On Disgrasya and Kati:
Talk of Filipino Boys on Teenage Pregnancy

A Master's Thesis

Submitted by

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At the end of each session during my fieldwork for this research, I would always ask my informants if they have any question. Different groups would ask me the same question over and over: Why am I studying teenage pregnancy and sex? The first subject was easy to answer. I would tell them that I had been an NGO worker in my previous life and I have spent more than 15 years in developing and managing reproductive health programs. One of the areas I have worked on is adolescent sexuality. Then, I would add that in my own family, there had been teenage pregnancies which have always created a crisis within our household. Why teenage pregnancy creates so much trouble in most families has influenced me to understand what it means to those who have experienced it and in what context it is happening.

The second part, sex, was at first embarrassing for me in the sense that this is really my first time to ask people about their sexual experiences. But in light of my primary subject of interest which is teenage pregnancy, I can't help but to look at the context of unsafe sex because after all, pregnancies happen as a result of people having sex. I would therefore tell my informants that I am curious to learn about young people's sexual experiences and how these events relate to teenage pregnancy.

I know that the young people love to talk about sex within their own circles. It has helped, I think, that I am of the same gender and the boys felt comfortable to talk about sex. One of my big discoveries during this research is that sex is always an enjoyable topic for the young and the old (let's admit it). Young persons usually get more animated whenever the conversation shifts to the subject of sex.

Another issue that has hounded me since the development of my research proposal is whether I should call my informants "boys" or "men." I decided to suspend any conclusion until I hear from the boys. I will therefore explain my thoughts on this question after the data are presented. But for the purpose of emphasizing their youth, I will be calling them "boys" in my discussion.

The 1993 National Demographic Survey (NDS) in the Philippines reported that rural teenagers are twice as likely (9%) to experience teenage pregnancy as their urban counterparts (5%). This in part has motivated me to focus my investigation on rural youths. In the end, it turned out that listening to the boys was not a mere encounter with demographic realities. More
importantly, it was a first-hand encounter with real-life stories that speak about their angst, aspirations, ambivalence, and audacity.

The production of this thesis is a result of the collaborative efforts of many people in the Netherlands and in the Philippines. I am indebted to all of them as I would not have completed this task without their support. It is with deep gratitude and affection that I express my appreciation to:

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• My family and friends whose moral and spiritual support has encouraged me to strive for higher goals;

• My wife Cristy who has been my constant inspiration, a friend who keeps me going even when I feel weak, and a loving partner in good and tough times;

• Finally, I thank God for the wisdom and grace He has lovingly provided me throughout the development and writing of my thesis.

Going through this research has been a fulfilling experience as it opened my eyes to the realities that drive young men and women to unsafe sex and teenage parenthood. For me and the boys in this study, it had been an empowering process because it created a space for discussion about stories and issues that are considered "off limits" to young people. This process must continue if we are to expect greater involvement and responsibility of men in their own reproductive health and those of their partners.

Romeo Abad Arca, Jr.
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Executive Summary

Each year in the Philippines, more than a hundred thousand babies, mostly out of wedlock, are born to mothers 19 years of age or younger (NSO: 2000). Why this happens is related to a host of socio-cultural factors but equally important is the role young men play in this real-life drama. Statistics tells us that sexual intercourse among the young usually happens upon the initiative (or insistence) of the boys (Raymundo & Diaz: 1995). But do these boys ever think of the possibility of unplanned pregnancy and its consequences?

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has called attention to the growing problems of adolescent reproductive health in many places around the world. Since then, many studies have dealt with teenage pregnancies, STDs among the young, adolescent sexuality, and related issues. But while these studies give light to these problems as they are experienced by the girls or through the girls’ perspective, little attention is paid to the boys and their points of view regarding these issues.

This research attempts to fill this information gap by exploring the boys’ emic (insider) view on teen pregnancy and the issues surrounding it. Taking a qualitative approach, this exploratory study investigated how rural young boys in the Philippines interpret teenage pregnancy, its preventions, and consequences. The researcher’s interest in this subject was spurred by more than a decade of involvement in reproductive health advocacy and program development especially in the adolescent sector.

Why is there a need to navigate the minds of the boys? According to SIECUS (1994), young men’s ideas regarding sex, pregnancy, male-female relationships, masculinity, and sexuality influence behavior that causes negative health and social consequences. For instance, in the Philippines, many boys tend to correlate masculinity with being sexually aggressive because that is how they are socialized under the prevailing social norms. This puts pressure on the young men to engage in risky sexual behaviors. By looking at the boys’ concepts of pregnancy, responsibility, sex, and fatherhood, reproductive health practitioners may find clues that are useful in designing intervention programs vis-a-vis teenage pregnancy and male involvement in reproductive health.

The study aims to answer the question “What are the meanings of ‘teenage pregnancy’ among rural male adolescents in the Philippines?” It examined the different variables that influence and result from teenage pregnancy as young men understand them. These variables include socio-
cultural factors, gender constructs, peer pressure, access to contraceptive information and services, personal problems, lay ideas about pregnancy, unprotected sex, and the socio-economic as well as health consequences of teenage parenthood.

The study was done in Maragondon, a rural municipality of the province of Cavite which is a progressive area south of Manila. The choice of the site was mainly influenced by practical reasons. By working in his home province, the researcher gets the advantage of built-in contacts and familiarity with the language and culture of informants. The 42 male informants were selected through purposive sampling and include in- and out-of-school boys aged 15-23 who have and have not experienced fatherhood. Out-of-school boys are included because they represent a big part of the youth population. Of the 42 informants, eight had experience with pregnancy and five of them decided to live with their pregnant partners while three ran away.

Using triangulation, the researcher gathered data through focus group discussion, individual interviews, and projective techniques. These were done between May to July 2002. The researcher himself facilitated or conducted these activities with the support of a professional documenter and a research assistant.

This research is informed by cognitive-symbolic theory which provides that people respond differently to medical phenomena depending on how these phenomena are constructed in their cultures. In this case, teenage pregnancy was viewed not as a medical but a social phenomenon. This anthropological gaze is backed up by the assumption that young men's views of teenage pregnancy are different from those of the girls and more so from the adults. Data were analyzed using discourse analysis. Semantic themes were identified and their literal as well as metonymic meanings were explored. The research showed that both in and out-of-school youths have similar concerns as evidenced by the convergence of themes and terms in their discourse.

One of the main findings is that the respondents demonstrate an ambivalence regarding sex. It is seen both as a "natural" need of men yet it is also portrayed as a kind of temptation or kati (itch) which has potentials for destroying the men's bodies and lives. Many of the boys believe that their masculinity is affirmed through experience in sex yet many of them are not ready to bear responsibilities for their sexual behavior. Ironically, they believe that taking up responsibility is one sign of being a real man. Many of them try sex early in their lives only to "taste" what it's like and to prove something about themselves. Most of them do not want to use condom when having sex because they say it reduces the pleasure of sex. Hence, when pregnancy occurs, it is seen as an
unintentional accident, in some cases it is the fault of the girl, or when love and trust are absent, they run away from any responsibility. One dominant concept in the boys' discourse on teenage pregnancy is to look at it as a "disgrasya" (literally ‘fall from grace’) not in the sense of a moral violation but as an unexpected consequence of their being curious, in love, problematic, or influenced by friends or alcohol. Interestingly, many of the boys' sexual encounters happen right in their own house because they do not feel the burden of shame if they are caught. For them, it's only "natural" for boys to have sex.

The majority of boys see the consequences of teenage parenthood mainly in terms of its social repercussions especially the embarrassment that it brings upon the young parents themselves and their families. They believe that it will adversely affect their chances of finishing school and therefore limit their chance to get a good job. This, in part, gives them a sense of humiliation. Others think that teenage parents are in danger of peer ostracism. Some boys believe that teenage parenthood may result in unstable marriages, A few others see risks in terms of the mother's and child's health. The discussion on avoiding the risks of teenage parenthood elicited a mixture of ideal and practical suggestions. Almost everyone prescribes "finish school first." Then, they say "think about the consequences first before getting into sex, avoid pornographic materials, practice safe sex," and others.

The boys define "father" as someone with responsibility. When they talk about responsibility, they speak of providing for the material and physical needs of the baby. Fatherhood is seen as a status that is higher than singleness. They say it's because the boy who has fathered a child has already proven his virility and he has shown a proof of his fertility which is an important virtue for most Filipino males. Many of the boys believe that responsibility does not always mean marriage.

The concern for the welfare of the baby over the mother shows in many of the boys. They say the baby cannot survive without help; whereas the mother can live by herself. In part, this reflects the high value of a child for the Filipino family.

They boys are unanimous in saying there is no advantage in being a young father. All of them say it is "mahirap" (difficult). The difficulties include the inability to get a good job because of their low educational status and lack of experience, the "unfinished singlehood" which competes with their new role as father, and the frequent quarrels with their partners over childcare, jealousy, and household chores.
When asked about the age and conditions that are suitable to become a father, the informants’ responses converge between 21 to 30. Many of the boys believe that a man is ready to become a father if he: has finished schooling (college level); has a stable job; and has helped his parents (Filipino concept of "paying back" the parents for sending their children to school).

In view of these findings, the researcher basically recommends a number of educational interventions that aim to help young men clarify their own values regarding sexuality, masculinity, as well as the concept of responsibility and fatherhood. A repackaging of safe sex programs that are culturally appropriate is also proposed. It is recommended that gender concepts should underpin the proposed interventions since gender issues came out as a crosscutting concern in the research data. This study suggests that many young fathers equally need support as the young mothers do and policymakers should examine whether enough support is given to the young fathers in terms of job placement, livelihood skills development, and family life enrichment.

This research was done by the above-mentioned student in fulfillment of the requirements of the University of Amsterdam’s Master’s in Medical Anthropology.
Introduction

A twenty-two year-old father wrote to a popular advice columnist in a Philippine newspaper1 asking for her counsel. The letter says

Dear Dr. Holmes,

Mylah was my girlfriend when I got married to my wife. We had been going steady for three years by then. We hid our relationship from her parents because her father was very strict and conservative. Despite that, our relationship was very happy. She is the first woman in my life, and I, the first man in hers. In other words, we devirginized each other. When I went to college, our communication was temporarily cut off.

One day, I met a woman who was five years older than me. I didn't have any intention to court her, but we became sweethearts. I also learned to love her, a love that was exclusively for Mylah before that. We ended up in bed and eventually she got pregnant. I was not ready for any emotional and/or financial responsibility but somehow we ended up in church. We got married and I don't know "kung napilitan ako" (if I was just forced into it). Mylah was surprised about what happened. I don't know if I was a fool for marrying my wife.

My problem is simply this: I love Mylah more than my wife and she loves me, too. Every time we meet, we are both thirsty for love. We still have sex because of our mutual understanding and feelings. I can no longer cope. I don't know how to overcome my feelings. Please help me with some advice.

Archie

The experience of Archie typifies the life stories of many adolescent boys in the Philippines. Like him, they would usually have their first sexual experience before college or between the ages 13-16. Some equate good sex for good love and end up confused. When pregnancy occurs, most young men admit they are not emotionally or financially ready to face the responsibilities. Like Archie, their standard line seems to be "I don't know how it happened but it just did." Because of family pressure or the dictates of their own conscience, these men end up in marriage or cohabitation even if they are not ready for fatherhood and commitments.

But when is a man ready to become a father? What do men think are the risks of teenage pregnancy for themselves and their partners? What does teenage pregnancy mean for the boys who are in the threshold of adulthood? What is their concept of responsibility? Except for some sparks of openness exhibited by a few men like Archie, the literature on these subjects speak little about the men's own views.

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1 This letter came from Dr. Margie Holmes' advice column "Bodymind" published in the defunct Manila Times. This and other letters were collected in a book of Dr. Holmes called Wild Wicked Wonderful (1999, Pasig City: Anvil Publishing Inc.).
In the realm of adolescent reproductive health, there is an abundance of data about the epidemiology of teenage motherhood, the medical and social consequences of pregnancy on the lives of girls, and how they view their own sexuality. On the contrary, while there is increasing interest on men’s involvement in reproductive health programs nowadays, there is little data about boys and men’s perceptions in this area. This research attempts to address this information gap by creating a space for discussion on the boys’ own views about teen pregnancy and the related issues.

But why care about boys?

Young men’s perceptions about sex, pregnancy, male-female relationships, masculinity, and sexuality influence behavior that causes negative health and social consequences (SIECUS: 1994). In many cultures, manhood is associated with being sexually aggressive and this puts pressure on the young men to engage in risky sexual behaviors. Understanding the perceptions and awareness of the boys will enable stakeholders of reproductive health program to address young men’s sexuality and reproductive health needs in ways that are appropriate and acceptable.

The 2000 census in the Philippines indicates that one in every five Filipinos is a young person between the ages of 10 and 19 (NSO: 2001). It means that one-fifth of the Philippine population are in the threshold of major life-defining events in their lives including schooling, engaging in sexual relationships, family formation, entry into the labor market, and others (Raymundo and Laguna: 2001). One of these major events is pregnancy and its health as well as socio-economic consequences.

In the Philippines there is a stigma attached to teenage pregnancy because of the negative attitude projected on teenage mothers but not on teen-age fathers. Teenage pregnancy is generally considered especially by the adults as a deviation from moral standards and a social problem. In schools, homes, and churches, girls are admonished not to fall pregnant. Yet, it is prevalent especially in rural areas.

In most cases, those who fall into early pregnancy and marriage are those with lower educational and economic status (Raymundo & Laguna: 2001). With less years of schooling, those

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2 In the Philippines, the population is divided into age brackets of five years interval beginning at 0-4. Those belonging to ages 10 to 19 are considered adolescents and in the 2000 census, their population is estimated to be more than 16 million. Young adults are those in the 15 to 24 age brackets. The term “youth” is ascribed to persons aged 10 to 24 in accordance with WHO definition.
3 Teenager is a term used in the Philippines to describe individuals with ages 13 to 19.
young parents face the risks of economic and social hardship. More than pregnancy itself, however, it is the risks of teenage parenthood that present greater problems.

Based on common experience, the usual story is that of a young girl who is gotten pregnant by her young boyfriend. Since prevailing social and legal mores does not condone abortion, the pregnancy will be carried to term. Usually, before the girl gives birth, she marries the boy. Often, they both leave school and the young father starts working. This time, the risks of teenage parenthood become real for them. Because of incomplete education, neither the young man nor the young woman is able to get a well-paid and stable job. Financial, health, and emotional problems may start to put pressure on the couple. Because many of them are still developing emotionally and lack the experience to handle these crises, the marital relationship may be destabilized. When the problems aggravate, the family either breaks up or they live in a very stressful condition.

Current efforts to prevent teen pregnancy in the Philippines rest on the shoulders of the non-government organizations (NGOs). This is understandable because the government, wary of confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church on the issue, is not supposed to provide contraceptives or even provide fertility management information to adolescents. The few NGOs who work on adolescent reproductive health are themselves unable to openly provide contraceptive information and services to young boys and girls because of cultural and religious pressures. The most that they can do is to educate boys and girls with messages that encourage them to delay pregnancy and marriage and to avoid sex or to protect themselves if they are unable to.

For these educational campaigns to become really effective, there is a need to reach out to the boys who are described by statistics and popular accounts as the more sexually active gender. In 1994, the University of the Philippines Population Institute conducted a survey called Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study II (YAFSS II) that took a nationally representative sample of males and females aged 15-24. The YAFSS II study shows that by the time they become 15, three per cent (3%) among the males and one per cent (1%) among the females have had their sexual debut (Raymundo and Laguna: 2001). YAFSS II further revealed that the males practice more risky sex owing to the fact that 45% of the sexually active young men had sex with more than one partners compared to 4% for the women. The problem is that while boys (and some girls) want to have sex, very few are willing to take responsibility for their behavior.

Of the sexually active young adults, 74% or 1.8 million do not use any contraceptive despite the fact that two-thirds (67%) or 1.67 million of sexually active youths indicate an

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unwillingness to become parents and the lack of preparation for becoming parents. The Foundation for Adolescent Development (2001) reports that 16.5% of induced abortions in the Philippines are estimated to occur among teens.

Further, the most recent civil registry data showed that one-fifth (21%) of all illegitimate births occur among women between the ages of 15 and 19 (Tirol: 1999). In the Philippine legal context, illegitimate birth means that the child was born out of wedlock. In its social context, an illegitimate birth carries the shame of social stigma projected to unwed mothers plus the absence of a legal right to demand the father’s support to the baby.

The YAFSS II survey indicates that the risk of becoming teenage parents is high for Filipino boys and girls. As of 1980, nine percent (9%) of all live births in the Philippines occur to women under 20 (Bernales: 1980). By the time Filipino women reach the age of 20, 3.7% have given birth at least once (PRB: 2000). The YAFSS data revealed that 16% of Filipino girls and 3% of the boys are already married by the time they reach the age of 18.

Teenage pregnancy happens within a larger context that involves relationships and a host of social, cultural, structural, and personal factors. Figure 1 explains the conceptual frame in which the researcher worked on during the fieldwork. A more refined configuration (Figure 4) was developed in the analysis phase of the study. It is presented in the conclusion with focus on the boys’ own perspectives and terminologies.

**Figure 1. Problem Analysis Diagram on Teenage Pregnancy**

[Diagram showing various factors influencing teenage pregnancy]
The socio-cultural environment in which boys and girls live trigger the structural and cognitive determinants of their sexual behavior. For instance, the prevailing religious sentiments in the Philippines prevent the government from making a clear policy on the provision of contraceptive information and services for adolescents. However, this is not only an issue of access since commercially branded condoms and pills are widely available. In most cases, the youths are either embarrassed to access contraceptives because of social taboos or they deliberately do not use them because they do not want to acknowledge their sexual activity. More importantly, even if contraceptives are available and accessible, they are often not around when needed because most intercourse happen when they are not expected by women (Raymundo & Diaz: 1995).

Meanwhile, competing interests of young men and women in heterosexual relationships also put pressure on them to engage in sex. While most young women care about emotional bonding, the men are oftentimes after physical pleasure. More importantly, the traditional concept of masculinity, which defines maleness in terms of sexual prowess, socializes the boys to become promiscuous. This is reinforced further by peer pressure. A study in the US portrays some characteristics of boys that contribute to teenage pregnancy. Among others, the study said that boys, as compared to girls, are more likely to rank sex as a higher priority, think that becoming sexually active premaritally or at an early age is acceptable, and be proud of their non-virgin status (Pittman and Adams: 1988).

Personal problems with parents or family situations also interact in the situation. Being in a conservative society, most Filipino parents have difficulty communicating to and reinforcing their sexual expectations among their teenage children.

Other factors such as lay knowledge on how pregnancy will or will not occur also lead young boys and girls to engage in unprotected sex which results in pregnancy. The importance of proving one's fertility, which is highly valued in Philippine cultural context, may also motivate boys and girls to get into sex. Without strong social and economic support, young parents suffer various problems associated with teenage parenthood.

In terms of literary stock, the discourse on teenage pregnancy often revolves around the young mother. This is reflected in the preponderance of studies done on the subject focusing on young women and their children. The studies of Furstenberg (1981) and Foley (1991) on the consequences of early childbearing illustrate the focus of literature on this subject. These authors argued that early pregnancy eventuates in increased childbearing characterized by high parity and
short birth intervals. In addition, they pointed out that babies of teenage mothers have more than two times the risk of death than those born to adults. This is due to the high likelihood of prematurity and low birth weight. Further, women who marry as teen-agers are more likely to separate (Furstenberg: 1981). It is also known that the young girls' reproductive system may not be physically mature to successfully carry a pregnancy. Often, teenage mothers have large families due to a longer reproductive career.

Studies that link boys to teenage pregnancy are quite limited. The few literature that make this specific connection mostly look into the teenage pregnancy prevention programs or analyze the concerns of teenage fatherhood the way adults see them. It is almost a rarity to find literature that looks at teenage pregnancy from the perspective of young boys.

In his study in the United States, Dryboos (1988) describes the risks of paternity for young boys. According to him, the boys know less about sexuality, yet they are subjected to a great deal of social pressure to initiate sex early. Further, Dryboos cites survey data in the US indicating that boys are generally not mature enough to deal with emotional relationships, lack cognitive skills to plan for the future and have least potentials for providing for a family.

One particular study done in New York and Utah (USA) went a step ahead by looking at adolescent fathers and how parenthood impacts their lives (Elster & Lamb: 1986). This study, however, did not cover the young fathers' own views on fatherhood. Instead, it looked into the 'crises' that the young fathers went through from psycho-social perspective. According to Elster and Lamb (1986), parenthood and marriage are considered normal developmental "crises." They believe that one reason for concern about adolescent fathers is that these crises coincide with the crisis of adolescent development. The combination of stresses associated with each of these crises may adversely affect young males especially those who are psychologically immature and who have weak or inconsistent social support.

So far, these data are mostly representative of etic views, those of the adults. One of the rare exceptions is the study of Kirkman et al (2001) which examined the phenomenon of teenage motherhood from the perspective of the young women themselves. The interview guide was developed after six focus groups discussions. Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews of 20 Australian teenage mothers. Adopting the theoretical frame of narrative, Kirkman et al attempted to explain the women's perspectives by analyzing their autobiographical accounts. They found out that the young women see the following as among the positive aspects of
being a teenage mother: life is enriched by motherhood; young mothers have more energy than older mothers; young mothers will be free in the future when others are tied to children; there are benefits in growing up with one’s children; and the child is a source of pride and pleasure to the extended family as well as a means of bringing the family closer together. On the negative side, the women said that their being young mothers has posed difficulties in meeting the child’s needs, restricted their social lives, narrowed down their chances for employment which has implications on their financial status as well, and made some people look down upon them (Ibid: p291). While this study comes very close to the intent of the proposed research, it is again from the lens of the girls. Nevertheless, this study brings to the fore some important concepts that relate to the present research.

One local study that bears close resemblance to this research was done by Tan, Batangan, and Espanola. In Love and Desire (2001), these three authors present the results of a qualitative study on the meanings and contexts that young adults, both men and women, single and married, attach to sex and sex-related concepts. It specifically focuses on the context of sexual risks and how the young people themselves deal with these risks. The study was done in the highly urbanized cities of Manila and Iloilo where focus group discussions and interviews were held among young people of both sexes belonging to ages 16 to 24. Further, the study involved participant observation in different hang-outs for young people – places where the youths gather including parks, discos, beer gardens, etc.

Using discourse analysis, Tan et al probed into the young adults’ definitions, perceptions, and knowledge of gender, premarital sex, contraception, role of sex in relationships, risks related to sex, and pregnancy, among others. Some of the important findings of this study include the following: curiosity about the pleasures of sex makes a person want to try it; on the discussion of premarital sex, there are strong fears that one might be unprepared for the responsibilities of supporting a family; the right time to get married is after a college degree and a stable job; becoming pregnant before marriage is like a fall from grace; and that when pregnancy occurs, a quick solution would be marriage. As the reader will find later, these statements will resonate in the findings of the present research albeit in a different context.

While Tan et al listened to both urban men and women, the present study focuses only on rural boys mainly in the 15-19 age bracket. As one will see, both studies overlap in terms of the subjects covered but the present research looks into the boys’ concept of fatherhood, responsibility
towards teenage pregnancy, and the consequences of teenage pregnancy - three issues that are missed in Tan et al's work. But taken together, these two studies provide complementation that could be very useful in developing culturally responsive reproductive health programs for boys and girls.

Given the commonly accepted notion that men are the primary initiators of sexual acts, this research sought to find the missing voices of the boys in the discourse on teen pregnancy. The researcher’s interest in this subject springs from his long years of involvement in reproductive health advocacy. Personal circumstances such as the teenage marriages within his own family have also motivated the researcher to search for the meanings of teenage pregnancy from those who have experienced it.

In the end, the qualitative data that arose from this study may help to shed light on the boys’ ideas about and experiences with teenage pregnancy and fatherhood.

Many studies addressing the issues of adolescent sexuality and responsibility are being done in many places but hardly anyone focuses on adolescent males. If we are to expect active male involvement in reproductive health programs, then it’s time to hear the voices of the boys.

### Methodology

This study relied on primary research data collected through various approaches. As a means of triangulating sources and methodologies, the researcher conducted focus group discussions (FGD) among four groups of in-school and out-of-school youths; projective techniques for a group of mixed adolescents; and in-depth interviews with eight young men who had different experiences in taking up responsibility towards pregnancy.

In line with the goal of drawing out meanings and contexts from a rural perspective, all data collection activities were done in Maragondon, one of the few remaining rural municipalities in the province of Cavite, The Philippines. This site is chosen for pragmatic reasons: the researcher is a native of this province giving him access to the language and cultural environment of the area. Though he has not worked in this particular town before, he has contacts with people and a non-
government organization working in the area. These contacts helped facilitate the process of identifying informants for the study. A more detailed description of the research site is elucidated in the presentation of data.

The researcher served as the principal investigator for the study. A research assistant, one recorder and two transcribers supported him. The Research Assistant, a college graduate of Foreign Service who has worked for years as a secretary, provided mainly clerical and administrative support. The recorder is a freelance journalist who has done documentation jobs for many national and regional events. The transcribers were college-level married women.

The research was done from May to July 2002 over a period of six weeks. The short fieldwork period complies with the timeframe given to students who wish to finish the Amsterdam Masters in Medical Anthropology within one year. This is also a limitation that goes with the scholarship grant provided to this researcher.

Before the actual data collection phase, the projective techniques were pre-tested among a group of eight in and out-of-school youths in Bacoor, Cavite. Bacoor is different in the sense that it is a highly urbanized community and lies in the border between Cavite and Manila. The pre-test participants, however, were chosen from the interior villages inhabited mainly by squatters. They are the boys who also attended the non-formal education classes. Only one university student attended the pre-test. As a result of the pre-test, the actual session is more participatory and well timed. While the results bear similarities, the participants in the pre-test showed more openness in talking about their sexual experiences. This may have been the effect of an urban environment proliferated by mass media that openly talk about sexual matters.

All respondents came from ten of the 27 barangays (villages) of Maragondon. Since the intent of most qualitative research is not to generalize but to provide analytical insights (Curtis et al: 2000), informants for this study were selected using purposive sampling. They were selected by convenience following these basic criteria: aged 15-19, resident of Maragondon, and articulate enough to talk.

Altogether, 27 in and out-of-school youths took part in the FGD sessions. The in-school participants were chosen by convenience by the researcher's key informant who is a university instructor at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) Maragondon Branch. Those selected were her freshmen students from an engineering class. For the out-of-school informants, the researcher relied on the non-formal education students who recently finished the last module
given by the Department of Education in Maragondon. The out-of-school respondents were selected by their teachers who served as the researcher's key informants.

The FGDs for students were conducted at the PUP while those for out-of-school youths were held at the Maragondon Elementary School. Two sessions for each sub-group or a total of four FGDs were conducted because the depth of information generated from FGD is sometimes unpredictable. The division was considered so that those who are not in school will not feel inferior to those who are studying. Besides, people are more likely to share information with others who have similar status as themselves (Carey: 1994).

In line with the research interest, the FGD sessions for both groups covered topics related to the boys' concepts of teenage pregnancy including their view whether it is a problem or not, when is pregnancy considered "early," on which age and conditions are appropriate to become a father, concepts of responsibility, and their awareness about risks associated with early pregnancy. An FGD guide in Tagalog (the local dialect) indicating the themes and corresponding questions was used for the four sessions. These sessions were preceded by pre-session chats to break the ice and establish rapport with the participants. On average, the FGD sessions lasted for an hour and a half. The proceedings of the FGD were recorded in cassette upon approval of the participants and a recorder took note of key statements, non-verbal language, and dominant themes. The final documentation consists of the respondents' verbatim responses to the questions arranged by theme. A debriefing session among the facilitator, recorder, and research assistant was held after each FGD in order to note key phrases and words used by the participants, points of difference or convergence, and the participants' body language. The debriefing notes form part of the raw data examined for the analysis.

The researcher served as facilitator for both FGD and projective techniques. The decision to serve as facilitator does not only have an academic value. The sensitive nature of the topics to be discussed has led the researcher to think that the informants would be more comfortable discussing personal matters such as their experiences in pregnancy and sex with a male facilitator who has similar cultural background.

For the actual projective techniques, 11 boys comprised of six students and five out-of-school youths took part in a creative session out of which their concepts of the contexts and consequences of teenage pregnancy were explored. Taking cue from the work of Good (1977) on
the semantics of illness, the concept of teenage pregnancy was explored in relation to a wide set of contexts and consequences.

Two sets of meta cards were provided to the participants. On the yellow cards, they were asked to write feelings, social situations, beliefs, and other factors that prompt adolescents to engage in sex; on the blue cards, they were asked to write what they think are the consequences of teenage pregnancy. The cards were then posted by the participants on the board after which the facilitator sought the help of the participants in grouping together those that are related to each other. The participants were then asked to come up with key words to capture the essence of each group of ideas. These key words became the core ideas, which were then arranged to indicate which leads to or results in what. Arrows were drawn to indicate the relationships.

During the discussion, the participants were asked to explain why a particular idea is a determinant or a result of another. Later, they were also asked to what degree the identified factors lead to teenage pregnancy and to rank identified effects according to their potential impact on the teenage parents. Colored labels were stuck on the cards which were identified as having the greatest impact on the lives of the young people. In the end, the gradations e.g. with highest impact, with high impact, etc. were indicated by the number of labels tacked on the cards. Further, they were asked at which age or conditions it is suitable for them to become a father.

The second part of the projective technique consisted of mapping of unprotected sex sites. Pregnancy happens within the larger picture of relationships, situations, and physical environment that induce young people to have sex. Following the anthropological orientation of this study, the researcher attempted "to understand culture on its own terms" (Peoples and Bailey: 1997) by asking the boys themselves to draw a map that will depict the places where unprotected sex occurs and the people, events or situations that have anything to do with the adolescents' involvement with unsafe sex.

As Mikkelsen (1995) pointed out, visual sharing of a map or diagram is useful because all who are present can see, point to, discuss, manipulate and alter physical objects or representations. Triangulation takes place with people cross-checking and correcting each other. The learning is progressive. The information is visible, semi-permanent, and public and is added to, verified by and owned by the participants.

(Chambers, 1992 as cited by Mikkelsen)

First, the participants were asked to discuss among themselves the places, people, and situations that have anything to do with unsafe sex. Then, the participants drew an imaginary
community showing the places where unprotected sex among adolescents takes place and the people who have anything to do with this. The resulting "map" was then discussed with the group. The participants were asked to explain the presence of each actor, place, or situation. This way, discussion touched upon the context of unsafe sex. The whole session lasted for about three hours. The key ideas that came out from these activities were brought up during the focus group discussions and individual interviews.

To complement the FGDs and projective techniques, individual in-depth conversations with five (5) boys who have gotten a girl pregnant and took the responsibility and another three (3) who ran away from it were conducted. Taking responsibility is defined here as either marrying the girl/living with her or providing support for the child.

The informants were identified and recruited from those who attended the FGDs and projective techniques session. Some of the participants themselves referred their own friends and peers. Originally, only three per category was planned but the informants either presented themselves for the interview or had been notified previously by a key informant and out of the researcher's sensitivity to the local culture of giving importance to those who volunteer to help, he decided to take the two others in.

A semi-structured interview guide that contains open-ended questions was used to steer the conversations. The interviews were done once in Tagalog for an average of about one and a half hours. Earlier, only boys aged 15-19 who had experiences with teenage pregnancy were considered for this group but the difficulty of finding enough informants within this age bracket who are willing to talk has convinced the researcher to raise the age ceiling to 24 which is still within the adolescent bracket as defined by World Health Organization (WHO).

Before the actual interviews, the researcher explained the informant's rights and all of them had to sign the informed consent form before the conversations began. The interviews covered the boys' experiences with pregnancy and their views on fatherhood and responsibility. The interviews were held mostly in the informants' home and backyard while two were held in a school and river bank. Except for two informants who refused audio recording, all interviews were recorded and transcribed in full.

All informants in this research were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of all information they will share. Thus, all names mentioned in the presentation of data are pseudonyms.

On Disgrasya and Kati: Talk of Filipino Boys on Teenage Pregnancy
During the fieldwork, the researcher kept a diary to record his day-to-day experiences as well as thoughts and reflections on the day's events. The diary also includes his personal circumstances and feelings as he went through the research process. These notes along with the introspection have helped corroborate the research findings.

Towards the end of the fieldwork, the researcher conducted informal validation sessions with selected in and out-of-school participants to get their comments on the initial findings. This final session helped to confirm many of the findings and shed light on some terms and issues that came out prominently during data collection. The researcher himself noted the boys' comments and clarifications.

Before the actual fieldwork, the researcher expected serious difficulties in making the boys talk about their sexual experiences in light of existing taboos and religious norms that prevent open and honest discussion of such matters. The more difficult part, the researcher thought, was finding the informants who had experience with pregnancy and who run away from responsibilities. It turned out that the boys themselves are very much willing to share their personal stories perhaps because these are narratives that they are proud to share but which prevailing social norms consider offensive. By giving them space for their stories, they must have seen an opportunity to bring their innermost or even unconventional thoughts into public consciousness. For them, it was a liberating and empowering process. In the end, the researcher himself was freed from the initial embarrassment and in the process learned some jargons which the youths have constructed to convey deep meanings that are otherwise hidden to those who do not share their culture.

The use of different data collection methodologies proved to be a crucial means of drawing out the respondents' profound and sometimes hidden thoughts. The interactive nature of FGDs and projective techniques led to public discourses where seemingly neutral ideas and socially acceptable views could be safely revealed. But it is the individual interviews and the in-depth probing in group discussions that unveiled some of the boys' intimate secrets and their lived realities. As an example, very few boys admitted in groups that they have had sexual experience. But in informal chats and individual conversations with the boys, some quietly told the researcher that they have already experienced sex. The effective triangulation of methods helped bridge the gap between the public discourse and the actual experiences.
Meanings are in people. As sickness is understood in different meanings by patient and doctor, so are social phenomena like teenage pregnancy. People view and respond differently to teenage pregnancy based on their experiences and understanding of this phenomenon. While their perspective is affected largely by their own values and cognitive faculties, the social and cultural environment undoubtedly bears upon their views.

Essentially, this study ventured to describe the perceptions and explanations of the young people themselves, particularly the boys, regarding the concepts of teenage pregnancy, teenage fatherhood, and responsibility.

This research adopts the cognitive/symbolic theory in explaining the boys' perspective. The cognitive/symbolic orientation, according to van der Geest (1987), is not a distinctive perspective in anthropology but an omnibus term to cover all perspectives that focus on mental activities. This perspective derives inspiration from the principles of thought in their definition of culture (Ibid: p.30). A classic example of this analytical approach is the definition of "illness" that is constructed by the patient as opposed to the definition of "disease" given by the doctor. Van der Geest explains that from the cognitive point of view, "illness" is defined as saying or thinking "I am sick." There is therefore no illness until that pronouncement is made.

In the same vein, it could be said that teenage pregnancy is not considered a problem until those who experience it like the girls and boys say so. What adults or the "outsiders" think as problematic about early pregnancy may be viewed by the young mothers or fathers as beneficial. What adults perceive as factors that avert teenage pregnancy may be seen by young people as the factors that lead them to teen pregnancy.

Also germane to this study is Kleinman's explanatory model defined as "the notions about an episode of sickness and its treatment that are employed by all those engaged in the clinical process" (Helman: 2001). This framework suggests that culture provides a way for ordering the world and how things are classified in ways that are relevant to that culture. This perspective becomes relevant in understanding the boys' ideas about teenage pregnancy, their explanations for the etiology of unsafe sex, the consequences of teenage pregnancy, and the ways to avoid the risks of pregnancy.

While this study was approached mainly from a cognitive orientation, it could not help but to glean also from a transactionalist view in which individual survival dictates one's actions or
perceptions (van der Geest: 1987). In talking about pregnancy or responsibility, the girl's or boy's thinking and actions may be motivated by their private interests such as future career, social status, sense of pride, or integrity.

In line with the above agenda, this research aims to meet the following objectives:

**General:**
To describe the meanings of teenage pregnancy from the perspective of Filipino rural boys

**Specific:**
1. To collect and explain terminologies and concepts associated with teenage pregnancy and fatherhood by rural young boys;
2. To enumerate and explain the contexts in which teenage pregnancy occurs from the perspective of the boys;
3. To identify perceived advantages and disadvantages of early pregnancy according to the boys;
4. To explore the rural boys' extent of knowledge about the risks of teenage parenthood;
5. To explore how young rural boys see their responsibility towards teenage pregnancy.

Following the cognitive/symbolic orientation of this study, the researcher has relied on discourse analysis to draw the meanings and contexts put forward by the respondents. Discourse refers to "a set of textual arrangements which organizes and coordinates actions, positions, and identities of people who produce it" (Thwaites, Davis and Mules: 1994 as cited by Tan: 1999).

According to Tan (ibid.), discourse covers the practice of communication and in short it refers to what people are saying to whom and in what way. For this research, that includes the verbal and non-verbal language expressed by the informants during conversations. The informants' statements and the terms they used, along with the contexts, are taken as reflective of what they think about the issues at hand. The analysis therefore was based on the study of meanings. The first level of analysis concerns the textual or literal interpretation of the informants' statements. The next level of analysis was the correlation of the boys' statements to prevailing cultural and social realities. In doing so, the boys' rhetoric on teenage pregnancy as well as its social and cultural contexts are brought to light.
In line with its nature as a descriptive study, the analysis in this research is not constrained by what is common among the informants. This study gives space even to the opinion of one individual in order to preserve the depth and richness of the information it generated. Such accommodation enables the research to capture the natural diversity of opinions including the contradictions and ambiguities present in the minds of the young people.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

The discussion of findings begins with a brief description of the field site and the informants to help set the context of the research data. It is followed by the presentation of research findings focusing on five inter-related themes. It opens with a discussion on the context of unsafe sex among the teens as they see it. In this part, the boys reveal the situations, the feelings, and beliefs that lead them to have sex, where they do it, and how they look at sex. This section provides the context for many of the ideas that are taken up in the succeeding parts of the discussion. The next section describes how the boys look at teenage pregnancy as a lived experience. Then, the boys' perspectives on the consequences of teenage pregnancy for themselves and the other parties involved come next. The presentation continues with a discussion of the boys' concept of responsibility towards teenage pregnancy. Finally, the exploration ends with the boys' concept of fatherhood.

The researcher looked for differences in perceptions between the in-school and out-of-school youths but found many common ways of talking about sex, pregnancy, responsibility, and fatherhood. This convergence of ideas is apparent in the idioms they use as well as the themes covered by their discourses. The findings, therefore, highlight much of these commonalities but where relevant, the differences are cited to show the range of ideas generated by the study.

**A. The Field Site**

The municipality of Maragondon lies in the valley between the provinces of Cavite and Batangas. This town, which was founded in 1727 by Spanish friars, is situated in the southwest of Cavite 54 kilometers away from the capital city of Manila. It is predominantly Roman Catholic which
constitutes 83.6% of the population (unpublished municipal document: 2002). Tagalog is spoken by 98% of its inhabitants.

Maragondon is an agricultural town made up of 27 barangays (villages) spread over 16,549 hectares of land. More than 2,000 hectares of land are devoted to agriculture of which rice is the primary crop. The town’s original name is “Madagundong” which comes from the word maugong (meaning “‘thunderous’) in reference to the roaring sound of a big river in one of the villages where the first town hall was erected.

Its current population stands at 33,615 (ibid.). With 7,245 households, the average household size is 4.6. During the 2000 census, the town’s population growth rate was pegged at 3.8%, much higher than the national rate of 2.3%. According to the 1999 population estimates, the population of individuals aged 15-24 totals 5,426 or 19% of the total population then. Mirroring the national trend, one in every 5 persons in the town is an adolescent. The child and youth population belonging to age 0 to 24 in the same year comprises 50.5% of the population making Maragondon a place of young potentials. By 1999, there were 1,103 men and women aged 10 to 24 who were listed as married.

The literacy rate in the municipality stands at 95.3%. As far as the health indicators are concerned, the town’s mortality rate is pegged at 79.6/1,000 and crude death rate of 4/1,000.

B. Informants’ Profile

A total of 42 males from 10 villages of Maragondon participated in this research as informants. All of them were selected through purposive sampling. Their ages range from 15 to 23 and the majority belongs to age 16-18. Only six (6) are above 20. Legally, all the 42 are singles but five (5) had an experience living with a partner. Of these five, four are living-in with their partners at the time of data collection; one recently broke up with his partner. All five of them are already fathers. Four of these five fathers took part in both FGD and interview. The majority of informants have had a relationship with girls and only 30% or 13 boys reported that they never had any girlfriend.

All informants belong to a Christian religion. All except eight are Catholics. Of these eight, four belong to Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ), a local sect; three are members of Aglipay, officially called the Philippine Independent Church – a local group with Catholic background but outside of Vatican’s control; one belongs to the Seventh Day Adventist Church.
Of all informants, more than half or 52% are out-of-school and except for one who reached college, all of them dropped from high school. The rest are freshmen students from the same university, a government-subsidized school charging very minimal tuition fees. Generally, the informants belong to low-income group. A summary of these numbers is shown in this table:

Table 1. Informants' Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>No. Of Participants</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Mean Age</th>
<th>Educational Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>In-school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projective Techniques</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. The Findings

1. The Boys' Etiology of Unsafe Sex

In their own words, the boys have clear boundaries between love and sex. They said that love demands trust and respect. It means not forcing your will on the other person. For them, love is “pangmatagalan” (takes more time to hold) “dahil dito'y nagkakakitla ng lubusan” (because here, one gets to know each other fully). Someone also said it is “mahirap iwanan dahil pag mahal na mahal, masakit iwanan” (it is hard to say goodbye to love, when you love someone very much, leaving is painful). The boys’ construction of love evokes romantic notions bringing in the concepts of trust, respect, taking time, and pain. In short, the boys posited that love is a product of time and has something to do with their emotions. In contrast, the boys said that sex is “pangkatawan” (physical) and “pangmadalian” (temporal) as it is merely an urge that goes away when it is satisfied. One of the boys said sex is just “mapagdarausan” (an outlet to fulfill an urge).

Some contradictions exist in the boys’ description of sex. They said that it is “kailangan” (needed) by the body yet it is also “tukso” (temptation) or something that may harm the body. While they said that love and sex are “magkaiba” (different), one said that sex could also mean love because sex is “patunay na mahal mo siya” (the proof that you love the person). These words, spoken in relation to the contexts in which sex among teens occur, echo the same sentiment:

“Karamihan, hindi nakukuntento na pag sinabing love, parang words lang. Iba yung nakikit na para patunayang mahal sila, yun ngang makipag-sex.” (Many are not content to
say love, they’re only words. It is different when you see the proof that they love you, that is through sex.)

“mahal na mahal ‘yung babae at gustong ipakita sa pamamagitan ng sex” (he loves the girl very much and wants to show it through sex)

“gustong patunayan na mahal sila ng babae” (wants proof that the girl loves him)

“sobrang pagtitiwala at pagmamahal, para patunayang mahal niya ang lalaki” (too much trust and love, to show that she loves him)

In this rhetoric, sex becomes a currency that guarantees the value of love. To some boys then, love is only real when it involves physical intimacy.

Sex is also reified as “kati” (itch) so they would say that they had sex because they “became itchy” (nangafl). “Kati” is something that is hard to remedy because as the Tagalog-speaking people say “kung alin ang makati, iyong ang masarap kamutin” (it is pleasurable to scratch that which is itchy) and yet they also say that “habang kinakamot, lalong kumakati” (the more you scratch, the more itchy it gets). Hence, by referring to sex as itch, the boys are referring to something that one feels occasionally and that which is difficult to resist because it is uncomfortable to ignore it and pleasurable if you respond to its call. The itch, though, will not go away as long as one scratches.

There are also many references to sex as something one could taste. “Gustong matikman kung masarap nga ba” (wants to taste if it is really good) was mentioned repeatedly when the boys talked about their first experience in sex. This is consistent with how the Tagalogs describe sex as “luto ng Dios” (God’s cooking).

How love and sex interface with each other is something that the boys explain through the concept of “pananagutan” (responsibility). The boys said that if one is ready to take up responsibility for the possible consequences of sex such as pregnancy or marriage, then sex may come in. This stand deviates from the traditional moral standards that restrict sex only within marriage, thus, reflecting changes in values among contemporary youths.

The boys acknowledged different kinds of factors that drive them to have sex, particularly those that are social, natural, parental and gender-related. In actuality, however, it is peer pressure that is the most dominant one.

Their words describe how the group dynamics prompts them to try sex:
"Panunukso ng barkada, sasabihin 'virgin ka pa?"' (Teasing of peers, they will say 'you mean you're still a virgin?)

"Pag ikaw na lang ang hindi nakapunto sa girlfriend, tutuksuhin ka. PAibhasa barkada mo, gusto mo namang patunayan mo at gusto mo ring magkaroon ng experience." (If you're the only one who has not scored [no score means no sex] with your girlfriend, you will be teased. Because they're your friends, you want to prove to them that you can do it and you also want to experience it.)

"impluwensya ng tropa, pakikipag-good time kasama ng barkada" (peer influence, having good time with friends)

One value that is cherished by many Filipinos is pakikisama (getting along). In Philippine context, it means being part of the group or "weaving into other people's lives." According to Lapiz (1997)

"We (referring to Filipinos) place a lot of premium on pakikisama and pakikipagkapwa (relating). Two of the worst labels, walang pakikisama (inability to get along) and walang pakikipagkapwa (inability to relate) will be avoided by the Filipino at almost any cost. We love to blend and harmonize with people..."

The value of pakikisama figures strongly in the boys' discourse about peer pressure. Pleasing friends and having a good time with them to the point of being subservient to the whims and fancy of their buddies are attempts to keep the camaraderie intact. To do otherwise is to face the risk of being labelled "walang pakisama" (one who does not get along) which means being out of the group. Talking about pleasing the peers and the consequence of defying the group, one respondent said "para sa akin, mahalaga [ito] kasi la/ail laitin ka" (for me it is important because you will be cursed all the time). It is common knowledge that for adolescents, being "in" is an important matter and as Lapiz (ibid.) said of the Filipinos, they would do almost anything to get along with the peer group. This is not to say that pakikisama in itself is "bad" as it teaches individuals how to socialize and deal with a group. It only shows that pakikisama motivates most young people to conform with the group norms.

Even drinking and drugs, which the boys also pointed out as some of the factors that influence them to have sex, are also part of peer pressure. They learned how to drink and get into drugs through friends. When they drink or take drugs, it is always with friends. According to some boys, it is good to have sex "kapag nakainom" (when drunk) or "kapag may tama ka" (when high on drugs). Three of the stories about first sexual encounters happened while the barkada (peer group) is having a "good time" drinking alcohol.

On Diagrasya and Kati: Talk of Filipino Boys on Teenage Pregnancy
According to the boys, another pressure comes from the media via pornographic materials. They said that watching erotic films or reading adult magazines entice many boys to try what they see.

The boys also point out to "natural" elements that lead them to sex. These are lust and curiosity and this is how they appear in the boys' discourse:

"Pagiging mapusok ng mga kabataan; gagawin kung ano ang pumasok sa isip" (lustfulness of the youth; will do anything that comes to mind)

"gustong tumikim, gustong maiaman kung masarap" (would want to taste it, likes to know if it is delicious)

"kalibugan, magpaparaos" (lust, to satisfy urge)

"tinessing ko kung paano gumaraw sa babae" (I tested how it is to have sex with a woman)

The way the boys framed lust and curiosity is to naturalize sex by saying that being lustful and curious about sex is a "natural" part of being a young man and that sex is something they could hardly resist. This line of thought appeared in the stories of boys who related their first sexual experiences to "tawag ng laman" (call of the flesh) and "dala ng pagka-kabataan, mahina sa laman, hindi na napigilan" (because of youth, weak when it comes to flesh [sex], unable to resist). None said the same about girls. In fact, there is an expectation that girls should be modest when it comes to sex by saying that girls who have sex are "flirt" and "wild." This distinction of men as "naturally lustful" and women as self-controlled is very evident in the way love and sex are defined by the boys.

Relational problems with parents and difficult situations within the family also figure in the discussion of factors that lead young people to sex. It appears that adolescents engage in sex as a means of getting back at parents who are described as naggers and overly strict. The boys indicated these situations in relation to parental and family problems:

"Laging pinagagalitan ng magulang" (always get scolded by parents)

"kapabayaan ng magulang, kulang sa gabay ng magulang" (lack of parental guidance) "broken family"

"nagrerebelde sa pamilya, gumaganti" (rebelling against the family, trying to get even)

"sobrang higpit ng magulang" (parents are overly strict)

"galit sa magulang" (hates the parents)
Another factor that shows itself in the boys’ discourse on the context of unsafe sex is that of gender. The notions of masculinity pervade many of the factors cited along this theme. The boys talked about proving their masculinity through heterosexual intercourse. Someone described a virgin man as “walang ka-appeal sa mga babae” (unattractive to women) which invokes the image of an inferior man. There is also a strong tendency to associate masculinity with being fertile, hence, getting someone pregnant boosts the boys’ confidence in their manhood. Masculinity and fertility were like Siamese twins in the boys’ narratives. They repeatedly made these statements when explaining why they had sex:

“para patunayang lalake” (to prove one’s masculinity)

“tinesting ko lang para patunayang hindi ako baog” (I just tried it to show that I am fecund)

The need to prove their manhood through fertility could be associated to what Santiago (1982) found out in her qualitative study of Filipino rural men’s concept of pagkakakala (masculinity). Her informants said that one of the key elements of maleness is that of being “mabuting binhi” (a good seed). A good seed is one that yields maximum harvest when planted. There is therefore expectation that the real men will produce children to show that they are “good seeds.”

Most boys in the Philippines are circumcised at the age of 12. This event is seen as a ritual that marks the transition of boys from childhood to adolescence. University graduation is considered the ceremonial transition to adulthood. However, among the Tagalogs (to which the boys of Maragondon belong to) and even in many other ethnic groupings in the country, there is no ritual to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood. During adolescence, boys become strongly attached to their barkada (intimate friends/peers) and in the context of peer group, they experiment with sex and learn to be men. The barkada system becomes the natural network where the transition from boyhood to manhood happens through experimentation and group affirmation. As Dumont (1993) said, the male barkada itself becomes a social institution and cultural phenomenon which constitutes an important link in articulating and molding the manhood of men.

One interesting aspect of the gender concept coming from the data is the idea of “owning” a girl through sexual intercourse. One boy said that having sex with a girl is like “sineseguro na hindi [siya] mapupunta sa iba” (assuring that she will not be claimed by anyone else). Along this line, sex is described as “tatak” (seal) of ownership as if a girl is a property whose title is awarded to whoever claims her virginity first. Note that the “tatak” is valid only when it is for the first time. There is a feeling among some boys that having sex with or marrying an experienced girl is like
having a "second hand" item and they want something "brand new." This attitude was confirmed in a study of impoverished Filipino urban families where 9 out of 10 boys, whether they are sexually experienced or not, were firm in their assertion that they wanted to marry a girl that nobody has "touched" (Decaesstecker: 1978 as cited by Medina: 1991).

One of the young fathers in this study was told by his partner that he is not the first man in her life and this has caused him anguish and many sleepless nights. He said:

"Simula noong sinabi niya sa akin 'yon, hindi na ako makatulog, hindi na ako makatulog ng maayos sa gabi. Bago ako matulog laging pumasok sa isip ko 'yon. Parang tingin ko sa sarili ko nanliiliit ako...nakakahiya yon. Para sa akin, malaking kawalan 'yon. Gusto ko 'yung magkaanak man ako, ako 'yung nakauna, walang iba... Tuloy minsan, gusto kong manuntong pagka ganoong naisip ko 'yon, kasi nanliiliit ako sa sarili ko. Wala nga akong mukhang maibaharat..." (The moment she told me that, I couldn't sleep anymore, I couldn't sleep well in the evening. Before I fall asleep, it would always come to my mind. I felt so small, I was ashamed. For me, it was a big loss. If I will have a baby with someone, I wanted to be the first man in her life and no one else. At times, I want to beat up someone whenever I think of it because I felt humiliated. I have lost face...)

This study showed that it is very seldom for the boys to have sex with their girlfriends because they already wanted to become fathers even at their early age. Love was also never mentioned as a primary motive for having sex. Many boys said that they get into sex precisely because they want to experience it:

"naiinggit sa kabarkada na may karanasan na" (envious of peers who had experience with sex)

"gustong maka-experience sa sex" (wants to experience sex)

With the above as a background, let us now see when and where all these happen. The boys' accounts speak of early sexual experiences. Of the boys who shared their stories, the first sexual encounters happened between the ages of 12 to 17, a time when they are in the last grade of elementary school or during high school years. These encounters happened early on in their relationship with the girls from as early as one week (7 days) after the first day of courting to two months after they became sweethearts. The earliest was a few hours after the boy and girl met in a party. Evidently, these encounters took place without the benefit of long acquaintance or "getting to know you more" period. It is also a time when the boys are most likely out of job or in a position where getting work is difficult. The basis for taking responsibility for a possible pregnancy is therefore weak. As to the time of the day, the boys cleverly said that they would usually do it late in the night or early morning when the parents or guardians are deeply asleep.
Where these encounters mostly happen speaks of yet another theme along gender lines. But this could only be revealed in private talk with the boys. During the projective techniques, the boys drew the places where teens have sex. This is what appeared in their drawing:

Figure 2. Map of Unprotected Sex Sites

As the above figure shows, these are the places where, the boys said, sex happens among boys and girls:
- School
- Beach
The boys explained that sex happens in the beach or friend's house because many parties or socials happen in these places during which many sexual encounters are initiated and consummated. School toilets or unlocked rooms provide venues for sex during school parties. motel and beer house are for boys who have money. The boys said the farm is ideal because of the space, quietness, and comfort (fresh air) it provides. The graveyard is sometimes chosen because the boys said it offers the ultimate privacy and tranquility since most people are afraid to go to cemeteries especially during the night.

What the boys did not draw came out only during the discussion and in the interviews. While the public discourse focused on public places, individual conversations and further probing revealed that most heterosexual encounters happen either in the boy's own house or that of the girl. Between the two, more sexual encounters happen in the boy's house. It only happens in the girl's house when her parents are away. Why it takes place in the boy's house brings the gender dimension once again. According to the boys, they do it in their house because

"ok lang kung mahuli, hindi nakakahiya, naintindihan ng magulang" (it's ok if they are caught, it's not embarrassing, the parents understand)

"bale wala sa magulang, lalake naman ang anak nila" (the parents don't mind it, after all their son is a man)

Here comes again the notion of men as "naturally endowed" with a license to have sex that even their own parents know this. In contrast, what is unsaid is that for the women, sex is profane. It is not a shame for a man to have sex out of marriage because it is something expected of them.

Do the boys practice safe sex? The notion of "sarap" (pleasure) is invoked why they do not use condom when they have sex with either their girlfriend or a commercial sex worker. They said it is "hindi masarap" (not pleasurable) or "nakakabawas ng sarap" (it reduces pleasure). Some of them also have sex when they get drunk. Almost all of the sexually active boys use withdrawal, though not always successfully, to avoid pregnancy. This practice is hard to do and is likely to
result in unwanted pregnancy as what happened to the partner of the boy who described how he does it:

"Pag aiam ko na puputok na, sa labas ko na pinapalabas. Kaya lang 'yung isang beses, ah, dalawang beses, lasing ako. Doon po pumutok." (If I know that it is about to fire, I release it outside. But once, ah, twice, I was drunk. It fired inside.)

There is a powerful subliminal meaning in this boy's use of the word "putok" for orgasm. In Tagalog, putok is the sound of a gun shot. By adopting this term, this boy brings up the image of sex as a hunt, his phallus as a gun, and the male orgasm as the final shot that seals the conquest of a woman. Here is another paean to male chivalry and sex assumes a symbolic value that celebrates man's triumph over the woman.

Meanwhile, the boys' ideas about when it is good to have sex give us a preview of what excites these young people. Some of them have simple motivations such that a drop in temperature would be enough to make them horny. Many said it is good to have sex "kapag malamig (when it's cold), "pag umuulan" (when it's raining), "pag bumabagyo" (when there is a storm) or "pagka three weeks po na walang masturbation" (three weeks without masturbation). Others are quite profound and exude a sense of responsibility. They said that it is good to have sex "kapag mahal mo ang babaeng (when you love the girl), "pag kaya nang bumuhay ng isang pamilya" (when already capable of supporting a family), or "kapag nakabuntis, masusuportahan" (when I get someone pregnant, I can support her). Still many others are on the risky and adventurous side. They said that sex is good "kapag pareho kayong walang experience" (when you're both virgins), "kapag nakainom" (when drunk), "kapag maka-burn ng marijuana" (when one has taken marijuana), or after watching erotic movies. The others are women-centered and they said that sex is good "pag malakas ang sex appeal ng babaeng (if the woman has strong sex appeal), "pagka po gusto ng babaeng (if the woman likes it), "pagka po magaling magipag-sex ang babaeng (if the woman is good in sex), or if the woman is virgin.

As the above shows, the boys are enticed by various stimuli spanning a continuum of physical (weather, experience) to the emotional (love). Their notions also show the risks they face when they act upon these ideas such as having sex when drunk or high on drugs.
2. Teenage Pregnancy Through the Eyes of the Boys

Across all ages and educational boundaries, there is unanimity on the term used to describe teenage pregnancy: disgrasya. In fact, only this term came out repeatedly in all focus groups and in the interviews. It is a borrowed Spanish word which literally means “fall from grace.” But in its common usage, it is also a word synonymous to “accident.” Among the Tagalog-speaking people, “disgrasya” is used when someone had a mishap or when something unintended happened as in the case of someone accidentally hit by a car or when a coconut fell from a tree hitting someone in the head. People would say of the victim as “Nadisgrasya siya” (He/She had an accident).

In the Philippines, the average age of marriage is 24 (Raymundo et al: 1999) and this could be attributed to the high premium placed on education and a stable job before someone considers marriage. It used to be that marriage is the only legitimate condition for sex and when a pregnancy occurs while the woman is in her teens, it is “malaking iskandal” (a big scandal) for the family. The high moral standard of the past generation casts teenage pregnancy in a negative light because it signifies a violation of socially accepted norms. This moral discourse brought about the notion of teenage pregnancy as a “disgrasya” (fall from grace) because it brings shame and dishonor to the woman and her family. Even to these days, many Filipino families still believe that “family honor is upheld in the preservation of a daughter’s virginity” (Tan et al: 2001).

It seems though that among the boys in this study, the meaning of teenage pregnancy as a “fall from grace” is on its way to oblivion. Instead of looking at teenage pregnancy as a breach of morality, the boys prefer to see it as an unintended event that nobody likes to happen. In using the word “disgrasya,” the boys explained that it is “hindi sinasadya” (unintentional) or “hindi inaasahan” (something unexpected). In the graphic words of one boy, it results from the accidental firing of a phallic “or-gun” inside the woman. Even in jest, someone said it is like “nakalunok ng pakwan” or “accidentally swallowing a whole watermelon.” One of the young fathers interviewed in this study admitted that he and his partner tried to abort their baby since they were not ready for the pregnancy. He said:

“Nagulat po ako at bigla kaming nag-usap na ipapalaglag yung bata... Pinainom pa nga ho namin siya ng, yung ano po yung uget po na pampalaglag, ganon.” (I was really surprised so we immediately talked and agreed to abort the baby... We let her drink this, what, this root for abortion, that’s it.)

In all the discourses on teenage pregnancy, what came out strongly was the tendency to absolve anyone of responsibility by emphasizing the element of chance. Upon probing, the use of
the term "disgrasya" is always connected to "aksidente" (accident) in the context of an unexpected mishap or an unfortunate event. When asked "Ano ang nadisgrasya?" (What is the accident about?) when a teenager falls pregnant, the boys said it is "the future." Here, one can see the boys' strong awareness about the impact of teenage pregnancy on the future lives of the girl and the boy who fathered the baby and that the rhetoric veers away from violation of ethical or moral standards. Rather than a "fall from grace," the boys look at teenage pregnancy as "fall of the future" which for the boys means facing social and economic difficulties in the future.

By framing teenage pregnancy within the context of a mishap away from a moral angle, the boys are subtly raising a challenge to the traditional value of looking at teenage pregnancy as an infringement of moral codes. On a more benign context, this shift in meaning of the word "disgrasya" when referred to teenage pregnancy also confirms the fact that meanings change as people's values and situations evolve. The concept of teenage pregnancy as an "accident" becomes even clearer when it is juxtaposed in the context of unsafe sex among teens as described in the preceding section. The boys' stories about their coital debut speak of sexual encounters that are merely "trials," unplanned, with women they barely knew, and when they admit that they are not yet ready to assume responsibility either for pregnancy or marriage.

Meanwhile, despite the attempt to negotiate the meaning of teenage pregnancy as "nobody's fault," there is still a tacit admission among the boys that when a pregnancy happens, they have to be accountable for it. When asked about the risks of having unsafe sex with a girl, the most common reply of those interviewed was "baka mabuntis ko siya" (I might get her pregnant). Asked further why they think it is a risk, the boys said

"Baka pagaitan ako ng pamilya ko." (My family will scold me.)

"Natatakot ako sa maaaring gawin ng magulang niya, baka sapakin ako." (I am afraid at what her parents might do, I might be beaten up.)

"Walang trabaho, wala pa akong ipakakain." (I am still jobless, I am not able to feed [a family].)

The ambivalence on the talk about teenage pregnancy as "hindi sinasadya" or unintentional becomes even more apparent when the boys are asked further about the terms they use to refer to teenaged girls who got pregnant. One may be led to believe that when the boys say "hindi sinasadya" it applies only to the boys themselves as these statements imply:

"Mapusok siya." (She's wild.)
“Sobrang hilig.” (Too Lustful.)

“Sa akin ho kasi ang tawag ko sa ganoong babae e malandi. Parang maagang hindi nakayang pigilan ang nadarama nila.” (For me, I call that kind of girl flirt. She can’t seem to control her feelings.)

By saying that teenaged girls who get pregnant are “wild,” “flirt” or “too lustful” the boys are saying that these girls have crossed the boundaries of decency and chastity. The above statements mirror an expectation among women to control their feelings more specifically their sexuality. This stereotypical expectation could be an influence of prevailing gender beliefs which look at men as “naturally lustful” or sexually aggressive and the women as passive sexual beings. When a pregnancy therefore occurs, it’s because the girls failed to control themselves.

In contrast, the boys have a generally positive view of other boys who have gotten someone pregnant. Many concepts appear but the most dominant is the idea that a pregnancy means that the man is “hindi baog” (not infertile). In Philippine context, the term “baog” (infertile) carries a negative connotation because it is associated with being “not man enough” since one proof of manhood is to produce a child. In the study of Santiago (1977) cited earlier, she discovered three levels of maleness as constructed by her informants: hindi lalake (not manly), lalake (man enough), and tunay na lalake (real man). The informants emphasized that the tunay na lalake (real man) is, among others, confident, principled, mabuting binhi (good seed), and married because one important indicator of maleness is the ability to raise a family and manage it well. The emphasis on being a “good seed” and “ability to raise a family” therefore permeates the Filipino male psyche and this is reflected even by the boys in this study.

Other remarks about a boy who has sired a child are equally positive as shown by these statements:

“Malakas ang loob niya” (He’s got a strong inner self.)

“Mas nakakaangat siya sa ibang lalake” (He surpasses the level of other men.)

“Normal lang siya” (He is just normal.)

“Lalakeng-lalake” (Really man)

On a less positive note, some boys describe young men who have fathered a child as “malibog” (lustful), “mahilig” (likes to have sex often), “manggagamit” (he exploits girls) if he does
not take up responsibility, he is “walanghiya kung manggagamit lang” (insensitive to the point of being hard-hearted, if he will only use the girl).

There are also statements which tend to naturalize the act of getting someone pregnant. In their words

“Natural lang po yon, lalaki siya.” (It’s just natural, he’s a man.)

“Okay lang po, lalake naman siya.” (It’s ok, he’s a man after all.)

Compared with how pregnancy is viewed when it is contextualized in the lives of young girls, it appears that teenage pregnancy is seen in a more natural and positive light when it is situated in the lives of young men. Again, we see here some traces of gender stereotype which locates sexuality within the purview of men’s natural instincts.

The boys have a high regard for the value of education in the family’s economic future. This is manifested in their opinions as to when pregnancy is considered “too early.” The boys believe that a pregnancy is too early when the girl is twenty years old and below, when she has not finished college, and has no means to support the baby. Someone, though, stated that age does not matter for as long as she can support herself.

The general sentiment is consistent with prevailing values attached to the importance of education. Even among the young fathers interviewed in this study, one of their dreams for now is to be able to send their children to school.

The boys also consider it too early when the girl is “hindi pa nakakatulong sa magulang” (still unable to help her parents). This refers to the Filipino tradition of “paying back” the parents for the investments they made in taking care of the children and in sending them to school. Hence, a child is expected to finish college, get a job, and help with the expenses or chores in the household for a reasonable period of time before he or she starts his or her own family. For some, it means sending their other siblings to school or helping build the family house before settling down. In the Philippine context, therefore, a teenage pregnancy is like losing an investment for it will damage the girl’s or boy’s ability to “help the parents.”

When asked to compare teenage pregnancy versus that of an adult, the boys came up with a number of differences emphasizing the physical and intellectual aspects. The discourse on teenage pregnancy is replete with references to “mahirap” (difficult) and “hindi pa handa” (not yet ready). They say that it is physically difficult because the young girl will be prone to sickness, spontaneous abortion, and distressful pregnancy. On the intellectual side, the boys think that
pregnant teenagers lack the knowledge to deal with their own illness and pregnancy and are not fully aware of their new responsibilities. All these make them not yet ready for pregnancy. Compared to those who get pregnant when they're older, pregnant teens are "madaling nalolosyang" (quick to lose their grace and beauty) because of severe physical and emotional stress. The boys think that adults who get pregnant have the advantage of experience and maturity which make them more prepared for pregnancy.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of teenage pregnancy, the discourse refers back to the difficulties of early pregnancy. It is noteworthy to mention that no significant advantage is mentioned except to say that teenaged girls who get pregnant do not suffer from edema which shows in the swelling of muscles. The identified disadvantages echo the physical difficulties and intellectual shortcomings mentioned above. In addition, they mentioned the possibility of physical defects on the baby, and the emotional stress brought about by frequent quarrels with the partner. Again, the boys cited being "madaling nalolosyang" as one of the disadvantages. It shows that the boys are aware about the negative impact of stress on the physical condition of the pregnant teenagers. But by focusing on the woman's physical and temporal difficulties, the boys have only vague ideas about the disadvantages of teenage pregnancy on the woman's life in the future.

3. The Boys' Perceptions on the Risks of Teenage Pregnancy

As any student of medical anthropology knows, risks could be construed from personal, political, cultural and epidemiological perspectives. For this study, the concept of risk was studied not as a statistical probability but as a subjective probability which the boys themselves defined. During the discussions with the boys, risk was translated as panganib, literally meaning danger. That is the Tagalog word that comes closest to risk. And so the boys were asked what they think are the panganib (risks) of teenage pregnancy for themselves and the pregnant girls.

The boys appear to have a wide-ranging view about the possible dangers of teenage pregnancy. They know very well that teenage pregnancy will mean teenage parenthood. In fact, being young parents is looked upon as a risk in itself. The boys expressed the risks as:

"Maagang pagkakaroon ng pamilya at pananagutan" (having a family and responsibility too early)

"Mahihirapang gampanan ang pagiging ama" (will find it hard to assume role as father)
As shown above, there is still the notion that pregnancy should lead to marital union or family formation. This belief reflects the common practice among Filipino families of marrying off their daughters who have become pregnant. Marriage is closely linked with pregnancy because traditional values assign marriage as the only context within which sex and pregnancy could happen.

It is interesting to note that while marriage is closely linked with pregnancy, none of the young fathers interviewed for this study is legally married to the mother of his child at the time of the interview. All of them are living-in with their partners. Asked why they refused to marry, the majority said they are not yet ready because they still do not have a job.

Why the boys look at teenage parenthood as risky could be understood in terms of the dangers that they have enumerated. Concerns for economic future dominate the discourse on risks for the boys. There is a strong belief among the boys that in a marital relationship, it is the man who is responsible for providing the family’s basic needs. The economic risks came up repeatedly as these remarks illustrate:

"Hirap sa pera" (will be hard up on money)
"Mahihirapang maghanap ng trabaho" (will find it difficult to find a job)
"Kahirapan" (poverty)

According to someone, economic difficulties will even lead teenage fathers to harm his neighbor or engage in illegal activities in order to survive. Examples mentioned are stealing and selling of illegal drugs. This brings to fore a moral consequence in the discussion of risks.

The concern for economics extends even to their own family’s welfare as expressed in this statement:

"Kung panganay ang nakabuntis, mawawa/an ang pamilya niya ng breadwinner." (If the man who fathered the child is the eldest, his family will lose a breadwinner.)

In traditional families, the eldest child, whether son or daughter, is expected to help in the family finances and by having his or her own family, he or she will no longer be able to help.

Another dominant concern that has relation to their economic future is the risk on education. The boys think that teenage pregnancy may interfere with both the boy’s and the girl’s education which will make it hard for them to find a good job.
Further, the boys are aware about the possible consequences of teenage pregnancy on their relations with people. First, most of them think about the uncertain reactions of their own parents. These statements exemplify such concern:

- “Baka itakwil ng magulang” (Perhaps, the parents might disown)
- “Baka palayasin ng magulang” (Perhaps, the parents will throw [him] out of the house)
- “Baka hindi ako tanggapin ng magulang ko” (Perhaps, my parents will not accept me anymore)

The consistent use of the word “baka” when talking of risks is significant. In Pilipino or Tagalog, the word baka speaks of uncertainty. It could be translated as “perhaps” or “maybe.” Thus, even as the boys talk about the possible negative reactions of their parents, they also express the risk of uncertain future for those involved in teen pregnancies.

Second, the boys are also conscious of the consequences in their social lives. Their friends and peers appear as important actors in their social circle. Besides them, they also worry about the impact of teenage pregnancy on their reputation. Hence, the boys see the following as risks:

- “Bababa ang tingin ng barkada” (The friends will look down [on me].)
- “Imbes na sasama sa barkada, mag-aalaga na lang ng bata” (Will just take care of the baby instead of going with friends.)
- “Mahihiya na sa barkada” (Will be embarrassed to see his friends)

The boys said that a husband and father, is unable to catch up with his friends’ activities which may lead the friends to look down on him. This may give him a feeling of shame before his friends.

In addition, they think that when a boy sires a child out of wedlock, other people will look down on him and this may result in loss of self-confidence. With regard to the marital relationship, the boys think that when a young couple live together as a result of pregnancy, they are likely to have a problematic relationship which might end up in early separation. The boys said that the problematic relationship is a result of unmet material and physical needs, differences in concepts of responsibility, and incomplete level of emotional maturity.

Finally, in conjunction with the above, the boys link teenage pregnancy with the shattering of dreams. This discourse is related to the concept of teenage pregnancy as a kind of “disgrasya” or accident. The boys think that teenage pregnancy may result in:

- “Mawawala ang mga ambisyon” (Loss of ambitions)
- “Masisira ang kinabukasan” (“Broken” future)
The above describes the boys' concept of the risks of teenage pregnancy for themselves. Their perception of risks for the girl who became pregnant revolves around the physical, social, educational, and family concerns.

On the physical aspect, the boys are cognizant of the health risks posed by teenage pregnancy on the girls. They cited the following as possible risks:

Abortion

"Mase-caesarian dahil malili pa ang puwerta" (May deliver by caesarian due to small vaginal canal)

"Magiging matamlayin dahil hindi alam ang kahihinatnan ng panganganak" (Will be sickly due to anxiety about the uncertain result of child birth)

"Magkasakit" (Will get sick)

"Apektado kalusugan ng bata" (The child's health will be affected.)

Someone even said that teenage pregnancy may even cost the life of the girl: maaaring magpakamatay kung hindi niya kagustuhan ang pagbubuntis (she may commit suicide if her pregnancy is unwanted).

While the boys demonstrate general knowledge about the physical and psychological stress brought about by teenage pregnancy on the girls, they are obviously not aware about other specific and more dangerous health risks such as preeclampsia or eclampsia, hemorrhage, infections, and obstructed labor and fistulae – conditions during pregnancy and childbirth that are greater when the woman is below 20 (Melencio and Calagnas: 1992).

Meanwhile, the boys also think that the girl's education is at risk when she falls pregnant.

The discourse on risk is dominated by concern for honor reflecting the boys' consciousness about the social more than the health consequences of early pregnancy. Three of the four focus groups emphasized strong parental reaction as a possible risk. They said the pregnant girl may face these risks:

"Maaring itakwil ng magulang" (May be disowned by her parents)

"Mapapagalitan ng magulang" (Will be scolded by the parents)

"Palalaysin ng magulang" (Will be thrown out of the house by the parents)

"Bumababa ang tingin ng tao sa kanya" (People will look down on her)

"Mapapahiya" (Will be embarrassed)
While the above risks are also mentioned for the boys, they are stressed even more when applied to the girls' situation. This somehow reflects the prevailing societal expectations for women to maintain their chastity until marriage and that failure to do so would be an embarrassment for the family. The phrase *maaaring itakwil* (may be disowned) has been mentioned in almost all groups and the word *itakwil* is a very strong verb to describe the action of a very angry and unforgiving parent who disowns and disinherits a child. In Philippine context, it happens when a son or daughter commits a very serious act causing great dishonor to the family and the way to redeem that honor is to disown the person who caused the embarrassment.

It should be noted too that the term "*mapapahiya*" (from the word root word *hiya* or shame) came out only in the discussion on risks for the girls. The concept of *hiya* was not mentioned for the boys as if to say that teenage pregnancy causes more embarrassment for the girl than for the boy. This same theme appears in the discourse on unsafe sex where the boys differentiated what is *nakakahiya* (embarrassing) for the boys and the girls.

In the consciousness of the boys, the girls who get pregnant do not face economic risks in the same degree as the boys. Hence, the only economic risk mentioned is "*walang pambili ng gatas*" (no money to buy milk [for the baby]). Again, this could be tied in to the prevailing role expectations between the husbands and wives in which the men are expected to be the family's breadwinner and the women as managers of the house.

In a way, the boys' concept of risks vis-à-vis teenage pregnancy defines the conventional places of men and women in Philippine society. Whereas the men are expected to engage in productive roles as the family provider, the women are expected to carry out their reproductive roles as mother and housekeeper. This is reminiscent of the public/private dichotomy espoused by one theoretical position which holds that all societies are divided into a less prestigious domestic (private) world inhabited by women, and a more prestigious public world dominated by men. (Nanda & Warms: 1998). While this is not true everywhere, in many rural areas, the boys are indeed socialized to assume public roles and girls are socialized to take on private roles as mothers and homemakers. This gender divide could be seen in the way the boys of Maragondon construct the concept of risks related to teenage pregnancy. The public/private paradigm is evident in the way the boys stress the economic risks posed by teenage pregnancy to themselves. As shown above, the discourse on risks for the boys is replete with references to difficulties in getting a job.

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and in providing the needs of the family. Whereas for the girls, there is emphasis on the social impact of unwanted pregnancy on the self and family.

For the baby of teenage parents, the boys' concept of risk is framed within the issues of physical survival and the baby's future. The risks are compounded by the young parents' economic handicap and their unpreparedness to bring up a child. The concern for the baby's life and health is evident in these remarks:

"Ipapalaglag. Siguro, hindi pa kaya nung babaeng magka-anak at yung lalake hindi pa kayang panagutan yung anak." (The baby might be aborted. Perhaps, the girl is not yet ready to have a baby and the boy is not ready to take responsibility for the baby.)

"Nagkakasakit yung bata. Napapabayaan ng magulang." (The baby gets sick. The parents are unable to take care of the baby.)

"Sakitin ang baby dahil walang pambili ng vitamins." (The baby becomes sickly because there's no money to buy vitamins.)

"Baka magutom po yung bata." (The child might starve.)

As for the baby's future, the boys make a bleak prognosis:

"Maaaring hindi makapag-aral yung anak dahil wala pang sapat na trabaho ang magulang." (The child may not be able to attend school because the parents do not have a stable job.)

"Yung karapatan niya bilang bata, maaari pong hindi mapasakanya /ahat. Siempre po, kailangan ng bata ang tamang atensyon, tamang pagkain para sa kalusugan, edukasyon. Maaari pong lumaki siyang walang pinag-aralan." (The baby may not get his rights as a child. Of course, the child needs appropriate attention, the right kinds of food, and education. The child might grow up without proper education.)

When the issue of avoiding the risks of teenage pregnancy was raised, the boys offered a range of suggestions for both the teenage boys and girls as well as their parents. For themselves and the girls, the boys' discourse could be grouped into two semantic themes: avoiding sex, and if it doesn't work, have "responsible sex." To avoid sex, they recommended avoiding the stimuli for sex and getting preoccupied with other things. If they couldn't help it, the boys said they should try safe sex and just be ready before having sex.

The boys pointed to a number of factors that motivate them to try sex and according to them, these stimuli should be avoided if they want to avoid the risks of teenage pregnancy or parenthood. One of the stimuli to be avoided is pornographic materials which include erotic films.
and reading materials. In the words of the informants, these materials have these effects on the boys:

"Halimbawa yung isang lalake na-expose sa mga pornographic materials, di andon pa yon sa katawan niya. Tapos may girlfriend siya, tetestingin yung nasa pornographic materials, mga x-rated movies, magazine, Hustler." (If a man is exposed to pornographic materials, it [referring to lust] is in his body. Then, if he has a girlfriend, he will try what's in the pornographic materials, erotic movies, magazine, Hustler.)

"Merong epekto ang mga bold na palabas – yung lalake. Pag may girlfriend, magpaparaos." (Erotic movies have an effect – lust. If one has a girlfriend, he will have sex with her.)

To complement the "don'ts," the boys also mentioned the "do's." To avoid sex, they said they should preoccupy themselves with things such as schooling which is always expressed in the exhortation “tapusin muna ang pag-aaral" (finish schooling first) and sports.

The boys mentioned a repertoire of practices related to safe sex. Many expressed openness to use condom. Other fertility regulation methods that were suggested include pills, withdrawal and rhythm. Some also suggested “tiis muna" meaning abstinence. One suggestion that always elicited laughter and amusement whenever it is mentioned is “masturbation" as if everyone’s funny secret is thrown out in the open. They never mentioned the word masturbation or its common Tagalog equivalents. Instead, they used a local euphemism for masturbation which is “magsarili" (meaning "to be by one's self") or “magsolo" (to go solo).

For those who could not do the above, the boys admonished preparation. In their words, "Kailangan, iplano muna ang lahat." (It is necessary to plan for everything first.)

"Bago mag-sex, isipin mo yung mga possibilities. Halimbawa, pag nabuntis yung girl, magkakaroon ka ng responsibilidad bilang tatay." (Think of the possible consequences before having sex. For instance, you will have the responsibility of a father if you get the girl pregnant.)

The words of one respondent probably sum up what the boys mean by preparation:

"Kailangan, maging handa bago siya mag-asawa, bago siya makipag-sex. Kailangan may trabaho na. Ayos na yung buhay niya. Komportable at saka handang-handa na siya." (Before one gets married, before having sex, he should have a job. His life is in order. Comfortable and really prepared.)

One of the boys had words for the parents, too. He said "yung mga magulang, kailangang ibigay ang lahat ng alensyon sa anak" (parents [of teenagers] should give their full attention to their [adolescent] children).
As a whole, the boys are aware that the risks of teenage pregnancy have social, moral, and economic dimensions that impact on the present and future lives of both girls and boys. These risks, according to them, are shared by themselves, their partners, the baby, and their family. The risks, however, are demarcated along gender lines which emphasize the perceived roles of men and women in the traditional mould. To avoid the risks of teenage pregnancy, the boys were practical enough to recommend both abstinence and responsible sex.

4. Responsibility and Teenage Pregnancy From the Lens of the Boys

The boys in the FGDs were asked “In a situation where a boy got his girlfriend pregnant, what do you think are his responsibilities?”

There were three thematic responses that came out of the boys’ narratives on responsibility towards teenage pregnancy. In essence, these responses have something to do with the baby, marriage, and denial.

The majority of responses give a picture of a highly pro-natalist stance. In all FGD groups and even with the interviews, the boys’ discourse is replete with concern for the baby’s welfare. Illustrative of these responses were:

“Sagutin ang pangangailangan ng magiging anak.” (Provide for the baby’s needs.)
“Sustentuhuan ang anak.” (Provide allowance to the baby.)
“Alagaan ang magiging anak.” (Take care of the baby.)
“Bigyan ng magandang kinabukasan ang bata.” (Give the baby a bright future.)
“Pag lumabas ang baby, ibili ng mga gamit.” (When the baby comes out, buy baby stuff.)

The above statements were repeated in one way or another in the various groups. Such statements indicate that in the minds of the boys, responsibility is equated with accountability for the baby’s welfare over and above anything. They believe that whether they decide to live with/marry the girl or not, they should provide for the baby’s needs.

The baby’s prominence in the boys’ discourse on responsibility points to the symbolic value of a child for Filipino men. Medina (1991) wrote that in the Philippines, children are looked upon as a sort of investment, source of happiness, and a symbol of masculinity on the part of the father. Besides, the birth of a child is always greeted with alacrity because of the hope that this baby symbolizes.
The high importance given to the baby's welfare could also be a reflection of what Tan et al. describes as the "reproductive imperative" (ibid.) of Philippine culture. The country's high fertility rate of 4.7 (NSO: 2001) and the Filipino men's fixation to prove that they are not "baog" (infertile) are some of the manifestations of this cultural bias. In fact, the Tagalog word for family is *mag-anak* from the root word *anak*, meaning "child." In short, the Filipino family becomes a family when there is a child in it. Given the importance of reproductive productivity in the Philippine society, providing for the baby is therefore a responsibility that many boys think they must assume.

Ruel, one of the informants who fathered a child when he was 17, quarreled with his partner who attempted to abort their baby. He explained:

"*kasi mahal ko 'yung syota ko at saka, at saka 'yung bata wala namang kinalaman doon sa ano eh... kung ipalalaglag niya ang bata, kung ayaw niya sa bata, ibigay na lang niya sa akin. Kasi nakakaawa 'yung bata eh, bata kasi 'yon eh, hindi naman hayop 'yun eh*." (because I love my girlfriend, and besides, the baby had nothing to do with it... if she will abort the baby, if she does not like to have the baby, she should give it to me. It's because the baby is pitiful, it's a baby, not an animal).

In contrast, the discourse about responsibility had very few references to living with the girl and in most cases, it is a statement against marriage. Two kinds of responses are typical: live with the girl (no marriage) and marry the girl at the right time. Always, the immediate response of the boys was "pakisamahan ang babae" (live with the girl without marriage). If ever marriage was mentioned, it was timidly suggested or always conditional. One of the very few respondents who mentioned marriage said:

"*Siguro po dapat niyang pakasalan yung babae at suportahan yung magiging anak.*" (Maybe, he should marry the girl and support the child.)

*Siguro* is a term equivalent to *perhaps* or *maybe* and it expresses uncertainty. By constructing the above response in the context of uncertainty, this boy verbalized the ambiguity felt by many other respondents regarding responsibility towards teenage pregnancy.

The conditions for taking up responsibility are varied: if money is available, when a job is secured, when the right age is reached, at the right time, and when paternity of the baby is established. This is how the boys constructed their responses along this theme:

"*Pakisamahan, hindi kasal dahil parehong under-age.*" (Just live with the girl without marriage because we're both underaged.)

"*Pakasalan kung may pera; kung wala, mag-iron mun."* (Marry the girl if there's money; if none, save money first.)
"Maghanap ng trabaho bago magpakasal." (Find a job first before getting married.)

"Pakisalan ang babae pero depende sa pag-uusap ng magulang." (Marry the girl but it all depends on the negotiation of the parents.)

"Pag-isipan muna talaga kung ako ang tatay bago magpakasal." (Before marrying, make sure that I am the father of the baby.)

"Hindi magpapakasal kung nabuntis lang pero hindi naman mahal ang isa't isa" (Will not marry if both do not really love each other even if she became pregnant.)

"Hintayin ang tamang panahon bago magpakasal." (Wait for the right time before getting married.)

It is quite tempting to believe that the boys are not trying to give "correct" responses because the socially acceptable norm based on tradition would be to marry the pregnant girl. It is not uncommon for parents of the pregnant girl to demand formal marriage from the boy because of the prevailing belief that the family honor is at stake if their daughter becomes a single mother. By limiting their responsibility to providing for the baby's needs and just cohabiting with his baby's mother, the boys are taking a more independent stance away from expected norm. One could sense that the boys are trying to frame responsibility as their prerogative. The case of the four fathers in this study who are living-in with their partners without formal marriage attest to this stand.

For these boys love, trust, and economic reasons appear to be the deciding factors in taking up responsibility. Ricky, who became a father at 16, said of his decision to live with her girlfriend as "Mahal ko siya, hindi ko siya tatakbuhan, walang kinalaman ang bata doon." (I love her, I will not run away from her, the baby had nothing to do with it.) Another young father, Rolly, said the same why he decided to live with his partner: "Mahal ko siya talaga kaya pananagutan ko ang narigya. Kung ano ang ginawa mo, panagutan mo." (I really love her that's why I will take responsibility for what happened. Be responsible for what you did.) Meanwhile, Danilo denied responsibility for the baby of his girlfriend because as he said "Puwede kong panagutan pero wala pa akong trabaho. At tsaka hindi ko sigurado kung may iba pang laaking nakagalaw sa kanya." (I can take up the responsibility but I do not have a job yet. Besides, I am not sure if there are other men who had sex with her.) By saying "I don't know if other men had sex with her" Danilo is echoing what most boys said about trust: it is knowing that he is the only man in the woman's life or more specifically that he is the only guy who is having sex with her. Dencio got his friend pregnant while he was drunk and he ran away from responsibility because "wala kaming relasyon, di ko
naman po talaga kagustuhan yon” (we don’t have a relation, I really did not intend it to happen). As Danilo and Dencio demonstrate, denial of responsibility is based on the absence of love and trust as well as financial ability to support a family.

The talk away from marriage when the girl gets pregnant could also be a function of economics. Having come mostly from the low-income strata, the boys’ concept of responsibility may be limited by what is economically viable in their situation. By saying “Pakasalan kung may pera; kung wala, mag-pon muna” (Marry the girl if there’s money; if none, save money first) this boy is expressing the general belief that it is costly to get married and even more costly to keep a family. Marriage is, thus, rarely an option for most poor people. The concern for marriage at the “right time” and “right age” echoes the same sentiment. For the boys, the “right time” or “right age” is when they have finished college and has a good job which will then enable them to fulfill their responsibilities in the family. These ideas are discussed further in the next section.

Fundamentally, the boys are willing to take up responsibility but they are constrained by economic considerations. Nonetheless, most of the boys spoken to who have fathered a child decide to live with their partner and take care of the baby even if it means having to rely on their parent’s support temporarily. Thus, to accommodate the problem, most young fathers would live with their own family who help them fill their needs. This is the case for all young fathers interviewed in this study. Their stories show that these young fathers would do everything possible to take up responsibility for their child and their partners.

Hence, in a situation where they have gotten someone pregnant, the boys’ concept of responsibility boils down to two options: live or not live with the girl. Depending on the given conditions, living with the girl could mean marriage or cohabitation which could later result in marriage. As shown above, the absence of love and trust could drive the boy away from the girl. But certain conditions would also prompt him to provide her with support from a distance. However, in either option, support for the baby always appears in the discourse. From their own words, the extreme case of not providing support to either the girl or the baby happens only in certain cases like when the girl who gets pregnant is a pokopok, a derogatory term for a prostitute or woman who is having sex with many men, and in the absence of a conscious and mutual agreement to have sex. According to one informant, “kapag pokopok ang nabuntis, di ko yon pananagutan; tatakbuhan ko dahil pakawala siya” (If the girl I got pregnant is a prostitute, I will not take responsibility for it; I will run away because she is a whore). As Dencio said, in explaining why he ran away:
"... Di ko naman po talaga kagustuhan 'yon. Siguro po siya, siya na rin ang may gusto noon dahil kung ayaw niya talaga, di naman siya gaanong lasing eh...Tinanong niya sa akin kung ano ang gagawin niya. Sabi ko 'ewan ko sa iyo, basta ako, hindi ko alam yung ginagawa ko ng mga oras na iyon, noong araw na iyon ikaw ang lumaro doon kaya nasa iyo ang pastya kung ano ang gagawin mo.'" (I really did not intend that to happen. Maybe, it was she who really likes that because if she really didn't like it, well she was not really drunk then. She asked me what to do. I told her 'I don't know, as for me I was not conscious of what I was doing at that time. On that day, it was you who played the game so it's up to you what you want to do.)

The boys' thinking on this matter could be illustrated as follows:

Figure 3. The Boys' Concept of Responsibility Towards Teenage Pregnancy

- Live with the girl
  - Marriage
  - Cohabitation

- Not live with the girl
  - Support the baby
  - Provide girl's needs
  - No support for either baby or girl

In essence, their concept of responsibility towards teenage pregnancy is slanted towards the welfare of the baby. Marriage is their prerogative and it is embedded within the concept of right time, right condition, and even right person.

5. The Boys' Concept of Fatherhood

Informants were asked what they think are the right age and conditions for becoming a father. There is consensus on the right age for becoming a father and everyone agrees that it is after 20. The ages mentioned range from 21 to 30. Normally in the Philippines, a person finishes college at 20 and in effect, the boys are saying that the right age for becoming a father is after obtaining a college degree.

The high value given by the boys to schooling mirrors the general sentiment of Philippine society towards education which is looked upon as a stepping stone to quality life. Two basic requisites appeared consistently in all discussions about the right conditions for fatherhood: *tapos na sa pag-aaral* (has finished college) and *may magandang trabaho na* (has a good job). These two are actually tied together because a college degree is seen as the key to getting a good job.
The boys mentioned conditions related to economic stability, education, emotional readiness, and others. Of these conditions, the boys in all groups stressed economic stability. They said that for someone to be ready for fatherhood, these conditions must be met:

"Kaya nang bumuhay ng pamilya" (Able to support a family)
"May matatag nang trabaho" (Has a stable job)
"Kaya nang mamousu at ang magiging anak" (Able to pay for expenses of the child)
"Nakaibon na" (Has saved money)

The boys’ emphasis on the ability of a man to feed and support a family before he can become a father mirrors the prevailing gender differentiation in Philippine society. As previously mentioned, one of the benchmarks for “pagkalalake” (maleness) cited by rural men in one study is the ability to raise a family (Santiago: 1982). The responsibility to provide for the family’s basic needs is thus assigned to the man. This provider image of a father may be so daunting for young men that many of them have ambivalent notions about assuming responsibility for a pregnancy as explained in the previous section.

Quite pervasive in the boys’ discourse is the ambiguous feeling towards responsibility such that pregnancy and fatherhood seem to be like strange bedfellows. On the one hand, most of them view pregnancy with trepidation because of the responsibility that it brings. On the other hand, all the boys interviewed in this study said that they felt “happy” upon knowing that they have become fathers. Hence, while the pregnancy of their partners is something they dread, fatherhood is a welcome event. When asked what makes them happy about being a father, the boys said it is in knowing that they are “hindi baog” (not infertile) which they say puts them on a higher status. According to one informant, proving one’s fertility is important because without it “parang hindi ka buhay sa mundo” (it is as if you are not alive in this world).

The boys are aware that being a father requires mental and emotional maturity. Thus, they also mentioned the following as prerequisites for fatherhood:

"Nasa wastong isip na” (intellectually mature).
"May paninindigan” (Has a strong will)
"Matatag sa mga pagsubok” (Able to endure trials)

4 The minimum legal age for marriage in the Philippines, according to The New Family Code, is 18. Between the ages of 18 to 20, marriage license would only be given if there is parental consent. From ages 21 to 24, parental advice is required.
Another concept which came out strongly in at least two focus groups is the idea that one has to help his parents first before thinking of settling down. In addition to financial capability and emotional maturity, the boys added “dapat nakatulong na sa magulang” (he should have helped the parents already) and “kayang suportahan ang magulang at sariling pamilya” (able to support both parents and own family) as right conditions for becoming a father. This concept of helping the parents is especially true for poor to middle class families where the children who are sent to college are expected to help send their siblings to school once they finish college and start earning. Once this is fulfilled, they are free to marry. Most rich families do not observe this practice since the parents are able to pay for all children’s education and other family expenses.

One dissenting voice appeared in the discussion on the right conditions for fatherhood. Speaking with conviction, he took a more practical view by saying “hindi importante ang may trabaho o nakatapos ng pag-aaral, ang mahalaga may lakas ng loob, may tapang at may pananagutan” (having a job or finishing college are not important; what matters more is that he has inner strength, is courageous, and is responsible enough). Interestingly, this comment came from a college student and his remark seems to mirror what is actually happening with many boys who plunge into teenage parenthood without the benefit of education and stable occupation.

The boys are divided on the advantages of being a young father. Among those who have not experienced fatherhood, opinions vary but for those who are already fathers, there is a consensual view.

The majority say that “wala, mahirap” (none, it's difficult), being a young father has no advantage mainly because:

“walang muwang na bumuhay ng pamilya” (he does not know how to keep a family)
“mahirap, aasa lang sa magulang” (it's hard, he will just rely on his parents)
“mahihirapan sa pag-aaral” (he will find it difficult to continue schooling)

For the young fathers, everyone agrees that there is no advantage in being a young father. Among the reasons cited include: “dahil hindi pa tapos ang pagbibinata” (because my life as a bachelor is not yet finished) and “medyo nahihilig pa ako sa tropa” (I still love to go with my friends.)

Only three conditions were mentioned as giving advantage to young fathers. The optimists see that because of the small age gap, there will be greater bonding between the child and the father. Another advantage that they see is that the youth of the father makes him more able to take
care of his child. Someone also mentioned that the father will still be young when his child starts working which means the father can still enjoy the fruits of his investment on this child.

According to the young fathers themselves, being a young father has many difficulties and they constructed their responses along three semantic themes: economic constraints, limited social life, and emotional problems.

The economic difficulties are mainly related to problems in getting a job and being broke. Job/Work was a big issue for many of them. The difficulties that were cited include the following:

- "walang trabaho" (no job)
- "walang pera, nangungutang" (no money, always in debt)
- "walang makuhang magandang trabaho" (could not find a good job)
- "mahirap bumuhay ng pamilya" (it's hard to support a family)
- "hindi ko pa kayang magtrabaho" (I am not capable of working yet.)

The young fathers also cited the toll exacted by fatherhood on their social lives. They said that it limits their choices and the world they move in. The restrictions are:

- "hindi makapag-gala" (could no longer gallivant)
- "hindi na magawa ang gustong gawin" (is no longer able to do what he wants to do)
- "hindi na makakasama sa barkada" (could no longer go with his buddies)

As far as emotional problems are concerned, the boys mentioned the difficulties of relating with their partners which results in frequent quarrels over jealousy, child minding, and household chores. They attribute the recurrent tiffs to their lack of emotional maturity and preparation for family life (hindi pa handang magpamilya).

Talking about the idea of a model father appeared to be the hardest part for the boys. For this question, only the young fathers were asked and they spoke with difficulty. They asked to repeat the question, needed more explanation on the question, grappled for words, stared down, lost track, and needed more time to answer. These verbal and non-verbal language may indicate an internal struggle between what they want to be and who they are at the moment. At this stage in their lives, most of them admitted being not yet fully ready to bring up a family.

What they said about the ideal father conforms to the traditional gender roles assigned to the husbands. In essence, they are saying that a model father is a provider, protector, and disciplinarian of the family. What they said about these roles are summarized in this table:
Table 2. The Boys' Concept of Model Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Protector</th>
<th>Disciplinarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• May trabaho (has a job)</td>
<td>• Ipagtatanggol ang anak sa disgrasya (will defend child during accident)</td>
<td>• Istriktong, pinagbabawalan ang anak sa di dapat (strict, forbids child from doing improprieties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pinag-aaral ang anak (sends children to school)</td>
<td>• Hindi sinasaktan ang anak (does not beat up his child)</td>
<td>• Pinag-aaral ang anak (takes children to school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May ibibigay na magandang kinabukasan sa anak: kayang pag-aralin at ibigay ang pangangailangan (able to give bright future to children: can send them to school and provide for their needs)</td>
<td>• Minsan lang mamalo pangangailangan (able to meet needs)</td>
<td>• Nagpapaliwanag sa mga bata kung nag-aaway (talks to the children when they quarrel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the hegemonic role assigned to the fathers, one boy's ideas seem to negate the others. He said that a model father is one who is “sumusunod sa kanyang asawa” (obeys his wife), “sambot ang mga gawaing bahay” (takes care of household chores) and “kaya siya ng isang babae” (a woman can manage him). He explained that his ideal man is one who is self-controlled but he and his wife should have an understanding of what one should do.

In addition, the boys came up with a list of characteristics that make an ideal father. These include: not a drinker; patient; obedient to his wife; helps in the house; kind; no vices; faithful; and good family man. Apparently, the boys have set a high standard for the model father and they themselves find it difficult to achieve their own yardstick. When asked which of those do they find difficult to accomplish, many said it is to be a good provider, knowing that in their present status as school drop-outs and bereft of any resource to start a livelihood, it is indeed hard to find a source of income. They also find it difficult to enforce discipline for their child and to avoid vices such as drinking and smoking.

They suggested a number of things that they could do to become a model father. The most common of these is: “get a job and work hard.” Other suggestions include: maging masipag (be...
industrious); mag-family planning (practice family planning); magsikap (strive hard); magsama-sama lagi sa bahay (gather in the house all the time); and magtapos ng pag-aaral, magtiyaga kahit may anak na (finish school, be patient even if already a father).

For the boys, their concept of a model father reflects the traditional father image in Philippine society, that of the proverbial “haligi ng tahanan” (the walls of the home). This symbolism captures the role of the father as the one who provides shelter, comfort, and protection to his family. Without adequate means of livelihood, the young fathers find it hard to be that kind of father. This is congruent with prevailing gender relations among Filipino families where husbands are expected to be the economic provider (Medina: 1991).

Conclusion

The study depicts the respondents as bound by a shared culture transcending differences in age or educational status. There is remarkable coherence in the core themes and issues that emerged from the boys’ discourse. Indeed, it shows that they do operate in “barkada” (peer) system where everyone shares group values and realizations.

Many indications point to one major factor which leads adolescent boys to unsafe sex: loss of control over themselves. This is manifested in a number of elements such as alcohol and drugs, peer pressure, kati or curiosity with sex, and pornographic media. Of these, the barkada pressure appears to have the strongest influence. The need to belong to a group is so strong among adolescents and it manifests in the formation of “barkada” which is a group of intimate friends. For many males, the barkada offers an egalitarian refuge where they could experiment and test the limits of culturally acceptable behaviors. To be a part of the barkada is to conform to its ideals and it means giving in to group pressure as a means of preserving the bond of solidarity. This is not to say that the barkada system is intrinsically flawed for it also serves as an institution for better socialization and integration of young men to the larger community (Dumont: 1993). The group norms plus the other factors exert so much influence in their decision making process and giving in to these elements results in the loss of control over their cognitive and emotional faculties. As this
study revealed, many of the boys' first experience in sex and the repeat encounters were prompted mainly by the barkada's "kantiyaw" (teasing) and prodding.

Aside from the loss of control, relational problems with parents who are overly strict or weak also lead boys to rebel against their parents and getting into vices (e.g. alcohol and drugs) or getting someone pregnant seems to be a potent tool to get back at their parents.

Gender issues resonate in many of the boys' beliefs. Many of them think that it is only "normal" if a boy gets someone pregnant. One of the respondents says that that boy is "lalakeng-lalake." There is nothing unusual about it, the boys said. Lalake is the term for man and in the Filipino language, when a word is repeated, it multiplies the degree of the word's literal meaning. However, for the girl who gets pregnant, some boys say she is a flirt or wild. Meanwhile, for some boys, having sex with their girlfriends puts a "seal of ownership" on the girls. It is for them a means of guaranteeing that the girl will be theirs alone. It appears that for some boys, sex is power because it "secures" their "ownership" of the girl's body and life.

There is however, no common stand on premarital sex among the boys. Among those who are attending school, many believe that if a boy truly respects a girl, he will not force or seduce her into having sex with him.

The rural boys think that teenage pregnancy is a kind of "disgrasya," a term that has double meaning. The word means "fall from grace" but it also means an accident or an unfortunate event that is not intended. For the boys, the use of the term disgrasya takes the meaning of "an accident" and not a "fall from grace" as Tan et al's urban respondents said in Love and Desire (2001). The concept of accident becomes clear once the context of unsafe sex is established. The boys engage in sex only to "try" and "taste" what it feels like. In most cases, they only want to know what it's like to have sex and they have no intention of getting their partners pregnant. With this as the primary motive, they therefore do not use contraceptives especially condom because it diminishes the real taste of sex. Besides, most sexual encounters among teens are not planned. According to their stories, it begins with teasing, then kissing, followed by "kapaan" (touching the organ), "hubaran" (undressing each other) until finally they reach the point of no return. Once the girl gets pregnant, the boys say it is "hindi sinasadya" (unintentional). By adopting this meaning, the boys are subtly challenging the moralistic view which casts teenage pregnancy as a breach of morality since most of these cases happen outside of marriage. It appears from the boys' rhetoric that teenage pregnancy is more the result of an unguarded moment rather than an unguarded
morality. This shows an effort to cultivate new idioms for what were earlier considered plainly moral axioms.

While there is general agreement on the use of the term “disgrasya” for teenage pregnancy, those who had become fathers said that when they found out about the pregnancy of their partners, they felt “masarap” (literally means delicious). They said it is masarap because they have already proven their virility, they've got a baby, and that they have become fathers. One can see therefore that for the boys, pregnancy is both an event synonymous to accident and at the same time one that brings about good feelings. The teenage fathers may have no academic degrees or a good job to speak of but they take pride in having a baby. This tells us that for these boys, there are positive outcomes of teenage pregnancy which may even outweigh the negative consequences. For instance, the birth of a baby has a positive connotation not only because of its symbolic value for their masculinity but also the hope that each child represents. Since the future of most rural boys particularly those who dropped from school are uncertain anyway, there seems to be a value in having a baby as it signifies a chance for better future.

Historically, there was little opportunity for work in the rural areas outside of agriculture. Hence, boys and girls who are poor and unschooled had little motivation for pursuing higher education and early marriages were not uncommon. Besides, the birth of a baby was always welcome as it meant extra hands in the farm sooner or later. With growth and industrialization benefitting only a few places today, rural areas like Maragondon may continue to value big family size because family members are important sources of assistance in times of need. Big family size means starting a family early. For these boys then, early fatherhood may not be a totally negative idea. Nonetheless, the boys are indeed ambivalent because they see a positive value in early fatherhood but they clearly see the social and economic consequences of such responsibility. The talk about “risks” should therefore be shifted to talk about “consequences” to include both the positive and negative outcomes of teenage pregnancy. As a matter of fact, the rural boys could even see some risks such as early fatherhood as an advantage.

The study shows the emphasis of boys on the social consequences of teenage parenthood more than anything else. They know that once it happens, their schooling will be sacrificed. This is true both for the girl and the boy. The young fathers know by experience that because of incomplete education, they will find it hard to get a good job. Without the means to support his baby and partner, they will end up living on the graces of his own parents or those of the girl. That is if
their parents come to their rescue. Some of the boys know that when an unintended pregnancy happens, some parents would disown or send their child away. In a sense, the concern with parental sanctions may mean that the family could serve as a restraining force for delaying sex or pregnancy among young people. Meanwhile, the domestic concerns plus their difficult economic situation adversely affect their social lives and their relations with other people.

For the girl, the boys think that teenage pregnancy could mean losing face and suffering the ire of her parents. A few of the boys also exhibit awareness about the physical dangers of teenage pregnancy. Some mentioned abortion, difficult labor, being sickly, and a weak baby as the possible consequences.

Looking now at the boys' own views, this is what came out to be the important factors regarding the issue of teenage pregnancy:

**Figure 4. The Boys' Conceptual Framework of Teenage Pregnancy**

Compared to my earlier framework (Figure 1), the boys' discourse did not mention many of the socio-cultural factors and the lack of access to contraceptive information and services that were
presumed to play important roles in their sexual experiences. However, they added new dimensions to the socio-cultural factors through their concept of love and sex, the value attached to a baby, and the barkada system. Further, they identified kati and curiosity/experimentation as well as influence of alcohol and drugs as some of the other factors that lead them to unprotected sex. Among the consequences of teenage parenthood, the boys emphasized the social costs brought about by peer ostracism and shame for them and their families. They also pointed out the "positive" outcomes as mentioned earlier. There was very little talk about the medical risks of early pregnancy.

The boys do not have an absolute view of responsibility towards teenage pregnancy. What is clear to most of them is that they are first and foremost responsible for the baby no matter what. They challenge traditional family values by saying that marriage does not necessarily come with pregnancy. They are willing to live with the girl but marriage will come only when they become ready and sure of themselves. They are willing to assume responsibility for the baby and the girl if they love her and know that she is not promiscuous. Otherwise, the boys say "I will run away."

In a way, the boys' views about responsibility towards teenage pregnancy reveals certain ideas about being man. In their discourse, pregnancy becomes a litmus test that separates the "good" man from the "bad" man. At one level, pregnancy spells the difference between who is "normal" and who is not. Those who have gotten someone pregnant are seen as being "normal" and "really manly." Thus, the pregnancy of a partner becomes a compliment to a man's masculinity. At another level, he assumes a greater worth as a person if he takes up responsibility for the pregnancy of his partner. Such man has "strong inner self," and "strong will." He is seen as a "real man." On the contrary, a man who runs away from his responsibility is "walang kuwenta" (worthless), "walanghiya" (shameless), "manggagamit" (exploiter), and "mayabang" (boastful).

Thus, despite the complexities of the situation, most boys would in the end go to the side of taking up responsibility to protect the welfare of the child and also his masculinity. They would seek help from their own family in order to accommodate the problem. This attitude of the Filipino rural boys contrasts with the findings presented at a UNFPA regional workshop on adolescent reproductive health for Asian and Pacific island countries. The UNFPA (2000) reported that in these places, "Invariably, the males took little or no responsibility toward the outcome of their behaviour... Men commonly denied responsibility for a pregnancy or enticed a girl with a promise of marriage only to acknowledge later that they did not love the girl or that they were unprepared for the
responsibilities of marriage." Going a bit further, what the boys in this study demonstrated is also different from what Anja Krumeich (1994) saw among Caribbean young men in Dominica. Krumeich's life stories are replete with young mothers who had to fend for themselves and their babies because the boys who got them pregnant absconded and never helped them. In contrast, the Filipino rural boys in this study are willing to take up responsibility as fathers but the real constraint is to have an income.

In the discussion of both consequences and responsibility towards teenage pregnancy, the boys' rhetoric mirrors the gender stereotypes that define the conventional roles of men and women in Philippine society. The boys' discourse has often portrayed man in his productive role and the woman in her reproductive and domestic role. This is consistent with existing gender relations in Filipino homes where fathers are morally obliged to provide economic security to their families. Whereas, responsibility for homemaking usually falls on the wife.

When prompted by the researcher to cite ways to avoid the consequences of unsafe sex, the boys suggested a number of ideal and practical recommendations. These include: safe sex (such as use of condom, masturbation, and abstinence), avoid pornographic materials which the boys acknowledged as effective triggers of their sexual desires, finish schooling first, and think about the consequences before getting into sex. They are also suggesting to avoid the teasing of friends, those who serve as pimps, staying out late in the night (apparently most sexual escapades take place in the night), and school parties during which the boys said many sexual encounters happen.

The boys' ideas about fatherhood reveal their ambivalent feelings toward themselves and the relationships they get into. On the one hand, they dread the prospect of being a teenage father as it means a big responsibility that is still beyond their reach. By relying on their parent's support, they appear to others as irresponsible. On the other hand, they think that the pregnancy of their partners is a valuable proof of their virility which to most of them is synonymous to their value as a human being. A boy who has gotten someone pregnant feels both an elevation of status and a loss of good image before their family and friends.

The boys think that teenagers (those aged 13-19) are not yet ready to become fathers or mothers. They all believe that one has to complete education and find a good job before settling down. In addition, many think that they have to help their parents first. They equate fatherhood with the responsibility to provide for the family's material as well as emotional and intellectual needs.
which most of them admit is hard to accomplish for teenage fathers. The boys say they don't see any advantage in being a young father or a young mother. According to them, being a teenage father means finding it hard to get a job and the inability to catch up with the friends' social events which would mean being outside of the circle. The only advantage mentioned in the discussions is the possible closer bonding between the teenage parents and their child due to small age gap.

This research established that the rural boys are constructing new idioms in defining teenage sexuality. For the boys, sex is powerfully tempting because of its putative pleasure and its symbolic value for a man's masculinity. There is an apparent effort to detach teenage pregnancy from the issue of morality and instead look at it as an unexpected consequence of a natural craving or at times the accidental firing of his "or-gun" inside the woman. While they see it more as an "accident," it is also seen as an achievement that affirms their masculinity. When it happens, the boys indicate that they are willing to take up responsibility and albeit the economic constraints, they find their own ways to accommodate the problem such as seeking help from their parents. They also believe that responsibility does not automatically mean marriage, hence, adding new dimension even to the concept of responsibility.

So, shall I call them 'boys' or 'men'? In the Philippines, young males in the teenage years (13-19) are generally looked upon as boys. They are considered as being in the early process of personal maturation and mostly concerned only with the here and now. Boys are seen as impulsive and still developing their sense of responsibility. In contrast, those males past the teenage years are considered adults. By showing stability in their decision-making patterns, taking hard responsibilities and thinking more of the future, among others, these adults are labelled as men. However, my findings question the normative definition of what is a teenager and who is an adult. The informants in this study are ambivalent. On the one hand, they are teenagers and the juvenile thoughts are very much apparent in their perspectives about sex which to most of them is like a game of trial and error. Many of them, too, do not have yet a firm concept of what it is to be an ideal father. On the other hand, they have aspirations for the future and take a deep look at the consequences of early pregnancy. They also take a relatively mature perspective about responsibility. In fact, the teenage fathers I encountered in this study are doing their roles seriously though with some economic difficulties. Hence, the persons I met in this research could not be strictly categorized as either boys or men. I rather see them as persons in transition, wanting to prove that they are men indeed.
The recommendations are divided into two parts: one refers to some academic suggestions which might be useful for the conduct of similar studies in the future; the other points to some programmatic recommendations dealing with educational interventions that may be considered by program planners and implementers of adolescent reproductive health programs.

One of the limitations of this study is that no attempt was made to study how the meanings submitted by the boys are formed. It would be interesting to know in future studies where the rural boys get their information about sex and sexuality, where their ideas about pregnancy, fatherhood, and responsibility come from, how these ideas are filtered and mediated, and how the various channels of information influence their thinking. It is therefore recommended that these aspects be examined in future studies. This would make our understanding of the meanings more thorough resulting in more precise applications of the findings.

Regarding methodology, a combination of focus group discussions (FGD) and individual interviews is recommended when doing research on sensitive topics such as those that will touch upon people's sexual experiences. This study showed that FGDs are useful in constructing natural language because of the open and interactive environment present in-group discussions where everyone is almost equal. Its drawback is that people tend to construct a public discourse which is not necessarily consistent with what they say in more private conversations. In a group discussion, there is always the temptation to conform to what many are saying or to paint a more socially acceptable image of themselves. Those who take another opinion or who feel embarrassed may be discouraged to state their real views. In individual interviews, those information or ideas that are withheld in public discussions come out. Hence, the triangulation of data collection approaches is recommended as well.

As far as programmatic recommendations are concerned, the researcher offers the following interventions for male-specific adolescent reproductive health programs:

1. **Enable young men to negotiate successfully with their peers**

   As this study showed, a lot of happenings in the boy's adolescent life, including the first sexual encounters, are peer-controlled or peer-organized. Because being "in" is important to young men, it is difficult to be a maverick even when they know that some things are getting to be too risky. Youth programs should therefore teach boys how to assert their independence when they
feel that their values are being compromised. One of the ways to accomplish this is to teach them with negotiating skills that will help them stick to what they think is good for them without necessarily antagonizing the group spirit. They should be made aware that it is ok to be different when their future is at stake.

2. Implement culturally-appropriate and male-specific safe sex education program

By now, it should be clear that health communication programs for men should recognize the difference between young men’s needs from those of young women. This calls for male-specific messages and approaches that are anchored on young men’s needs and consciousness.

For boys who are unable to abstain from sex for various reasons, they should know that there are safer means of having sex other than their favorite withdrawal method. Many of the boys in this study expressed genuine fear for the pregnancy of their partners. Their fear is founded on the fact that they are not economically or emotionally ready to assume responsibilities for the baby and its mother. Despite this, they remain curious and do engage in unprotected sex in their quest for “sarap” (pleasure) and manhood. Safe sex program for young men could dwell on these cultural concepts of “sarap” and teenage pregnancy as an “accident” in some ways. The boys themselves should be made to realize that what is truly “masarap” (pleasurable) is when they don’t have to worry about the social, economic, and physical consequences of their acts such as embarrassment, pregnancy, or dropping from school to find work. Aside from being “safe,” protection should be related also with “sarap” (pleasure). But in addition to the basic abc’s (abstinence, condom, being faithful) of safe sex, such programs should also include natural methods such as rhythm for double protection. They should also be comprehensive enough to teach boys even the women’s fertility cycle since many of them have no clear idea as to when a woman can get pregnant.

Safe sex programs should emphasize though that “sarap” could be obtained not only through contraception but also by having sex at the right time. The boys themselves have identified this right time and safe sex programs could build on this concept.

Another relevant cultural approach is to package safe sex program as a means of preventing “accidents.” Such approach should be framed within the context of responsible sexuality. Some boys may think that going “safe” is not masculine because one measure of manliness is the taking of risks. However, many of them are amenable to the idea of preventing
accidents. This could be an entry point for introducing safe sex in a new light, one that is within the boys' cultural consciousness.

Finally, safe sex programs should reinforce the social risks of teenage pregnancy which the boys themselves acknowledged. The usual approach in many safe sex programs is to highlight the health or physical consequences of unprotected sex. This gives such programs a thickly medical character. While this is not discouraged, safe sex programs for boys should equally emphasize the social consequences which for them are more real and familiar. As this study suggests, having a baby may even be a welcome "reward" for the boys because of its symbolic value to their manhood as well as the perceived hope that each child brings for the family. By focusing on the social impact of early pregnancy such as embarrassment for them and their family, peer ostracism, or broken relationships, the goal of delaying sex or pregnancy may be achieved more effectively.

3. **Harness positive values of adolescents.**

The youths have aspirations for themselves and their families. They believe in the value of education and delayed marriage. They are also aware of the responsibilities of fatherhood. They think that marriage is not the quick solution to an unwanted pregnancy. It shows that these young people have positive values which should be encouraged and promoted. Values education for adolescent should point to these ideals which the youths should hold on to. These messages should be highlighted in information campaigns directed to boys and girls.

4. **Provide 'fatherhood education' for young men.**

Whether we like it or not, a number of teenage boys end up as fathers. Some of them successfully grow into their new role but many find it hard to fill this role as some of the young fathers in this study attest. Many of them have difficulty explaining their concept of an ideal father. In light of this, IEC (information, education, and communication) programs for young men should include "fatherhood education" in order to prepare boys for their eventual fatherhood in the future. The boys should realize that early fatherhood is not the end of their future because there are so much that they can do as fathers.

Such fatherhood programs should be able to break the gender stereotypes between fatherhood and motherhood. They should include values clarification sessions as well as some practical skills in child rearing to impress the idea that taking care of children is not the exclusive role of mothers. In addition, there could be some sessions that will teach them how to take care of their pregnant partners and what to do during or after delivery.
In all these endeavors, gender should be a crosscutting concern. Asserting their beliefs, practicing safe sex, fulfilling their dreams, and taking responsibility should be seen in the light of positive masculinity and sexuality. Central to this is a clear idea of what makes someone a real man. Educational programs directed to boys should therefore engage them in clarifying gender concepts, gender-power relations, and health issues related to sex and pregnancy.

As regards policy recommendation, both young fathers and young mothers should be provided with considerable social support that will enable them to fulfill their roles in the family.

Finally, it is recommended that this dialogue with boys continue using both the “barkada” (peer group) approach and individual discussions as a means of further bringing to light the boys’ ideas and values regarding sexuality, pregnancy, fatherhood, and responsibility. This is an empowering process because it opens avenues for discussion of issues which are normally reserved only for the adults. By listening to the boys and bringing them into this process of healthy dialogues, we get to understand them better and they themselves become part of the solutions to their own problems.
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*On Disgrasya and Kati: Talk of Filipino Boys on Teenage Pregnancy*
Annex 1: Data Collection Tools

Annex 1.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE (IN-DEPTH)

I. Preliminaries
1. Self-introduction
2. Objective of Study
   To describe the meaning of teenage pregnancy from the young men's point of view
3. Topic of interview: Relationships and Fatherhood
4. Use of data
   I am presently doing my masters in medical anthropology which is the study of illness and how people respond to it from a cultural perspective. For my research, I am interested to find out the young men’s ideas on the various issues around teenage pregnancy which will help me understand what you think about this subject. Data will be used mainly for my master’s thesis.
5. Why informant was chosen
   As a young man myself, I want to learn from your experience in pregnancy [and fatherhood] which are of special value for my study.
6. Duration: 1 to 1.5 hours; with possible follow-up interview
7. Recording: Ok?
8. Ethics
   Guarantee of anonymity; confidentiality;
   You can tell me anything without me losing my respect for you.
   Nothing you say will make me think more or less of you.
   But I care that you will share your thoughts with me.
9. Any question before we proceed?

II. Interview Proper (to be done in 1 or 2 interviews)

Introductory Remark:
* For married/cohabiting man - Different people have different reasons for getting into a relationship. It is because they look at things from their own perspective which may not be the same as others. For men who decide to get married and become a father, they have their own styles of "fatherhood" based on their personal view of what fatherhood is. I would like to learn from you your own thoughts about these matters.

1. Balikan muna natin ang nakalipas na ___ taon noong mag-girlfriend pa kayo ni _____.
   Paki-kuwento mo nga sa akin yung nagning relasyon ninyo noong panahong iyon.

   [First, I'll ask you to think back, ___ years ago, when you and __________ (name of woman) were sweethearts. How would you describe your relationship with her at that time?
   When was the first time you had sex? Where did it happen? What do you think prompted you to have sex?
   What were your thoughts then about the possible risks of having sex?]

2. Sa abot ng iyong maaalala, ana ang nangyari nang unang malaman mong buntis si _____.
   Ano ang naging pakiramdam mo tungkol sa sitwasyon?
   Ano ang naging tingin mo sa iyong sarili?
   Ano ang naging reaksyon ng iyong pamilya? Paano ito nakaapekto sa iyo?
   Pinag-usapan din ang malin ang tungkol sa pagbubuntis, ano naman ang nakikita mong kalaban ng pagbubuntis ng isang tinedyer sa hindi na tinedyer?

   [As far as you can remember, what happened the first time you found out that she was pregnant?]
How did you feel about the situation? About yourself? How did your own family react to the news? How did the family reaction affect you?

Talking about pregnancy, what do you see as different in the pregnancy of a teenager from that of an older woman?

3. Paki-kuwento mo nga sa akin kung paano ka umabot sa pagpapasya na pakasalan siya/makisama sa kanya?

[Can you tell me the story of how you arrived at a decision to marry/live with her?]


[We now come back to the present time. Can you tell me what it is like to be a teenage father like you?]

5. Ano sa lingin mo ang kaibahan ng bata pa sa matanda nang ama? Ayon sa sarili mong karanasan, ano ang masasabi mong kabulihan ng pagiging tinedyer na ama? Ano naman ang masasabi mong hamon sa pagiging tinedyer na ama?

[What do you think are the differences between a young father and an old father? From your experience, what can you say are the advantages of being a young father/young husband? What about the challenges?]

6. Sa tingin mo, kailan ba masasabing handa na ang isang lalaki para maging isang ama? Anong edad at kalagayan?

[In your opinion, when can you say that a man is ready to become a father in terms of age and personal conditions?]

7. Para sa iyo, ano ang ibig sabihin ng huwarang ama? Sa mga sinabi mo tungkol sa pagiging huwarang ama, alyn kaya sa mga ito ang mabigat abotin para sa mga batang ama kauban mo? Paano ito maaabot ng mga batang ama na tulad mo?

[What is your ideal father? Regarding the things that you said, which of these may be difficult to achieve for young fathers like you? What do you think will help young fathers to achieve that?]

- If not married or cohabiting - Different people have different reasons for getting into a relationship. It is because they look at things from their own perspective which may not be the same as others. Some men decide to get married or live with someone while others do not even if they have gotten someone pregnant. The people's circumstances and beliefs explain the kind of action of opinion they take. In view of your experience in this matter, I would like to hear what you have to say about relationship and responsibility.

a. Balkan muna natin ang nakalipas na ___ taon noong mag-girlfriend pa kayo ni __________

Paki-kuwento mo nga sa akin yung naging relasyon ninyo noong panahon nyo.

[First, I'll ask you to think back, ___ years ago, when you and __________ (name of woman) were sweethearts. How would you describe your relationship with her at that time? When was the first time you had sex with anyone? Where did it happen? What do you think prompted you to have sex with that person? What were your thoughts then about the possible risks of having sex?]
b. Sa abot ng iyong maaalala, ano ang nangyari nang unang malaman mong buntis si ________? 
Ano ang nagling pakiramdam mo tungkol sa sitwasyon? 
Ano ang nagling tingin mo sa iyong sarili? 
Ano ang nagling reaksiyon ng iyong pamilya? Paano ito nakaapekto sa iyo?

Pinag-uusapan din lang natin ang tungkol sa pagbubuntis, ano naman ang nakikita mong kaibahan ng pagbubuntis ng isang tinedyer sa hindi na tinedyer?

As far as you can remember, what happened the first time you found out that she was pregnant? 
How did you feel about the situation? 
About yourself? 
How did your own family react to the news? How did the family reaction affect you? 
Talking about pregnancy, what do you see as different in the pregnancy of a teenager from that of an older woman?

c. Paki-kuwento mo nga sa akin kung paano ka umabot sa pagpapasya na huwag siyang pakasalan o pakisamahan?

Can you tell me the story of how you arrived at a decision not to marry/live with her?

d. Paki-kuwento mo nga sa akin kung ano ang epekto sa iyo ng iyong naging desisyon na huwag munang magpakasalan/mag-asawa.

Can you tell me what were the effects of your decision not to get married/live with your former girlfriend?

e. Sa tingin mo, kailan ba masasabing handa na ang isang lalaki para maging isang ama? Anong edad at kalagayan?

In your opinion, when can you say that a man is ready to become a father in terms of age and personal conditions?

f. Sa tingin mo ano ang ibig sabihin ng huwarang ama? 
Sa sinabi mo tungkol sa pagiging huwarang ama, alin sa palagay mo ang mahirap abutin? 
Paano ito maaabot ng mga lalaking tulong mo?

What is your ideal father? 
Regarding the things that you said, which of these do you think may be difficult to achieve? 
What do you think will help you achieve that?

III. Closing

1. Summarize key ideas
2. Is this a correct understanding of what you said? 
3. Can I call on you again for further clarification in between this and the next interview? 
4. When can we schedule the next interview (if needed)? 
5. Take personal information 
First Name/Last Name 
Age/Sex/Religion 
Education : Level/Course & Name of School 
Address/Contact No. 
Marital Status 
No. of children
6. Reiterate confidentiality 
7. Thank informant
Annex 1.2  FGD GUIDE

I. Preliminaries

1. Self-introduction
2. Objective of Study
   To describe the concept of teenage pregnancy from the perspective of young men. I came here to listen to you so that I could understand what teenage pregnancy means to you.
3. Topic of interview: Teenage pregnancy
4. Use of data
   I am presently doing my masters in medical anthropology which is the study of illness and how people respond to it from a cultural perspective. For my research, I am interested to find out the young men's ideas on teenage pregnancy which will help me understand what you think about this subject. Data will be used mainly for my master's thesis.
5. Why informant was chosen
   As young men yourselves, you have insights that are of special value to the themes of my study on young men's views about teenage pregnancy.
6. Duration :
   1 to 1.5 hours
7. Recording :
   Ok?
8. Ethics
   Guarantee of anonymity; confidentiality;
   You can tell me anything without me losing my respect for you.
   Nothing you say will make me think more or less of you.
   But I care that you will share your thoughts with me.
9. Rules for the Session
   9.1 There is no right or wrong answer.
   9.2 Do not be afraid to share a different view. We don't need to agree on everything.
   9.3 You can react on each other's statements but no personal attack will be allowed.
   9.4 One person talks at a time for easy recording.
   9.5 Everyone should give others a chance to speak.

10. Any question before we proceed?

II. Discussion Proper

Introductory Remark : Old people and young people, boys and girls look at some situations differently based on their own experiences and according to how they understand them. What is good for one may be bad for another. This is true for teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood. Some people tend to consider becoming a teenage father as problematic but we have yet to hear how the boys themselves feel about it. You see, when it comes to this issue, it is always the girls who are given attention. This is why it is interesting to know how young boys like you view teenage pregnancy. I also want to hear your views on which age or conditions are appropriate to become a father.

1. Una, mag-isip kayo ng kakilala ninyo na nabuntis habang siya'y teenager pa lang. Tapos, pakikuwento nyo sa akin yung kanyang naging karanasan.

   Nabanggit nyo sa inyong pakikuwento ang mga salitang ______________, ______________. Ano ba para sa inyo ang kahulugan nito?

   [First of all, think of someone you know who became pregnant when she was a teenager. Then, can anyone please describe that person's experience with teenage pregnancy? Note: If participants could not think of someone, bring up a hypothetical case. Ex. : Supposing you have a 15-year old sister and she became pregnant, what do you think will be her experience with this pregnancy?]

   Some of you mentioned the words ____________, ____________. Can you tell me what these terms/words mean to you?]
2. Para sa inyo, kailan maituturing na “masyadong maaga” ang pagbubuntis ng isang babae? Ano ang nakikita nyang kaibaan ng pagbubuntis ng isang tinedyer sa hindi na tinedyer?

[For you, when is pregnancy “too early”? What do you see as different in the pregnancy of a teenager from that of an older woman?]

3. Sa inyong palagay, anu-ano ang mga bagay na nagtutulak sa mga babaeng tinedyer para mabuntis?

[In your own understanding, what make teenage pregnancies happen?]

4. Sa palagay ninyo, anu-ano ba ang mga panganib na maaaring harapin ng mga babaeng tinedyer na nagiging batang ina?
Ng mga lalakeng tinedyer na nagiging batang ama?
Ng kanilang magiging anak?
Ano sa tingin nyo ang dapat gawin para maiwasan ang mga panganib na binanggit ninyo?

[In your view, what are the risks when a girl becomes a young mother? What about a boy who becomes a young father? What are the risks for their children? What do you think should be done to avoid the risks that you mentioned?]

5. Ano ang tingin nyo sa lalakeng tinedyer na nakabuntis ng kanyang girlfriend?
Sa ganoong sitwasyon, ano ang kanyang mga pananagutan?

[What do you think of a boy who got his girlfriend pregnant? In that situation, what do you think are his responsibilities?]

Kung kalagayan naman ang pag-ususapan, kailan siya puwede nang maging tatay?
Ano sa tingin nyo ang kabutihan ng pagiging batang ama, kung meron man?

[As far as age is concerned, when do you think is a man ready to become a father? Please explain your answer. What about in terms of his personal conditions? What do you think are the advantages of being a young father, if any?]

III. Cbounding

1. Summarize key ideas
2. Is this a correct understanding of what you said?
3. Can I call on you again for further clarification?
4. Take personal information
   First Name/Last Name
   Age/Sex
   Religion
   Education: Level/Course & Name of School
   Address/Contact No.
   Has had a girlfriend? Currently in a relationship?
   Marital Status
5. Reiterate confidentiality

Thank informants

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Annex 1.3 GUIDE FOR PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Session Objectives

At the end of the session, the participants should be able to

a. explain what they think are the contexts (feelings, social situations, etc.) in which teenage pregnancy occurs and its consequences
b. explain their views on which age and conditions are appropriate to become a father;
c. identify and explain the roles of people who have something to do with the occurrence of unsafe sex
d. identify the places where they think unsafe sex among teenagers occur
e. visualize the above ideas by drawing a "semantic network" of teenage pregnancy and "map" of unprotected sex

Participants: Mixed group of 8-10 boys aged 15-19
Duration: 4 hours
Materials Needed: Manila paper, color papers, meta cards (yellow and blue), markers, labels, adhesives, Scissors, paints, attendance sheet, cleaning materials, snacks

Procedure
1. Semantic Network of Teenage Pregnancy
   a. Explain objectives of the session and use of data (for master's thesis).
   b. Give instructions as follow:
      • Write on the yellow cards what you think are the feelings, social situations, etc. that lead to teenage pregnancy and on the blue cards write down what you think are its consequences (health, social, economic, etc)
      • One idea only per card
      • Maximum of 5 words per idea
      • You can write on as many cards as you like
      • Write big
   c. Distribute meta cards and markers
   d. Individual work: think and write
   e. Plenary
      • Ask participants to stick meta cards on the wall (or lay down on the floor).
      • Stick together those that are the same or similar asking the help of the participants.
      • Group those that could fall under one category (i.e. gender, family situation, personal, cultural, peer pressure, etc); always get consensus for each card
      • Ask a participant to position the cards with the help of the other participants in such a way that the relationships will be clarified; draw arrows to signify which leads to what
   f. Discussion – ask the following questions:
      • In what way does (so forth and so on) lead to teenage pregnancy?
      • In your opinion, which of these factors make the most influence and what are your basis for saying so?
      • What made you think that teenage pregnancy results in (so forth and so on)?
      • Of these results, what do you think have the most impact on the lives of the girls and boys?
      • At what age and conditions do you think would be appropriate for you to become a father?
      • What do you think are the advantages of being a teenage father, if any?

Break/ Snack (30 minutes)
Mapping of Unprotected Sex Sites

a. Explain objective of the session.
b. Give the following instructions:
   - First, you will brainstorm among yourselves to identify the places where unprotected sex among teenagers happen; then you will identify the people who have something to do with unprotected sex
   - When you are ready with your ideas, we will start drawing our map.
c. Let the group brainstorm
d. Distribute materials
e. Let participants draw the map
f. Discussion
   - What do you think are the reasons why boys and girls prefer to have sex in this (so and so) place?
   - What is the difference between love and sex? Or does sex also mean love?
   - When is it good to have sex?
   - What are the risks of having sex?
   - What made you say that (so and so) has something to do with the occurrence of unprotected sex?
   - What do you think about this situation
   - Could anything be done to improve this situation?

End of session
Thank participants
Refreshment
Annex 2: Pictorial Report

An FGD session with out-of-school youths

In-school youths sharing their ideas during an FGD session
The semantic network of teenage pregnancy done by both in and out-of-school youths

An interview with one of the informants
In and out-of-school youths constructing their map of unprotected sex sites