he probably wants to teach them the work of pimping, he's very indifferent towards the girl.

In those times, the crime was exploitation, and not trafficking. The second one didn't exist back then. In any case, authorities are not very competent. The kid is now 16 years old and doesn't want to see his mother. He has his own car, goes to a private school while his sister is under

the custody of her mother and doesn't get anything if she doesn't go to live with her dad (Extract of interview with person linked to the topic. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



In regards to community violence:

When I was in middle school, there was one time when a girl arrived escaping from the pimps and hid in the school. She asks to be taken in and at that exact moment a group of armed men arrives and says: "either you give us the girl or we kill everyone!". They started to shoot and the school had to turn the girl in. They tell it like something that hurts, because they were forced to give the girl up knowing that if they didn't they would have wounded children in the school, while the girl begged for protection. So, what do you do? (Group interview extract, 08/17/11. Tlaxcala, Tlax.).

I've been working with women for almost twelve years now and we get more cases of violence, but this doesn't mean that women report the cases more than before, but rather, it depends on what municipality the reports come from. For instance, we are here (the organization), but the majority of cases we've followed are from here, Tlaxcala.

From other municipalities, it's really difficult. But I assure you that if they were to create a women's institute or a NGO or government agency that would provide attention to gender violence, then we would have more reports registered; only that we would face the challenge, facing the impression that people have that in the south of Tlaxcala women have the daughters involved in the process; that women do sex work because they want to. Because we would be facing two types: women that in fact have taken that decision, and women that were taken, groomed, seduced and that are being exploited (Extract of interview with citizen. 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



The lack of offices that protect women's right to a life free of violence makes the situation in this region worse. On one hand, no information about the laws that protect women is shared with the general public, and on the other, cases of violence are not attended:

We were going to ask for information from the Violence Observatory that we have here in the organization, and simply, we, we don't have registration of any cases of violence. There is no place, no office, no institute for women, the municipal president was invited to the "Council against trafficking", and he simply didn't show up. You feel frustrated with all of this, you want to just give up (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax).



Regarding patrimonial violence, informants said:

Another important aspect is patrimonial violence in Tlaxcala. According to custom, the owner of the house is the "xocoyote", the male son who inherits all property. In general, inheritance of properties is exclusive to males. That's why when women ask for a separation, they are left in material abandonment (Group interview extract, 17/08/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



In relation to institutional violence:

From what I know, municipal authorities, and authorities in general are men, and they don't follow through with the reports. There are people who are threatened so they won't report (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).

-Have you worked with women who report trafficking?-
Yes, first, the father reports it, and we've also had cases where we know the girl's version of the story, where she usually assumes certain responsibility: "he's my partner, he suggested it and I accepted and I'm still doing it". Just in one case, a 46 year old woman who was exploited for 13 years

and always looked for a way to run away. She tried it a few times but didn't make it (Extract of interview with person related to the topic. 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)

(Authorities) know, but they are colluded with the pimps. We reported a case of a woman who said she would see patrol car after patrol car that would take girls and boys to a broken down factory. Another woman, who lives near the middle school, who watched how girls jump the school fence and get in the patrol car, they change clothes and they go to the parties they have at the factory. She says she called the municipal president and told the situation and the president never took her calls again. Then they went and threatened the woman because they knew she had talked (Extract of interview with person related to the topic, 08/18/11 Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



Another sphere of power that is also related to violence is the one that concerns power between men, specifically between pimps.

I don't think violence is a thing just between men, but men use more violence. For example, in the carnivals, there are always shoot-offs and bullets, and in the dance they really beat each other (Extract of interview with NGO representative, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax).



This competition described by participants is a form of violence between peers:

There is a very small group that considers it violence, and a very big group that tolerates it. And also because some of the people that tolerate it are women from other places that aren't sensible to the phenomenon. In the municipality I was a hairdresser and I got to see how people from there tried to sexually exploit someone from the community and one day the father ran into the pimp in the barber shop and they pulled out screw drivers to hit each other. But then

the father went to look for his family and they shot down the pimp's house. That was a social message: if you try to capture women in your own community, someone's going to die. So then, the community is not affected, the problem is that they tolerate it a lot (Extract of interview with NGO representative, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



The next testimony helps illustrate the different ways in which men's authority over women can be expressed, and not just men as pimps or traffickers:

They don't take orders from women. For instance, when with my husband we were building our home with the workers from one of those municipalities, they didn't accept what I told them, they didn't listen to me. And my husband told me: "tell them that who pays, gives orders, and I say that they need to break down what they built or I won't pay them". With that, they would understand. Then my husband spoke with them and said: "I can't be here because I work, my wife is the one in charge and if you can't work with her then tell me how much I owe you and you can go". They can't take that a woman tells them what to do (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



To conclude, purchasing power is also a sphere that provides power and domination of men over others:

Before, about three decades ago, being a church representative meant social status, now it's different, because when a pimp represents the church, a person with a lot of money, they bring any music group (la banda El Recodo⁵), it doesn't matter if the community doesn't support it, because he can do it with his own resources. Another form of power appears, it's not the people of the community who cooperate, it's only the representative, the one who is

5 A very popular Mexican music group.

going to be the godfather of the “baby Jesus”, the one who says, I can bring this: it’s not about being ok with God, but a way of demonstrating economic power (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



The spheres of power in the construct of masculinity have to do with the different mechanisms of exercising violence against women and peers, with purchasing power and competition. It is important to mention that violence is so complex that we can identify more than one type within one relationship. In other words, starting from the “hooking” of the girl and beyond, we can identify symbolic power, for example, when pimps try to be the father figure, a figure that many women felt was absent or distant. The pimps apparently provide what the girls thought they never had: affection, attention, and care. On the other hand, blackmailing their children is another form of violence, added to the sexual, and economic-patrimonial exploitation. This also represents community violence, because they are rejected by the community for the life they lead, and that they apparently chose for themselves.

Conditions that facilitate the phenomenon

In this chapter, we analyze some of the social conditions that enhance men’s participation in the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls. We have divided it into three sections: social conditions, formal education, and work conditions.

Social conditions

Thanks to the data from the interviews, we concluded that socioeconomic position does not determinate if a women becomes a victim of trafficking, and it is not a condition for young men to get involved as traffickers:

Is the economic factor determinant for a victim of trafficking?
Not necessarily. You can find people who come from very marginalized contexts, but you can also find reports of girls that disappear when they’re on their way to school,

or to the store, or went out with friends. More girls are disappearing this way. Girls can identify pimps in the park. They're no longer hooked by seduction. Authorities still assume that disappearances are due to the girls running away from home. You can also find young men who don't have money issues but that work in trafficking, it gives them status, privileges that you can't buy with money (Extract of interview with person related to the topic, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



The network of trafficking in the south of Tlaxcala is complex. There are many characters involved in its operation:

The trafficking organization is a network of municipalities that has cab services, lawyers, medics, etc. They first transport the girls from one place to another and watch who goes in and out of the community. The traffickers also have certain reputation because they are the ones who finance the expenses for the community, particularly religious celebrations. They also pay for repairs for schools, who donate computers, they repair the streets. So when the police arrive, the community protects the pimps by ringing the church bells and getting together with machetes and other weapons. The women who go out on the street are the mothers, the cousins, the sisters of the pimps (Group Interview extract, 17/08/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



On the other hand, pacts between pimps—that are not always respected—make the situation even more complex, because it seems that they institutionalize their *modus vivendi*:

In that municipality, the pimps have an agreement; they can't work with women from their own community, and in turn, the community doesn't interfere with the pimps' work. If someone breaks the pact, there are shoot outs, that's how they settle things. And the authorities are nowhere to be seen (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).

Another important factor for young men to get involved in trafficking is that there are no recreational spaces. Except the “arcades”, bars, and a few sport courts/fields, there are no recreation/cultural centers, theaters and other places of entertainment where other models of men and masculinity may be presented, models that don’t promote violence and abuse. These new models can be a way to communicate that the construction of masculinity is in a way, a personal decision, not a natural norm.

When we talk about other types of masculinity, we think of those anti-hegemonic forms of life, for example, a masculinity that is respectful and responsible, affective, emotional, conscious, and creative, and that doesn’t need violence in order to be and position itself socially. Workshops that cover both emotional and theoretical aspects with young men can be a useful tool. Also, workshops that are lead by other young men that embody anti-hegemonic masculinities and show what men can win when they give up violence as an a priori element in their own construction.

In regards to young women, they have even less recreational spaces to socialize in, which speaks of a lack of appropriation of spaces and with it, a latent vulnerability:

In fact, near the schools, they sell alcohol, and the pimps go to those places to capture young women by getting them drunk. Youth already identify these places as contexts of risk
(Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



The perception that adults have of youth in this regions responds to an adultocentric⁶ vision that de-legitimizes and always questions how youth construct their identity. This fact can motivate little or no communication between adults and youth, which can help youth become easier targets for pimps.

The other sector of youth, between 20, 30 and 40 years old, I get the impression that they don’t know where they’re going. That maybe they see their grandparents or their

⁶ Adultocentrism is the parameter of validation and legitimation that comes from the adult world. Many of the research and intervention regarding youth are made from a place of the adult researcher, assuming what youth think, need and feel, and without taking in consideration youth’s opinion; and if they do, they use them to illustrate predetermined conclusions (Alpizar & Bernal, 2003). Adultcentrism refers to thinking that just because someone is or is considered an adult, they have more experience and knowledge; an adultcentric form of thinking does not only de-legitimize youth, but it invisibilizes their interests and needs.

fathers, but they also see their friends that maybe have other attitudes, so they don't have a clear path of where to go, so they start to repeat mistakes and have stereotypes that confronts them and helps them think if it's good to help their partner at home, take care of the kids, and at the same time, they find someone who says "don't get yourself in there, because once you're in, it's really hard to get out". Or on the other hand, when he sees his friend who helps his partner, shares house expenses, that he does things that he doesn't do, but that he could, but they have this resistance.

That's why I think that men in Tlaxcala are still macho, they still repeat stereotypes, and they keep educating with the same roles that they were brought up with. They're violent, insecure, stuck up, I don't mean to generalize so much, but this violence is manifested in many cases, in dating, and becomes worse in day to day interactions, like marriage (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



An important element here is the social imaginary. Participants agreed that even though that in school, students are educated in human rights, many boys and young men still want to be pimps when they grow up. The same thing happens with some young women who aspire to have a house and a family, and the way to get that is what they call "prostitution":

The other thing is that when you ask boys in kindergarden, or elementary school what they want to be when they grow up, they answer "pimps". Because the image they have of the pimp is a man with a lot of cars, a lot of women, and a lot of money. So the stereotypes repeat themselves and seem they are impossible to revert (...) young women want to have mansions, they want to be princesses and they way to become one is through sex work, they think it's a job, they don't see that it's a modern form of slavery because they money isn't for them, or for their home, it's for the pimp (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)





This image shows of one of the homes that is presumed to belong to a trafficker⁷.

Because of youth's aspiration for money and happiness, dropping out of school is very common, particularly among young women. Thus, many young women decide to start "working" in order to acquire purchasing power so they can fit into the social imaginary, and buy items such as: brand clothing, new cars and live in homes such as the one shown in the picture.

Education

Participants agree that starting from middle school; teachers are required to inform and teach on human rights, trafficking in persons, its consequences and repercussions. Participants even shared that boys and girls know the definition of trafficking, but are not able to understand the condition of women in the south region of the state:

When you ask children from the south what they want to do when they grow up, they answer that they want to be pimps. While we're working on violence prevention, over there, they're training new pimps. This is related to the economic

⁷ This image shows the dimensions of the houses some youth desire. These buildings stand out from the rest of the houses in the area, since most of them are very humble homes. According to the information provided by one of the interviewees, the costs of these homes is over 3 million pesos (around 280,000 USD). The photograph shows a house under construction, the ones occupied are usually painted with bright colors, which makes them even more visible.

power involved in sexual exploitation. It's complicated because pimps are more prepared every day. They prepare and train psychologically to better their seduction techniques. There is a high degree of professionalization, we know there are lawyers who specialize in litigating cases for pimps. In some psychology conference they identified pimps who attended. They even know what we talk about when we speak of prevention of trafficking. (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.).



In regards to dropping out:

Women in high school who drop out because of unplanned pregnancies. Young men get their girlfriends pregnant and then they disappear. Men leave school a little bit later, when they finish high school. There are more men with a college degree than women... (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



It is important to keep in mind some of the elements presented in the chapter "Notions of gender", which indicate that in the social imaginary, for women to study, is seen as an extra burden and expense because they are supposed to be taken care of by their future husband. However, when they are sexually exploited, they are the ones who economically support their husbands, a fact that seems to be forgotten among people of the community:

A girl was saying: "why should I study? If I'm going into prostitution, I don't need to know how to read or write, sex work gets me a lot of money... to build my house and buy stuff" (Extract of interview with religious group representative, 08/18/11.).



Other people accept that women are victims of trafficking, but, as we said before, they are afraid to report it, or follow the saying "as long as they don't mess with my family, everything is fine". This type of complicity is a determining factor for the network to function properly.

Work

In what regards to work spaces for young men and women in this region of Tlaxcala, the scenario is complicated. We observe that they reproduce gender stereotypes, when the work opportunities for young women are for them to work as saleswomen, in factories, catalog sales, or as seamstresses. Men usually work as laborers, informal sales on the street, and industrial workers (Group interview extract, 08/17/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)

Because Tlaxcala is such a small state, an important amount of men and women work in public services. Another important sector work as teachers, and another in established commerce; and I think lately there have been more women who work in sales, selling shoes, clothes, perfumes, jewelry, etc. In order of importance it would be the public sector, teaching, industrial sector, and as laborers (where men are traditionally accepted) (Extract of interview with citizen, 08/18/11, Tlaxcala, Tlax.)



Because work offers are so limited and precarious, youth from the south region of Tlaxcala, could undervalue them and find working in trafficking networks much more attractive because of the monetary earnings it brings them. In a sense, it goes beyond the values that are promoted in education or the family; we are facing a scenario that is difficult to fight, mainly because the money one can make in trafficking is very seductive, and because the labor market is so limited.

Until now, we have presented the axis of this research, giving voice to the informants with the objective of showing the reality that is lived in this geographical region. What we analyze next are a series of lines of action that we present as suggestions for intervention with some of the social actors that we identified throughout this text.

Some of these suggestions are inspired or taken from the State Strategy to Prevent, Fight and Punish Trafficking in Persons and Protect its Victims that was presented at a conference in Tlaxcala in August 2011. The participants in this conference were NGOs, and government representatives.

Lines of action and suggestions for interventions to identify, prevent, and decrease trafficking of women and girls in Tlaxcala

Dissemination of realistic and intelligible information

- Use of common and understandable language.
- Characteristics of aggressors and their *modus operandi*.
- Risks and consequences for victims, consumers, potential consumers and aggressors.
- Legal and judicial instruments and means of protection.
- Place the legend "In the state of Tlaxcala, trafficking in persons is a grave crime, any person that takes part in it in any way will be punished" in hotels, motels, public transportation, restaurants, bars, night clubs, among others.

Crime prevention and getting into the network

Primary actions

- Analyze the conditions of each municipality, and present a report on the current situation of trafficking of women:
 - Places of exploitation (map).
 - Characteristics of traffickers and their *modus operandi*.
- Institutional reports:
 - Analyze the perspective and procedure of each institution when dealing with cases of trafficking and their effectiveness.
 - The services provided to victims.
 - Legal instrumentation (norms and revision of norms).

- Develop a document with the obligations of teachers as well as the needs for sensibilization and formation in legal aspects:
 - Document that establishes their duties in communicating and formally reporting possible cases of sexual abuse, child commercial exploitation and trafficking in persons, and sexual abuse prevention.
- Promote active participation and student mobility within the educational system with the objective of:
 - Informing, orienting, sensibilizing in matters of human trafficking.
 - Carry out human trafficking workshops for parents.
 - Teach how to identify risk factors in the family and social contexts.
 - Establish safety measures when school starts and ends, as well as monitor recreation centers and spaces.
- Activities that promote self-care behaviors:
 - Motivate attention models that encourage development and strength in self-esteem.
 - Promote assertiveness and democracy within the family.
 - Promote institutional, social and family support networks that decrease risk situations and promote security.
 - Carry out workshops with children and youth in topics such as affective, equalitarian masculinities.

Strategies that promote structural changes from primary actions

Objective: achieve changes in the sociocultural imaginary of the meaning of “being a man”.

- Carry out anthropological, sociological and psychological research projects that analyze the affective, psychological and cultural elements that motivate youth and children to want to become traffickers and that give alternatives for prevention.
- Develop permanent ludic and theoretical workshops on the topic of the social construction of gender in each municipality.
- Present alternative models of masculinity through films, and theatre activities.

- Permanently raise awareness in human rights, with strategies that promote children and youth participation in community activities.
- Permanently diffuse the cases of incarcerated traffickers.
- Messages in mass media that explain the benefits of living alternative forms of masculinity, using assertive and attractive language.
- Create specialized centers for young men in each municipality where they can receive permanent, free psychological services.

Secondary actions

- Produce guides and manuals for each character involved directly or indirectly in trafficking.
 - For teachers, police officers, and public officials of every sector.

Content

- Conceptual elements.
- What to do in case you come in contact with a victim.
- What to do in case you come in contact with a trafficker.
- Clear information to use for immediate referrals.
- Legal and judicial instruments in topics of prevention and punishment.
- Human rights and women's human rights.
- Clarity in the punishments for traffickers and their allies.
- Design and develop educational and training programs for public officials.
 - Permanent.
 - Requisites for any promotion within government offices.
 - That they become part of the worker's quality evaluation.
 - Theoretical and ludic methodology.

Strategies oriented to achieve structural changes from secondary actions

Objective: achieve changes in the social imaginary of the meaning of “being a man”.

- National television series that shows the *modus operandi* of the traffickers, how they “groom” girls and seduce them, the impunity and corruption promoted and allowed by authorities, victims situation, psychological effects on the victims and traffickers, and finally the trafficker’s arrest and they life they lead within jail.

With this, we pretend to:

- Visibilize, sensibilize and recognize the local and national phenomenon of trafficking in Tlaxcala.
- Present the judicial and legal risks involved in carrying out trafficking.
- Diffuse victim and trafficker’s experiences so as to create a mirror effect on the possible traffickers and consumers.
- Present the real impacts and consequences of being part of a trafficking network.
- Motivate the production of interventions from NGO’s.

Attention, assistance and protection for victims

- Create help centers for victims of trafficking that can be located in women’s centers of the municipality.
- Facilitate and promote the creation of NGOs in order to attend, judicially, medically and psychologically assist victims.

The sanction and seizure of properties

- Not only harshen the punishment for traffickers, but also develop defense mechanisms for impunity.
- Create observatories to stop corruption and bribery with authorities.
- Seize trafficker’s properties.

A participating actor but...unattended? The active consumer and the potential consumer

Primary actions

- Carry out research projects that analyze the profiles and motivations of consumers and potential consumers.
- Diffuse clear messages that communicate the conditions that women victim of trafficking live in; deconstruct the idea that “all prostitutes are happy” and that they are in that line of work because of a personal decision: “because they like it”.
- Diffuse the risks of acquiring STIs, through community health centers.
- Distribute pamphlets with clear and concise information on how to identify a trafficking network and what to do.
- Distribute pamphlets with information in regards to the nation and international judicial instruments that focus on trafficking of persons: the punishment for traffickers and for their accomplices.

Secondary actions

- Put up banners and posters that explain that “prostitution” can be human trafficking; locate them in visible places where consumers of sexually exploited women are known to socialize.
- Refer men to spaces of re-education that are focused on eradicating men’s gender violence.

Final Considerations

Fortunately, we can find research that describes trafficker's and pimp's *modus operandi*, with it, we can appreciate the state of the phenomenon and acknowledge the complexity it entails. We would like to point out that we are talking about a problem that has been building for over five decades, so any isolated action or strategy will have a small impact, and the measures that are taken will unlikely have an immediate effect. However, we believe it important to set the basis to obtain tangible results in the medium-term.

As we have seen, trafficking of women and girls is very complex and multi-factorial, we must consider the economic situation of the region, the cultural infrastructure, the corruption, complicity, the effectiveness of legal and administrative actions, public policy as well as other elements.

In Mexico, we find strong involvement from non-profit organizations in this topic, organizations that are currently working on protocols and reforms to the legal framework, and strengthening protection networks for victims, and the services that are lent to the community (such as providing information on human rights and women's rights).

However, we still consider that there are important voids in many areas. One of them, which we consider fundamental to reduce trafficking, is prevention. Prevention strategies should not only be directed towards victims of exploitation, but to possible consumers, potential traffickers and all the men that in one way or another participate in any phase that conforms the phenomenon.

This text was elaborated from a masculinities and gender

perspective because it pretends to produce elements to generate different strategies that can help to reduce men's involvement in trafficking of women and girls. From the information we've gathered, we identify some elements that are important to take into consideration.

Firstly, the figure of the traffickers is not alien to the local culture, but rather represents a successful form of "being a man" within a patriarchal culture. It seems that traditional masculinity in the south region of Tlaxcala is not only constituted by action, but it also justifies and promotes the development of trafficking, where more than one representation of patriarchal power is presented: men with a lot economic power, power of seduction and therefore, sexual abilities (ability to generate fear and respect among peers and over women), with a space of power equivalent to that of the state authorities that makes them immune.

Secondly, the model of the pimps seems so attractive to youth that it seems difficult to imagine other archetypes, based on respect and equality could be equally attractive.

In third place, we find prejudice and misinformation on the topic of trafficking. In fact, data from the interviews helped understand that a lot of people know and use concepts such as "trafficking of women", but people in the region understand it as prostitution and that it is a decision solely taken by the woman: "they chose a life of easy money".

In fourth place, we need to analyze if making the punishment of trafficking more severe is an effective medium to discourage this crime. Apparently, this reinforcement has had two results: on the one hand, there has been an increase in the bribes between traffickers and public officials; on the other hand, traffickers learn "how not to do things". For example, hooking the victims is not done with physical violence, but with emotional and psychological violence, in such a way that victims don't recognize themselves as such.

Lastly, after making this trace of masculinity in trafficking of women with means for sexual exploitation, we agree that we need to analyze it further. The construction and reproduction of masculinity between men is still something unexplored within the trafficking literature. But we can also conclude that gender's logic is a determining factor in the phenomenon. This is why we consider it important to continue researching from a gender perspective, including the analysis of the traditional masculinity model as a transversal axis, and with it, trace strategies for its re-signification.

In particular, studies should verse on two topics. First, understand what happens with youth. Apparently, it is the most vulnerable population sector to the trafficking model, because it represents a “successful” and attractive man, not only for the reasons we have explained before, but because it is a group that is particularly susceptible to the consumption and the risk and adventure that an illegal activity entails. However, if a more detailed analysis is carried out, we can identity some subtleties that will help disengage from this hegemonic model. For example, not one hundred percent of the young population claims that they want to become pimps when they grow up, and these statistics are from areas densely populated by pimps. We must ask ourselves what happens in the neighboring municipalities and with the young men that do not manifest a desire to include themselves in this illicit activity. We can ask ourselves: for youth in the south of Tlaxcala, the trafficker is the best role model, or is it the “least bad” on in a geographical area that is marked by lack of job opportunities?

We must also attend aspects related to masculine sexuality. If men’s desire is a social construction, said desire is build on gender relations. Gender and sexuality find an ideal space to link their logics within the market of prostitution. This is why it is affirmed that prostitution is a man’s experience because he is the one that use money’s power to obtain sexual gratification and confirm his identity. Research should shed light on two aspects: motives why men “consume” bodies and their impact in terms of public health because of STIs risks.

Is it possible to establish a typology of the consumer-exploiter? How relevant is it to the study of women’s sexual exploitation to know the characteristics or even the marital status of the consumers of sex? What motivates men to consume feminine bodies without questioning this line of work? These are doubts that should be studied if we consider the following: who are the invisible men that constitute the demand?

Studies show that men who buy sex are from every nation, race and economic level. The majority of these men is married and has different ages. An interesting finding from a paper from France is that men that consume sex are not particularly old, but between 35 and 50 years old and are married or partnered. Of these, 55 percent had one or more children (Casillas, 2006: 87). We must talk about how the global north and global south relate to this phenomenon, and from this interaction, new technologies motivate the growth of markets where it is usually white men with strong economic power, business and pleasure trips, that offer, within a wider framework

of impunity young women's and girls' bodies as part of the hedonistic, professional adventure that can be pact between "men from the North" and "men from the South".

Even less common are the studies of men victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. They are usually boys and young men who were hooked into dynamics of offering pleasure for others from early childhood, using their bodies, exposed to sexual practices of any type and without any form of protection to their physical and emotional health. In patriarchal societies, it draws attention that the use of these individuals is not so limited, nor clandestine, even though we must underline the lack of empirical data that may make the magnitude of this phenomenon more clear, an issue that uses patriarchal codes to inflict harm on other men considered inferior: boys, homosexuals, natives, usually in conditions of extreme poverty.

Even though the scope of this analysis is much smaller than that of the phenomenon we are interested in, with the information provided, it is possible to suggest some routes to prevent the trafficking of humans while working with men.

Trafficking of women is not only a problem of structural violence, little access to education, delinquency and traffic; it is also a cultural problem. In line with the need to strengthen laws and public policy, it is necessary to intervene in how this country is building and reproducing the gender system in men and women: men-pimps and slave-women, consumer-men and pimp-women, powerful men and submissive women. Underlining, we believe it necessary to intervene in this model of "becoming a man" that is affecting the social imaginary, not only of men, but of women as well.

In this sense, it is important to promote alternative forms of manhood: individuals that don't need the juxtaposition of power and violence to become "men". Men can learn other forms of living their masculinity, ones based on respect, equity, and equality. But it is also urgent to show the costs of exercising traditional masculinity—the case of pimps is an extreme example, but not so different with the common denominator—as a cultural base that feeds violent actions and crimes; restricts or denies women's, boys' and girls' human rights; it represents risks to public health and favors the transmission of STIs; it distribute community cohesion, among other socially undesirable consequences.

One of the elements that constantly caught our attention was that people from the south region of Tlaxcala tend to confuse sexual exploitation with

prostitution. Besides, the information they have does not represent the reality they live in, so this confusion grows. To this, we add the shared belief that women work as prostitutes because they want and enjoy it, which make social interventions even more difficult. In this sense, it is necessary to explain concepts related to human trafficking in light of perceptions and dynamics that are registered in the communities, because only in a small amount of cases people make the connection between crime, daily practices and actors.

This analysis shows that human trafficking is a complex phenomenon that requires prevention strategies. In the case of men, it is necessary to consider their roles, particularly that of the potential young pimp; men who consume that are not necessarily aware that prostitution can be a part of the phenomenon of trafficking; men involved indirectly in the different phases of the phenomenon (cab drivers, bar tenders, waiters, etc.); invisible male victims, and more importantly, men who are aware but disagree with pimps' practices but don't have the tools to participate in any form of change.

We consider it of high importance to generate different proposals with gender perspective to prevent the insertion (voluntary or involuntary) of men into trafficking networks. We believe it necessary to attack this grave, social problematic from different flanks, particularly hegemonic masculinity, and men who carry it out.

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About GENDES

GENDES is a civil society organization which nurtures the development of fair, equitable and non-violent relationships, promoting, together with other social actors, processes of reflection, intervention, research and advocacy supported by gender based perspective and human development.

Legally constituted in 2008, but working since 2003, GENDES was founded by a multidisciplinary group of professionals in the social sciences committed to the analysis of male identities and the eradication of gender violence.

It offers different care strategies to develop other ways of being men and women, alternatives to the hegemonic model, from approaches that promote non-violence, affection, and equity and equality.



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