

A Dream Denied

Teenage Girls in Migrant Popular Neighbourhoods, Lima, Peru

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A Dream Denied

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Photo 1 Girls having fun during one of the *talleres*



Chapter 1. Introduction

It is January 2004. I am back in Los Pinos, the migrant popular¹ neighbourhood where I spent so much time for my fieldwork on teenage girls growing up in poverty. It has been more than a year since I left Peru and I am curious to see how the girls are doing. Most of them already knew I was going to come and that night they had organised an informal get-together. Angelica, Silvia, Erica and Marisol² are the first girls to arrive. As one of the girls remarks, it is a special moment for them,. They have always been very close friends, sharing many sorrows, joys, hopes and secrets. However, they do not see each other all that often any more. Two of the four got pregnant and moved out of the neighbourhood, the third girl is also pregnant and the fourth is extremely busy with her studies and household tasks. They ask me to take a photograph of them, as a memory of times past.

Marisol is the oldest of the four. When I first met her in November 2000, she had just turned 17 years old. Marisol has always been a serious girl, with a lot of responsibilities at home. Marisol comes from one of the poorest families in the neighbourhood, occupying a little house that is no more than a crumbling hut. Her father left her mother when Marisol was still young, leaving her mother to care for three children. Every day she leaves the house to work in the household of a middle-class family. As the oldest child, Marisol is responsible for cooking, cleaning and other household tasks. In the afternoons, she also helps her brothers with their homework, a job that is especially burdensome as her youngest brother is severely behind at school. Marisol herself is doing quite well at school. She does not have many friends, but those she she is very close to those few she does have, and is very loyal to them. Angelica, who was 16 years old when I first met her, has many household responsibilities as well. With four younger brothers and sisters³ and a mother who leaves early to sell chicken at the local market, her days are full of cleaning, cooking and caring for her siblings. Economically, her family is having a lot of difficulties, one of these being that her father suffers from a chronic disease. Angelica is the most reflective and observant of the four girls. She is a bit of a dreamer. The third in the row is Erica, 14 years old in 2000. Erica is the oldest daughter of one of the community leaders. She is very sociable and sympathetic towards others and always wants to help people who are in trouble. As both of her parents are working (her mother is a cleaning woman in an office and her father runs his own small curtain-decorating business) the economic situation in her family is not as bad as that of Angelica and Marisol. In the neighbourhood, Erica is known as a flirt and from time to time there is a good deal of gossip about her. The latter also goes for Silvia, back then almost 14 years old and the youngest of the four friends. On the one hand, Silvia is very

1 Popular is used in this dissertation in the same sense as the Spanish *popular*, referring to the lower socio- economic classes of society. In this dissertation, the term 'migrant popular neighbourhood' is used interchangeably with the Peruvian term *pueblos jóvenes*, which literally means 'young villages'.

2 The girls' and parents' stories in this study are real; all names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

3 Angelica has four younger and four older siblings, three of whom live away from the family.

sociable and eager to participate in any initiative or meeting. At the same time, however, she is rather introverted. In the second fieldwork period, she always seemed to be worrying about something. During that period, Silvia became rather rebellious at home.

The four girls, along with the other 15 who participated in my research, all lived in the same *barrio*, or popular neighbourhood. This *barrio* is a so-called *pueblo joven* or ‘young village’, in San Juan de Miraflores, in the southern cone of Metropolitan Lima. *Pueblos jóvenes* are “low income settlements in which people first live, then construct and then install services” (Riofrío, 2003:4). The term *joven* (young) refers to the age of the neighbourhood: the neighbourhoods only emerged during the last three decades, often springing up overnight, on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima. The word *pueblo* (village) refers to the fact that its inhabitants originally come from the countryside. The majority of the adult population (and therefore also the parents of the girls I just introduced) are first-generation migrants; they were born outside of Metropolitan Lima and came to the capital in their adolescence or early adulthood. Today, the *pueblos jóvenes* accommodate about one third of the eight million inhabitants of Metropolitan Lima.

Daily life in the *pueblos jóvenes* is characterised by poverty and marginalisation. Poverty figures for Metropolitan Lima are invariably high. In 2000, about 50% of the population in the capital was considered poor or extremely poor (Instituto Cuanto, 2000). For youth, the figures for poverty and especially for extreme poverty are even higher, up to 60% (GIN, 1999).⁴ In the migrant neighbourhoods, there is a lot of unemployment and many families are involved in a daily struggle to survive. Culturally, the *pueblos jóvenes* reflect the migrational background of their inhabitants. On a practical level, there are still many traditions and customs that are originally from the countryside. Examples are the celebration of festivities such as the *yunza*⁵ and the traditions around collectively building houses and other infrastructure projects (*ayni*). Many authors see these practical examples as part of a much broader phenomenon, in which a dynamic mixture of urban and rural cultural elements, together with the ways that people deal with the socio-economic conditions in their neighbourhoods, constitute a specific popular neighbourhood culture (Golte and Adams, 1987; Portocarrero, 1993; Thieroldt Llanos, 2000).

A preliminary overview of the research issues

The complex reality of migrant popular neighbourhoods has been one of the principal research themes among Latin Americanists in the last decades. Most of this research dealt with Metropolitan Lima, as this was the city where the phenomenon was most widespread (see, for example, Golte and Adams, 1987; Matos Mar, 1984; Portocarrero, 1993; Thieroldt Llanos, 2000). Research highlighted the high levels of solidarity and collective action among the migrants and the interesting mix of cultural elements - urban and rural - that was visible in the newly founded neighbourhoods (Golte and Adams, 1987; Matos Mar, 1984). The important role of women in daily survival strategies was also applauded (Haak and Díaz, 1987; MacEwen Scott, 1995; Rivera, 1993). Many authors focused their research on the small-scale, income-generating activities often referred to as the informal economy and the resulting emergence of an entire informal society (León and Cermeño, 1990; Palma, 1987; De Soto,

4 For more poverty figures and a discussion about the nature of poverty, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

5 The *yunza* is a harvest festival that takes place in the last week of February or the first week of March. See further Chapter 2, section ‘*pueblos jóvenes* identity’.

1986 and 2000). It was emphasised that despite the high levels of poverty, poor people were creative agents in their own lives, a conclusion that runs counter to the culture-of-poverty ideas Lewis had introduced in the 1960s (Lewis, 1965). In Chapter 2, these discussions will be developed further.

The theme of youth⁶ in popular neighbourhoods has received a lot of attention as well. In the first years, researchers mostly focused on the presumed vanguard role of popular youth. Studies on popular youth in Peru, particularly in the 1980s, were generally positive, portraying them as potential change agents. Later, researchers also started to study some of the more violent expressions of popular youth, such as *pandillaje* (youth gangs and youth violence) and hooliganism (Santos Anaya, 2001 and 2002; Thieroldt Llanos, 1998; Villanueva, 1999). Both of these types of studies are part of a much broader, sociologically oriented, current within youth studies worldwide. This current, especially well known through the work of the Birmingham School in the 1970s, approaches youth as a subculture that stands relatively isolated from the rest of society (Bucholtz, 2002). In recent years, there has been also some work on the social networks and socialisation processes of popular youth (Anderson, 1994; Ennew, 1986; Mansilla, 1996; Mendoza, 1993; Panfichi, 1993; Santos Anaya, 1999; Vega-Centeno, 1993). These studies pay more attention to inter-generational relationships, but their focus still seems to be on the extent to which the (presumed) pioneer mentality of the migrant parents is transmitted to their children. Less attention is devoted to the more open question of how the context of poverty, informality and the migrational background of parents influence the process of youth growing up in the *pueblos jóvenes*. Another bias in these studies is that, thus far, there has been very little attention paid to the position of girls in these contexts. To put it briefly: How do gender and age relate to issues of poverty, informality and migration?

An intriguing question is, for example, how the girls that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter experience their adolescence in the context of the *pueblo joven* they grow up in. How do they deal on a daily basis with poverty and to what extent are they able to take a step forward? How do the girls reconstruct the popular neighbourhood culture that was originally constructed by their parents and what role do the girls' parents play in these reconstruction processes? How does the context of poverty, the parents' migrational background and their different life histories influence their relationships with their daughters?

Youth studies⁷

In Peru and the other countries of Latin America, it is only in the last three decades that youth issues have become a legitimate field of study. Before, there was some social reflection on youth but, in general, youth were seen as just another mobilising social group, not worthy

6 The terms 'youth' and 'adolescence' are used in different ways by different authors. Some authors use the terms to refer to different age groups. In this case, 'adolescence' refers for example to the age group 12–16 (or 12–18) years old and 'youth' to the group between 16 (or 18) and 25 years old. Others use 'youth' to refer to the broad category of people under 18 or 25 years old and 'adolescence' for a specific category within it. It is in this latter sense that I will generally use the two terms. Especially when making use of theoretical or empirical insights from other authors, however, it is not always easy to stick to this division. When the reference is unclear from the terms alone, I will always give age indications.

7 The history of youth studies that is presented here is necessarily a brief one. For a more extensive overview of youth studies, see: Bucholtz (2002); James et al. (1998).

of any specific attention (Montoya, 2003:28).⁸ Worldwide, youth and adolescence have been a central issue within the social sciences for much longer (Bucholtz, 2002; James et al., 1998). The earliest studies approached adolescence merely as a life stage in which children undergo certain biological and emotional changes and in which they have to learn to conform to social norms that are necessary for later adult life (James et al., 1998:23). An example of the early authors is Hall, who, in fact, is usually credited with the discovery of adolescence as a separate life phase (Griffin, 1993:11, citing Hall, 1904). Most of these early studies originated within the psychological-pedagogical field and dealt with rather normative and prescriptive issues around youth behaviour and the guiding role of tutors. There were also studies in anthropology, which focused on the universalities and differences of adolescence as a life stage in a cross-cultural perspective in different cultures (Malinowski, 1929; Mead, 1928 and 1930).

In the early psychological studies, parents were seen as the most important socialising actors, followed by the school as replacement of the parents. Later analyses from this field increasingly included other socialising actors such as peers, other family members and adults outside the direct family environment (Bucholtz, 2002). The concept of 'social moratorium' also originally comes from the field of psychology. This concept refers to the idea of youth as being in a waiting room for adulthood. In this waiting room, the responsibilities and obligations associated with adulthood are absent and there is, to a certain extent, room for experimentation. Authors like Cortázar also stressed another side of the idea of youth as social moratorium - the marginalisation of youth from society (Cortázar, 1997:5).

Starting in the 1930s, a whole new current of youth studies emerged, focusing "on the ways in which subcultures, especially those created by young people, constitute alternative systems of shared symbolic meaning for their members" (Bucholtz, 2002:536). This predominantly sociological research became especially well known through the work of the already mentioned Birmingham School in the United Kingdom and the Chicago School in the United States, and this approach continues to generate a lot of studies on youth worldwide. Its basic assumption is that youth should not be studied in the first place as a phase that people have to pass through before becoming adults, or as a phase in which specific things need to be learned for later life. Instead, or at least as important, youth is seen as a period in which the group of youth as a whole possesses a separate typical identity.

Within the studies focusing on youth as a subculture, three general tendencies can be discerned.⁹ A first tendency is the focus on deviant subcultures and in line with this, the positioning of youth subcultures as, by definition, opposed to or reacting against the mainstream culture (evoking what is often called a 'moral panic'). The focus on these deviant subcultures has been especially strong in the United States (see, for example, Becker, 1963; Cohen, 1955). Also in Latin America, the focus on deviant subcultures has been popular, as evidenced in the above-mentioned boom in studies about youth gangs and youth violence (Santos Anaya, 2001; Martinez and Tong, 1998; Thieroldt Llanos, 1998; Villanueva, 1999; see also for Nicaragua: Rodgers, 2003; see for El Salvador: Savenije, 2004; Savenije and Andrade, 2003; Savenije and Van der Borgh, 2004). In many of these studies, youth gangs are presented

8 One explanation for the lack of attention on youth before the 1980s is that, in Latin America, social sciences became recognised as an autonomous academic discipline only in the 1960s. As a result of this late institutionalisation, the separate sub-disciplines and their borders are not always clearly defined (Montoya, 2003:24).

9 This division is inspired by Bucholtz (2002), but adapted for my own purposes.

as small and isolated cultural islands, with their own norms and values that, as a result of a number of processes both within and outside the subgroup, are increasingly excluded from the rest of society.

Another tendency, in some sense opposite to the first, is to see youth as inherently positive change agents in society (Bucholtz, 2002). In this view, authors also begin with the premise that youth occupy a special place in society, with its own identity and typical characteristics that distinguish them from other social groups. In these studies, though, youth are not seen as inherently inward-looking and anti-society, but as a group from which possible (political) changes may arise. The idea is that youth, as the new generation, carry the hope for a better future and will work actively to achieve it. In Leninist terms, we would speak here of youth as the political vanguard. The idea of youth as bearing potential for change has always been very popular in Latin America. Authors focused on the activist role of youth in the migrant popular neighbourhoods (Degregori et al., 1986) and on the progressiveness of youth in periods of dictatorial regimes and growing democratisation. (Cánepa, 1990; Tejada, 1990) The recent boom of studies about youth and *ciudadanía* (citizenship) are also examples of this idea (Alarcón Glasinovich, 1999; Guerrero Ortiz, 1999; Pineda et al., 1993; Ruiz González, 1999).

Surprisingly, many of the studies that start from the idea of youth as bearing the potential for change are in the end rather negative about the actual contribution of youth to society. Although youth are seen as potentially progressive and as ideally contributing to change, in practice this progressiveness is not actually realized. Some of the reasons that are given are neo-liberalism with its strong individualism (Tanaka, 1995), apathy as a result of disillusionment about the connections between education and the labour market (Grompone, 1991) or a broader political context that is not very conducive to change (Venturo, 2001).

The third stream of subculture studies, where more anthropologically oriented studies are also found, deals with youth and identity in more neutral terms, with research on fashion, music, free time and dance. Although the first two streams may have had the most resonance in society, it is probably this last current that has resulted in the most studies in terms of actual numbers. One example of this current is the extensive study on subcultures in today's Spain by Costa et al. (1996). Another example is a study by Rodríguez (2002) about youth and language, also in Spain. In Latin America, these kinds of studies have recently garnered wide attention. A very interesting book based upon the notion of youth subcultures is Margulis (1996) about youth cultures in Argentina, with chapters on youth and the shopping centre, youth and media, and youth language. Another one is Cubides et al. (1998), with chapters on youth culture and identities in different Latin American countries. In Peru, Protzel (1989) analysed the links between social class and the possibilities for cultural participation and experiences for different groups of youth. More recent Peruvian examples are Hurtado's study on youth and music in migrant popular neighbourhoods (Hurtado, 1997), the study on the use of free time by Santos Anaya (2000) and the culture and media study by Macassi (2001a).¹⁰ As we will see later, it is in this genre that the first examples of girls' studies are also found.

The shift to agency: giving youth a voice

In recent years, a number of authors have begun to criticise what, until now, have been the dominant approaches in youth studies (Bucholtz, 2002). These criticisms also hold for most studies on popular youth carried out thus far in Peru. Working from the starting point of

10 Other examples are: Cánepa (1993); González et al. (1991).

youth as a subculture and emphasising the differences between youth cultures and other (adult) cultures reveals many intriguing social patterns among youth that the more individual studies from psychology and pedagogy do not. For a good understanding of youth, though, the links between the subculture and the broader society are as important as the internal processes and patterns. In addition, there is a need to reintroduce intergenerational relations and the relation between children and their families (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996). This is especially relevant in contexts like the *pueblos jóvenes*, where the older generations have a different cultural background than the younger ones. Often, such perspectives had previously been lacking. Many studies approached youth subcultures as isolated islands and prioritised internal processes and the interaction with peers over the existing links and relations with other actors in society. For Peru, more specifically, we could add that, although many studies are supposedly about popular youth, there is incredibly little problematisation of the precise relations between poverty and informalisation on the one hand and youth on the other hand. Even less is known about the ways young people deal with these challenges. Possible questions about the link between migration and youth are *a priori* limited to the question of the extent to which there is collective action among them.

Another problematic issue is the adult-centredness of much youth research (Venturo, 2001; Bucholtz, 2002). All too often, research has been done *about* youth, conducted within frameworks and on themes decided upon by adults and actually carried out, generally speaking, by adults. Most studies start from what Venturo calls *juvenilismo*, which is an approach that presents youth as a social category which, for social, cultural or biological reasons, are not capable of full participation in society (Venturo, 2001:134-139). Reasons that are used for not giving youth full access to society have to do with their being biologically and personally immature, socially and culturally different, or still in the process of socialisation and integration into society. The adult-centredness, Venturo states, led to rather homogenised and generalised accounts of youth. Furthermore, it led to an emphasis on the problems that youth allegedly contribute to society (in the eyes of adults) instead of on youth per se (Macassi, 2001b:14). Equally important is the criticism that many approaches see youth too much as passive subjects and as victims of social structures and processes. Instead, “children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes” (Prout and James, 1990:8).

In the new approaches, authors intend to make a radical shift from the former studies.¹¹ For them, youth agency and autonomy - specifically, the capacity of young people to participate and actively engage in broader societal processes - are central (Feixa, 1998; James et al., 1998; Mouritsen and Qvortup, 2002; Prout and James, 1990). In the new studies, the way in which young people experience the world they live in and how they construct their own lives assumes increasing importance (Macassi, 2001b:14). There is also a greater tendency to work with the concept of difference (Montoya, 2003). Like many of the other new aspects, this tendency is directly connected to post-modernism. It goes against the homogenising tendencies of many of the former approaches, in which youth were too easily perceived as

11 The importance of giving youth a voice in research and policy is also in line with the recently adopted Convention of Rights of Children (CRC). The CRC is not only a call for more integrated policies on children and youth, but also involves a commitment to listen to children's voices and views and to initiate policies and action based on this information.

one homogeneous group just because they fell within a particular age group. Recent studies attempted to counter this bias, stressing the relevance of age differences within certain life stages as well as differences based on, for example, class, race and ethnic origin (Närvänen and Näsman, 2005; Punch, 2003; Thorne, 2004). The focus on girls and the emergence of girls' studies is a direct result of this tendency. The emphasis on difference and intersectionality, combined with the recognition of the constructed nature of concepts, also gave rise to interesting discussions about the meaning of childhood and the way childhood (and consequently adulthood) is constructed in different cultures, classes or ethnic groups (Hwang et al., 1996; Lozano, 2003; Prout and James, 1990).¹²

The new focus also calls for new methodologies that explicitly look for young people's own constructions and interpretations of reality (Caputo, 1995; Prout and James, 1990). Increasingly, researchers try to integrate youth as participants in the research, instead of treating them as mere objects of research (James et al., 1998:191). In the practical act of doing research, it is also crucial to free youth "from the process of containment that produces them as 'Other' and in turn continues to silence them" (Caputo, 1995:33).¹³ This can be achieved, for example, by thinking about practical choices, such as Caputo's choice not to sit on a chair but on the ground in her research with children. The use of cultural expressions may also be helpful as a research tool.¹⁴

In the Latin American context, quite a few studies adopted elements of the new approach. Sometimes, however, the idea of 'giving youth a voice' seems to have become more important than carrying out a sound academic analysis. Other problems with these kinds of studies are that they tend to overemphasise agency at the expense of a more structural or contextual analysis, and that attention to difference takes the place of attention to inequality. Examples of these more superficial 'giving youth a voice' studies are Portocarrero and Oliart (1986) and Cole and Montes (1991), both about opinions and expectations for Peru as a whole, and Encinas (1997), about opinions and expectations for the future on a personal level. Also in the field of sexuality, there are a number of studies that focus explicitly on the ideas and opinions of youth (Arias and Aramburú, 1999; Yon, 1998). Often, these studies are strongly related to provision of health services, soliciting knowledge and opinions with respect to sexuality without providing any further analysis. Of the rare more in-depth studies employing a youth-centred approach, one was conducted by Quintana and Vásquez (1999) on the social constructions of adolescent sexuality and another by Macassi (2001a), about youth and media.

Girls' studies

As was previously said, part of the new approaches of recent years is the increased attention to gender. However, the number of studies that explicitly and separately deal with girls has thus far been surprisingly low (Inness, 1998). This may be due to a number of different factors. In the introduction in one of the few academic textbooks on girls' studies in Europe, Van der Zande explains the lack of girls-focused studies by the general invisibility of girls. Because of girls' housekeeping responsibilities, the insecurity in the street and restrictions on movement in public space, girls' cultures evolve in and around the parental home and it is therefore much more difficult to see and become acquainted with girls as compared to boys (Van der Zande,

12 I will come back to these issues in Chapter 4.

13 Quotation marks and capitalisation in the original text.

14 For the use of creative tools, see: the methodological section and Chapter 5.

1991:10). Her explanation reflects a more general trend in youth studies, to a focus on what is most striking and visible. Violent youth receive more research attention than non-violent youth and, accordingly, boys receive more attention than girls. Another explanation is the fact that, within gender or women studies, girls have only recently emerged as a specific focus of interest. As a result of discussions around intersectionality and the emphasis on difference, the link between gender and age has been made more explicit only recently (Van Duin et al., 1993; for Latin America, see Chant and Craske, 2003).

Despite the slow pace of these developments, in the last 10 to 15 years a number of interesting studies did see the light and a body of literature on girls' studies has slowly emerged. Most of these authors start from the assumption that there is a separate girls' culture (often referred to as the girls' bedroom culture) that is very different from that of boys. Examples are De Waal (1989), writing on girls and their life worlds in The Netherlands and Wulf (1988), who did ethnographic research about girls in a lower-class London neighbourhood. Other authors, such as Walkerdine et al. (2001) explored the links between the positions of young women and class.

In the 1990s, reflecting what was then happening in youth studies as a whole, authors started to focus more and more on heterogeneity and difference and on girls' agency (Van Duin et al., 1993; Harris, 2004; Inness, 1998). Overall, we see a clear move from seeing girls as victims within broader social structures, to recognising girls as active agents able to shape their own lives. Although girls are restrained by many limiting structures, they also are able to interpret meanings and messages, create ideas and make their own decisions. This idea is clearly illustrated by two contributions to the book edited by Inness (1998), about the relation between girls' power and the British pop group the Spice Girls (Budgeon, 1998; Lemish, 1998). According to the writers, the notions of girl power that arose in connection with the all-female pop group offer a venue for girls to change and challenge traditional notions of femininity and girlhood.

There is also growing recognition of the context-bound character of certain issues and concepts in girls' studies. In this regard, Yanay's analysis of the concept of autonomy is revealing (Yanay, 1993). In her study, she describes how girls coming from poor and divided families in Israel use 'autonomy' to mainly refer to 'competence'. In contrast to what was expected, autonomy was used to refer to the freedom to be able to do things that other girls would see as compliance with the family norm. Examples were going to bed early and not drinking alcohol. However, in the context of these girls' families, these activities deviate from what is common and thus, for them, they are experienced as expressions of autonomy. Also interesting are the studies that invite girls to produce narratives through means they themselves consider attractive and 'theirs'. An interesting example is Bloustien's study on Australian girls who were asked to record their experiences on videotape (Bloustien, 2003).

Within the Latin American context, research on girls and girlhood is even scarcer than it is in other parts of the world. As we saw in the previous section, attention has focused primarily on youth as a deviant subculture or as a political change agent. Special attention to girls, then, would not be expected. Deviant behaviour in the form of *pandillaje* and violence is mainly found among boys¹⁵ and, in the very homogenising approach to youth as bearing the potential for change, it can even seem that youth have no gender at all.

15 According to a report by the Peruvian National Police, there are some examples of girls in *pandillaje* and there also exist a limited number of *pandillas* made up solely of girls or women. In comparison to male

Studies focusing on girls are found mainly in the fields of socialisation, child rearing, and health (Ennew, 1986; Cáceres, 1999b; Mansilla, 1991; Santos Anaya, 1999; Yon, 1998). The latter studies are often fuelled by policy needs and demands and are therefore rather prescriptive and superficial. Much of this research has emphasised in a one-sided and one-dimensional manner issues that the general public or policy makers regard as most problematic and pressing, such as sexuality and teenage pregnancy. This results in a biased view of girls and does not do justice to their complex and diverse reality. Specific problems or situations are too easily assumed, either explicitly or implicitly, to be representative of girls in general, at the cost of ignoring certain realities. A last problem with these kinds of studies, and a criticism that has been made of youth studies in general, is their lack of contextualisation and non-recognition of agency. Teenage pregnancy is, for example, often seen as something that is related only to the conflictive relationship between the girl and her parents, with no attention paid to the socio-economic context, or to a girl's own ideas about love.¹⁶

In socialisation studies, the other type of studies where girls receive separate attention, the emphasis is usually on how notions of femininity and masculinity are developed in interaction with the social environment. This emphasis results in a focus on the norms to which girls will be expected to conform both now and in the future. Most of the time, these questions are discussed in a rather static framework of *machismo* and patriarchy (Ennew, 1986). Often, there is also a direct link with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. One of the first Peruvian studies that did attempt to question *machismo* and patriarchy as universal and fixed notions is that of Ennew (1986), who already in the 1980s wrote about the process of girls becoming women in Metropolitan Lima. A more recent study on femininity and masculinity conducted by Santos Anaya (1999) addressed the socialisation processes of a group of girls living in a poor inner city neighbourhood in Metropolitan Lima. Analysing the interactions between these girls and other actors in a number of different social spaces, Santos concludes, among other things, that girls are active participants in and creators of what tend to be presented as masculine views.¹⁷

Girls growing up in the *pueblos jóvenes* of Metropolitan Lima

The starting point for my own research has been the concept of agency and the idea that girls and young women are active creators of meaning for and in their own lives. As I will outline more extensively in the methodology section, this consideration has determined my choice of the general research design. Thematically, as I briefly outlined earlier in this chapter, my research aims to fill some of the biases or lacunae mentioned above. With a focus on the ways teenage girls grow up in the context of the *pueblos jóvenes*, this research particularly addresses two of these biases: the one concerning girls and the one concerning the links between how these girls grow up and the context of migration, poverty and informalisation. I will first explain in some detail why I chose to focus on girls and then proceed to a further problematisation of the link between the girls and the specific context in which they grow up.

The choice to focus on girls has, first of all, to do with their being a relatively invisible and under-researched group. As stated above, quite a lot has been written on teenage pregnancy. In this literature, authors often refer to presumably unstable situations within the families

— participation in *pandillaje*, however, this phenomenon is very limited (Policía Nacional, 2000).

16 See further Chapter 7, on teenage pregnancy.

17 Santos Anaya (1999) remarks in passing that, because of pregnancy, not many girls actually succeed.

of girls who reside in the popular neighbourhoods. These accounts are generally biased and normative, presuming that the parents, because of their economic problems and lack of education, were not able to provide a safe and supportive home for their children. If the rural background of families is mentioned, this is usually done to support the idea that getting pregnant at an early age is a common and accepted phenomenon. Apart from the rather one-sided analysis of the backgrounds of teenage pregnancy, to which I will return in Chapter 7, a more general problem is that almost no research is done either on girls who are not pregnant (yet) or on growing up in popular class families in general. Just like girls worldwide, non-pregnant girls of the popular class seemed to be an almost invisible group.

I was also inspired by a number of publications that came out during the years before I began my own research on the gender changes experienced by young women in the middle classes (Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993; Kogan, 1996; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995). In these publications, there was hardly any reference to the situation of girls and young women in the popular classes and, if there was, it was only in terms of changes occurring more slowly and being less far reaching for them than for the rest of the population. These conclusions were not very satisfactory to me and I thought it would be interesting to use the ethnographic study that I intended to do, as a way to put these conclusions and assumptions into perspective.

Finally, there was a more practical reason for focusing on girls: doing so was a response to the needs expressed by local NGOs working with youth. During interactions I had with them during my first month in Lima, a number of NGO workers said that they did not know much about girls, their realities or their concerns and that therefore they felt incapable of designing specifically girl-oriented policies.¹⁸ They told me that most of the state and NGO interventions in Metropolitan Lima, just as in many other big cities, reached out mainly to already organised youth (the 'angels', as one of the NGO workers called them) and to the *maleados* (the bad guys, mainly boys). The big group in between and, particularly, the girls within this group, is largely invisible. This research is, therefore, not only relevant for academic purposes. It is also hoped that it will provide practical support for NGO-sponsored and state-supported intervention programmes for girls.

For a good understanding of the girls' lives and life projects, making the connection to the social environment in which the girls grow up is indispensable. The theme of growing up in migrant popular neighbourhoods is, as I have already noted, a theme that has received surprisingly little attention. This is the more remarkable because, as noted previously, quite a lot has been written about *pueblos jóvenes*, informalisation and poverty in general. It would be logical and interesting, then, to enlarge this focus in order to include the new generations. How do girls position themselves within this context and how do they construct their own lives and futures in interaction with it? Are they hopeful for the future or are they more concerned with and immersed in their day-to-day hardships? To what extent are they reproducing or reconstructing the dreams of socio-economic betterment which drew their parents to the capital? These are all questions that have hardly been touched until now.

In more general studies on youth in Peru, a recurrent conclusion is that a gap exists between the future expectations or life projects¹⁹ of young people (boys and girls) and a more objective assessment of their real possibilities (Basili and Encinas, 1999; see also Carrión, 1991; Encinas, 1997; González, 1990; Macassi, 2001b; Portocarrero and Oliart, 1986; Saavedra

18 Source: Interviews with people from the Peruvian NGOs SEPEC and CEAPAZ, during the preparatory phase of fieldwork, June 2000.

and Chacaltana, 2001).²⁰ Although no specific reference is made to the role of the migrant neighbourhood context in these life projects, it is clear that most of the young people participating in these studies live in *pueblos jóvenes*.

In my own research, the belief in the possibility of individual success, despite the difficult general situation and nearly inevitable failure, was evident. Let's look back for a moment at the four girls we met at the beginning of this chapter and see how their life projects looked when I first met them. When I first met them, they were still in high school. All four of them had enthusiastic plans about learning a trade and getting a diploma. That way, they thought it would be possible to move up a step on the socio-economic ladder. Angelica thought about becoming a kindergarten teacher. Erica was dreaming of working in an office, as a secretary or in some other administrative job. Marisol dreamed of working in the medical sector, either as a doctor or a nurse: she wanted to help make people healthy. Silvia, the youngest of the four, did not yet know what she wanted to be - she just wanted to get a diploma, she always said. Each of them wanted to stay in her parental home for at least a few more years, in order to be able to focus solely on school. Marriage and having children was part of their future plans, but only after school. Getting a diploma was priority number one.

These dreams seemed very optimistic and indeed, two years later, at the moment of the visit described at the beginning of this chapter, their lives had turned out rather differently. The most important hitch had been unplanned pregnancy. When I took the photo referred to in the beginning of this chapter, two of the four girls already had a baby. Together with their boyfriends, they were responsible for maintaining a family. Erica's little boy, Gabriel, was one and a half years old. She lived with her boyfriend in a small room in her parents' house. Angelica had a seven-month old baby girl, named Yazmin. In January 2004, when I took the photo, Angelica still lived with her boyfriend in a small and crumbling house, next to her mother-in-law, in Villa Maria del Triunfo, a district about five kilometres away. She was making plans to go back to her mother's house, as managing everything on her own was not as easy as she had thought it would be. Silvia, the youngest of the four friends, was five months pregnant when I took the photo. She still lived with her parents. Neither Silvia nor Erica had been able to finish high school. Angelica, fortunately, only became pregnant after finishing school. The only girl of the four who was still somewhat 'on track' with respect to her future plans was Marisol. She finished secondary school and, with some help from her father,²¹ studied at an *academia pre-universitario*²² for a few months before finally being accepted at a university. Medicine or nursing turned out to be a goal that was a bit too high, so Marisol planned on studying tourism and hotel management. Overall, however, their lives were now rather different from the ones they had dreamt of only a few years before.

19 A central concept in this and similar studies is the idea of a 'life project', through which the adolescent projects himself towards the future and makes plans with respect to its involvement with different aspects of life (Villanueva, 1999:42).

20 Similar findings for Chile are reported by Dávila León (1995 and 2002); for Brazil: Malta and Vieira (1996).

21 Marisol's parents are divorced. Marisol lives with her mother and her two brothers in a household that could be considered one of the poorest in Los Pinos. Her father, however, belongs to the lower middle class, and supports her financially when it comes to her education.

22 An *academia pre-universitario* is a private institute, where students are prepared directly for the university entrance exam.

Some studies suggest that there is a relationship between dreams of betterment and improvements in education during recent decades. The latter would have led to a 'revolution of expectations' (cf. Méndez, 1990:30). Improvements in education, along with improved possibilities of entering the educational system, the hypothesis contends, led to more positive expectations for the future. In spite of the low quality of the education (which adolescents themselves also mention regularly), high school is seen as the bridge to university, which in turn leads to a world of opportunities (Ansión et al., 1998; Méndez, 1990; Portocarrero and Oliart, 1986). This hypothesis is not, however, entirely satisfactory. How does this hypothesis, for example, relate to the idea of Lewis' culture of poverty, that, poor people, because of their different mindset, view the future more passively than non-poor? There are two key questions: first, whether the impact of education is the same for different groups of youth, and, second, how the possibility of failure influences the way dreams are constructed and experienced.

Social environment and the role of parents

The girls' lives and the way they construct their life projects take place in interaction with the social environment they live in (Mansilla, 1996; Mendoza, 1993; Mendoza García, 1995; Panfichi, 1993; Vega-Centeno, 1993; White, 2002). In interaction with this social environment the girls negotiate about norms and values and they learn to deal with the challenges of poverty and informalisation. The social environment comprises a number of different socialising actors, such as parents and other family members, friends and important adults who are not blood relatives, such as community leaders or teachers. Visually, the social environment can be represented through a number of circles around the girl, with the closest confidants in the smallest, innermost circle (Nestman and Hurrelman, 1994; Schlegel and Barry, 1991). In the literature, authors also mention the existence of different socialising *spaces*. For young people in *pueblos jóvenes*, Mansilla, for example, distinguishes three spaces: family-neighbourhood, school and work (Mansilla, 1996:100). In each of these socialising spaces, different actors interact with youth and different types of knowledge and experiences are mediated. At the same time, there is also a lot of overlap and many shared relations among the spaces (Santos Anaya, 1999:457).²³

Already at an early stage of my research, I decided to focus mainly on the socialising space of the family and, more specifically, on the role of the parents. This choice was motivated first of all by the observation that the girls spend a good deal of their time at home with their family and thus are frequently in close contact with their parents. The fact that the girls are pretty much bound to their homes is, as we will see in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, related to the extensive housework responsibilities and the rather tight control parents try to exercise over their daughters. Going out to meet friends is restricted and most parents encourage their daughters to stay at home as much as possible. The second reason for my focus on the space of the family was that, during the course of my fieldwork, the girls identified their parents as the most important persons in their lives. In the workshops, where I invited the girls to construct social maps, parents emerged as persons whom they regarded as closest to them in terms of emotional support and normative guidance.

23 Apart from socialising actors, there are also non-personal influences that, although less tangible, are relevant in the socialisation process. One example is the media. In Chapter 4, I will give some information about the ways in which the media contribute to the formation of girls' constructs with respect to their identities and future plans. However, this is not a topic of central interest in this research.

The third reason was more theoretical and referred to the fact that, in recent decades, research on families and socialisation had been somewhat neglected. With the emphasis in youth studies first and foremost on youth cultures and only thereafter on individuality and agency, youth and their development became somewhat detached from their family settings (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996; James and Prout, 1996). There is therefore a need to "recontextualize children within their families, to begin to prioritize their interests and perspectives, and to take account of both the permeability of boundaries between families and the outside world and the ways in which children negotiate these" (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996:1; see also Jones and Wallace, 1992). Of course, this re-contextualisation needs to integrate the newest insights in youth studies and thus not be a repetition of the very psychological type of family studies from the 1970s and 1980s, in which the child as an individual agent was only mentioned in passing.

The decision to focus on the parents within the complex social environment of the girls finally connected to some of the already raised questions and assumptions related to the specific context of the *pueblos jóvenes*. That is, the parents, as first-generation migrants, are the ones who most embody the migrational nature of these neighbourhoods. In the scarce literature on socialisation of youth in migrant popular neighbourhoods in which the role of parents is discussed, there is a tendency to portray parents as rather traditional and authors seem to conclude that their role is almost played out (Cárdenas, 1999; Mansilla, 1996; Panfichi and Valcarcel, 1999). This assessment builds further on the ideas of Margaret Mead (1970), who suggested that the role of parents in complex and fast-changing societies would increasingly be taken over by other people, mostly peers. It also builds on the general idea that in adolescence the role of peers (and other non-kin adults) increases at the expense of the role of parents (Jackson and Rodríguez-Tomé, 1993; De Wit et al., 1995). This conclusion is too simplistic. Of course, a new life phase and the new context, with its new challenges and requirements, change the position of parents. This change, however, does not necessarily imply a simple reduction. Quite to the contrary, I would say. Especially in the context of Latin America, where family relations and family socialisation always have been strong, parents remain the primary socialising agents and the family remains the space where children spend most of their time. As I said, in my fieldwork, parents were also those most often mentioned by the girls as people they see as examples in their lives. A more interesting question therefore would be how the parents cope with their changing position. How, and to what extent, are they able to adapt to the changing requirements of urban society? And how do these changes affect their relationship with their daughters?

Teenage pregnancy

The issue of teenage pregnancy was not part of the original research design. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, teenage pregnancy is one of the issues that has been taken up quite often in the literature (albeit at times in an unsatisfactory manner) and, therefore, this was not an issue I wanted to focus on. Instead, I was going to focus on all those other issues central to girls' lives. The issue of teenage pregnancy however, worked its way into the research on its own. First of all, it appeared to be one of the most important things the girls feared when talking about their future. It was also something that parents viewed as the ultimate failure for their daughters. Also practically, teenage pregnancy made its central position in the girls' lives abundantly evident: In the course of my fieldwork six girls (of the 19 girls I worked with)

got pregnant. In sum, it was clear that, in order to get the complete picture of the girls' lives and life project, teenage pregnancy simply had to be included as one of the main issues.

Towards the end of the fieldwork and during the analysis and writing process of this book, the issue of teenage pregnancy increasingly became an issue that put many other elements into perspective. The way in which the girls' parents, for example, talked about the risks of getting pregnant and about the long-term consequences of pregnancy gave many insights into the more general ideals and fears they had with respect to their daughters. The way the risks of pregnancy were constructed by the girls' mothers also provided insight into the way they looked back on their own life histories. And, to mention a third example, the fact that a number of girls got pregnant gave useful insights into the specifics of the transition process within the *pueblos jóvenes* from adolescence to adulthood, a transition that was decidedly different for pregnant girls as compared to non-pregnant girls. In the end, pregnancy came to assume such an important place in the research, that an entire chapter (Chapter 7) is devoted to it.

Research questions

The following set of questions constitutes the backbone of my study. The first questions deal with the lives and life projects of girls in *pueblos jóvenes* like Los Pinos. What do the lives of these girls look like and how do they experience their realities? What are their dreams for the future and to what extent are they translating their life projects into concrete steps and strategies today? And, more specifically with respect to the girls who got pregnant, how did they experience their pregnancies and subsequent motherhood. The more general questions on the girls' lives and life projects, including the way they deal with sexuality, are addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. Teenage pregnancy is explored in Chapter 7.

The second question aims to relate the lives and life projects of the girls to the context of the *pueblos jóvenes*. What is the relation between their constructions, experiences and dreams on the one hand and poverty and marginalisation on the other hand and to what extent does the so-called *cultura chicha* play a role? After a more theoretical and empirical presentation of the *pueblos jóvenes* context in Chapter 2, the answers to these questions can be found throughout the remaining chapters.

The third set of questions deals more specifically with the girls' interaction with their parents and the role it plays in the girls' lives and life projects. One question has to do with how parents construct the 'socialising messages' they convey to their daughters. What are the main norms and values that emerge and how do these relate to the *pueblos jóvenes* context? And, secondly, how do the girls respond to the messages their parents send out and how do they, in interaction with the parental messages, construct and reconstruct their own ideas about their lives and futures? With regard to socialising messages, I am focusing on verbal, explicit messages as well as more implicit, non-verbal messages. An important assumption underlying my approach is that messages may have different levels and that they may at times contradict one another. Therefore, the aim is not to present a simple, straightforward picture, but to show the complexities and internal links. Further, from the way these questions are formulated, it becomes clear that the girls are not passive recipients within the parent-child interaction. Instead, parental messages are taken by the girls and then used in their own process of (re-)construction of norms and values. The girls, in other words, are always active agents in their own lives.

Methodology

The issues addressed in this study were explored during two periods of fieldwork, the first from November 2000 to June 2001, and the second from January to June 2002.

The girls

The primary research group consisted of 19 adolescent girls and their parents. This group included the four girls introduced at the beginning of this chapter along with 15 others. A list of these girls, with their ages, school grades and some family characteristics, is presented in Appendix 1. As one can see from the appendix, there is considerable variation with respect to family size and parental characteristics. Before the study started, the girls knew each other at least superficially, and some were close friends with one another. The quality of my interaction with each of the individual girls in the group varied in intensity. The core group of girls (i.e. girls who usually came to the girls' meetings²⁴ or whom I would see and talk to at least once a week) consisted of more or less 13 girls.

In many studies, especially in more quantitative ones, adolescence and other life course periods are specifically defined in terms of age.²⁵ However, such fixed definitions are not very useful, given that adolescence is more than anything else a social and cultural construct (Dávila León, 2004). In my research, I used rather loose age limits in order to portray the way the girls presented themselves as accurately as possible. During my first year of fieldwork, I invited girls ranging in age from roughly 14-16 to participate in the girls' workshops and interviews. In practice, some girls were still 13 years old and one girl had just turned 17. The girls no longer identified themselves as children, but did not yet consider themselves adults. Those in their social environment also identified them as occupying an intermediate position - as adolescents. During the course of the past three years, during which time I returned to the neighbourhood on several occasions, the oldest girls turned 18 and 19. By then, some of the girls, especially those who had got pregnant or had already had a baby, could no longer be called adolescents. I will come back to this point in Chapter 7.

The 14-18 age group proved to be interesting for the purposes of my research. First of all, many girls celebrated a number of important events, or life-span markers, during this time, such as the *quince años* (15th birthday),²⁶ Confirmation in the Catholic Church and high school graduation. Pregnancy may also be considered such a life-span marker, as we will see more extensively in Chapter 7. Secondly, it is a transitional period, during which the girls are no longer children, but are not yet adults. It is a period during which they also look toward the future more than they had when they were younger. These observations are in accordance with more general theories on adolescence, which state that adolescence (and especially late adolescence) is a life stage during which involvement with life projects really gains

24 See the *research methods* section later in this chapter.

25 A common way of approaching age categories is for example: 0-12 years old: childhood; 12-18 years old: adolescence, 18-25 years old: youth; older than 25 years old: adults.

26 The *quince años* refers to a girl's 15th birthday, the most important birthday for girls in Latin America. Traditionally, this is the occasion on which the girl is presented to society. Even today, this birthday marks the transition from being a child to being a *señorita*. In Chapter 4, I will deal more extensively with the *quince años*.

momentum. It is during this phase that persons become more autonomous in many areas and increasingly take decisions about their own lives and futures (Hurrelman 1996). I would add that the personal wish to participate in one's own future plans is reinforced by society's pressures to do so. On their way towards adulthood, adolescents are increasingly expected to take responsibility and prepare for their own future.

What about boys? Apart from personal interviews with two boys and a group discussion with about five boys, boys' voices are not heard in the present study. It may seem a bit odd, given that boys play such an important role in the lives of the girls (as we will see later), that they are virtually absent as respondents or participants. My intention however, was to analyse the different tensions and frictions as experienced by the girls, with a special focus on the parental role in these. This means that it is not as much about the boys' views or attitudes or about the differences between the experiences of girls and boys, as it is about the girls' interpretations and reactions. A last reason for this choice is more practical: time. It took so much time to build an adequate *rapport* with the girls that I did not have time to do so with the boys as well. Besides, since I am a woman, this probably would have been even more difficult with boys. Another consideration was that during the research the girls, their parents and the other neighbours increasingly saw me as a trustworthy confidante for the girls. This position would have been much more difficult to hold if I had also spent a great deal of time with boys. It would be very interesting however, for another researcher to conduct a study similar to the one presented here, but focusing on boys' perspectives and experiences.

Area of study: Los Pinos

The fieldwork for my research was carried out in Los Pinos, a small *pueblo joven* in the southern cone of Metropolitan Lima.²⁷ Los Pinos is part of the municipality of San Juan de Miraflores and is located about 15 kilometres from the centre of Metropolitan Lima. By bus, it takes about 45 minutes to two hours to reach the neighbourhood, depending on traffic. In Chapter 2, I will elaborate more extensively on the nature and history of *pueblos jóvenes*. Here I will focus only on a few general characteristics that will serve to explain the choice of Los Pinos as the fieldwork site. According to Dietz (1998), all of the peripheral districts in Metropolitan Lima share a remarkable number of characteristics. They are districts inhabited by people "that fend for themselves by creating self-help housing through land invasions, which are subsequently incorporated into the city as large homogenous chunks of poor people with minimal financial resources to meet their endless needs" (Dietz, 1998:71). In addition to conforming to this definition, which describes all of the marginal neighbourhoods in Metropolitan Lima, *pueblos jóvenes* are also neighbourhoods in which most of the people are migrants from rural areas. Los Pinos shares all of these characteristics.

27 The actual choice of Los Pinos was influenced by contacts I had with the NGO Aynimundo, which did some work in the area. Aynimundo was mainly active in the construction of communal infrastructure and had not yet begun to work with youth. I joined them in some of their work visits and was able to profit from the relationships and rapport that Aynimundo had built up in the community. In the first month of my first fieldwork period we joined forces in conducting a neighbourhood survey about the interests and needs of the inhabitants. This questionnaire included items about family size and composition, as well as some questions on youth.

Los Pinos was founded in 1984 when about 50 families occupied a desert terrain which had until then been used as exercise area by the army.²⁸ The new inhabitants first installed themselves provisionally, with houses made of wood and reed mats, and then started to build up the neighbourhood as an organizational unit. Two years later, in 1986, Los Pinos was officially registered as an *Asentamiento Humano*.²⁹ Individual land titles were acquired in the years thereafter and now the majority of the people legally hold title to their plot of land. Over a number of years, the physical state of the houses and the communal infrastructure gradually improved. In accordance with Dietz's description of the marginal zones, the construction of houses has been a process of self-help housing. It is a slow process, taking place in stages. Every time some money could be spent on a house, this was done and, in this way, the house was gradually improved.³⁰ Now about two-thirds of the houses in Los Pinos consist at least partly of bricks with a sink roof. Most of the houses in Los Pinos have internal plumbing and are connected to a centralized sewer system.

Los Pinos is a poor neighbourhood and many people have to find work in the informal sector. Average income levels are difficult to establish, but my estimates are that at least half of the inhabitants live below the poverty line of one dollar per day. Apart from this economic poverty, residents face problems related to access to health and security. The neighbourhood consists of nine *manzanas*,³¹ with a small play square at the northern side of the neighbourhood. The total number of inhabitants is roughly 750. Compared to other migrant popular neighbourhoods, Los Pinos is quite small. However, given my research questions and my focus on the girls' own experience of their surroundings, formal neighbourhood size was not very important. Besides, although my first invitations for the group meetings and interviews were to Los Pinos girls, later some girls from the surrounding streets participated as well.

The age of the neighbourhood (about 18 years when I started the fieldwork) provided a good starting point for a study of girls in migrant neighbourhoods. I wanted the neighbourhood to be one where the heads of family were first-generation migrants (i.e. one in which the majority of adults had grown up outside of Metropolitan Lima). Given the usual life trajectories, in which people start their families around the moment they start living in the *pueblos jóvenes*, the neighbourhood thus had to be between 15 and 20 years of age. In younger neighbourhoods, children would not have reached adolescence yet while, in older neighbourhoods, their parents may not have grown up *en provincia*.

28 The information on the neighbourhood and its history is based on interviews with the *presidente* and other members of the *junta vecinal*, the neighbourhood council of Los Pinos.

29 *Asentamiento Humano*, or 'human settlement' is the administrative term used by the local government to refer to the low-income settlements.

30 Research in the southern cone of Metropolitan Lima has shown that, on average, it takes about 10 to 15 years for people to have a basic house. After this period, further improvements and new investments (e.g. provision of space for grown-up children) are made (Alternativa, 2004). In general, there does not appear to be any relationship between legacy of tenure and the subsequent level of consolidation of self-help housing (Gough, 1996).

31 A *manzana* refers to a block of houses, usually 100 by 100 metres. In Los Pinos, each *manzana* contains about 15 to 20 houses.

With regard to (street) violence, I would describe Los Pinos as a place that is relatively safe and quiet.³² This is also what people in the neighbourhood told me when I asked for their experiences with respect to violence. This reasonable level of safety made my research easier and was in fact a criterion for choosing the neighbourhood. For the group meetings with the girls, which I sometimes had to plan at night because of other responsibilities the girls had during the day, the relative safety turned out to be indispensable. Violence was not absent, however. There was some *pandillaje* (street gang violence) in neighbouring *barrios* and sometimes this affected the research. *Pandilla* violence has a tendency to come in waves. The first months of my fieldwork were rather quiet. After a few months though, there was a rumour that members of one *pandilla* had killed one of the gang members of a neighbouring *pandilla*. The latter *pandilla* then prepared for action. Although these events did not take place in Los Pinos itself but in the neighbouring areas, they produced a good deal of tension in Los Pinos as well. Parents started to keep their children inside after dark and were themselves more alert and fearful. During this time, fieldwork activities became more difficult to carry out. Coincidentally, in that same period a switch was made from workshops on weekends (when most tensions tended to occur) to workshops during the week, a shift which turned out to be rather helpful. In Chapter 2, the issue of violence in *pueblos jóvenes* is explored in more detail.

Research methods

During the fieldwork, a triangulation of research methods was employed. More traditional ethnographic methods, such as interviewing and participant observation, were combined with discussions in focus groups as well as creative workshops. This last method turned out to be very insightful, as it connected surprisingly well with the girls' life worlds and ways of expressions. Working only with the spoken word was not always enough to bring up new topics or explore taboo issues. Below, the different methods and some consequences of methodological choices I made are discussed in more detail.

Group meetings (talleres) with the girls

One important source for information were the *talleres de chicas*, or girls' workshops, which I organised twice a week. In total, about 45 meetings were held. To some extent, these girls' meetings were what in the methodological literature are called, 'focus groups', which comprise groups of between 6 and 12 persons, recruited to discuss a particular topic. Focus groups are particularly useful to gather information about a subject within a short period of time. Furthermore, they are suitable for those themes for which group interaction provides added insight and an environment of emotional support conducive to revealing personal concerns (Bernard, 1994; Schensull et al., 1999:52-56). The girls' meetings I used in my fieldwork were adaptations of the traditional focus groups. They were much more informal and less organised and included not only talking but also different kinds of creative expression. They eventually became a central place for questions, discussion, emotions, laughter and much more. The data gathered from the girls' meetings were often used as input for the open interviews. However,

32 This is in fact the case in most *pueblos jóvenes*. Contrary to what outsiders sometimes believe, most of the *pueblos jóvenes* in Metropolitan Lima are not violent 'no-go areas'. Except for a number of notorious exceptions, it is fairly safe to go there during the daytime (see also Degregori and Kruijt, 2006).

in the subsequent chapters, I also refer directly to some of the interactions that took place in the meetings.

To invite the girls to the first workshops, I went to each house in which one or more girls between the ages of 14 and 16 lived,³³ inviting these girls to a meeting later that week. I left a leaflet that included an introduction of myself along with information about the meetings and in which I invited them to come and bring a friend. Attendance at the meetings was variable. Sometimes there were ten girls, while at other times no more than three or four turned up. Some girls came often, others just sometimes and this also changed over time. The original group I started with consisted of eight girls. Later, some new girls joined in. I invited new girls I met in the neighbourhood and the girls themselves brought in new friends.

Together with the girls, I set up a program. Once a week, I was going to teach them some English and the other night was reserved for thematic talks and group discussion.³⁴ The themes for these discussions were brought up by the girls and these were complemented by my own ideas. Although in practice this structure was never followed very rigorously, especially in the beginning it served as a starting point. In the course of time, it became clear that the girls liked to do creative work. Once, I asked them, for example, to present themselves by creating large posters with photos, pictures and text. The girls enthusiastically sat to work and came up with very nice and insightful products. Another creative product that the girls produced were (fictitious) stories about love and sexuality. These stories are used as input for Chapters 5 and 7. In Chapter 5, I will include a short methodological reflection on the use of projective techniques and more specifically of fictitious stories for research.

The group meetings had various, interrelated aims. First, they were meant to 'attract' the girls, to become acquainted with them and to build *rapport*. In a sense, they functioned as 'ice-breakers'. Especially the English classes were mainly set up with this underlying idea. I invested a good deal of energy in encouraging the girls to come to the meetings.³⁵ However, the girls themselves were responsible for actually getting to the meetings. This may have led to biases in the composition of the group and thus in the data. For the interviews I carried out later in my fieldwork and for informal conversations, I therefore approached other girls as well.

Secondly, I hoped that the meetings would provide some initial insights about the concerns and daily lives of the girls, issues I could later use in personal interviews and other informal personal conversations. Thirdly, the meetings were intended to be a source

33 This information was known from the neighbourhood survey that was carried out in cooperation with Aynimundo, the NGO that was active in the neighbourhood.

34 For the set-up of the *talleres*, I loosely used elements from the following manuals: 1. 'Cómo planear mi vida. Un programa para el desarrollo de la juventud latinoamericana', by the Asociación Demográfica Costaricense and the Center for Population Options (n.d); 2. 'Tiempo para conversar sobre nuestra sexualidad' and 'Preparándonos para conversar con los adolescentes sobre su sexualidad', both by IES in cooperation with the World AIDS Foundation (2001); 3. 'Módulo de sexualidad: salud sexual y reproductiva para los jóvenes', by the Peruvian ministry of Labour and Social Promotion and UNFPA (n.d.); 4. 'Sólo para adolescentes', by CEDRO (2000).

35 Especially during the initial months, I used to go by the girls' houses about half an hour before the *talleres*, in order to remind them of the meetings and prompt them to go. These visits were also helpful for building up credibility with the parents, with the desired result that they came to more readily give their permission for going to the meetings.

of information in and of themselves. Some meetings were more fruitful than others in this sense, but due to the high degree of confidentiality that developed over the months, it was frequently the case that very interesting and insightful conversations developed. During the course of the fieldwork, discussions and stories became more personal and the girls also started reacting to one another. As interesting as the planned parts of the meetings were the unplanned talks and gossiping that took place both during and after the 'official' meeting. During these times, the girls came up with a lot of additional information, interesting questions and good ideas. The workshops also enabled me to explore certain taboo themes, such as those related to sexuality. Through 'exercises', or hypothetical cases to which I invited the girls to react, interesting discussions about these themes emerged.

Unforeseen positive effects of the girls' meetings were the reactions of the girls' parents. In the parents' eyes, the meetings gave my interaction with the girls a kind of structure, something that they generally applauded. Usually they did not let their daughters move outside the house too freely and even less so at night. However, as the meetings were at planned and fixed hours and at a place known to the parents, under supervision of an adult, it was much easier for the girls to get their parents' permission to attend.

Interviews with the girls

After about five months of meetings and talking with the girls, both in the *talleres* and informally on the street and in their houses, I began a series of open interviews, recorded on tape. By that time, the girls trusted me and they were already familiar with the tape recorder. In these interviews, which each lasted about an hour and a half, I asked the girls about their lives and concerns, their childhood, the relationship with their parents and their dreams and plans for the future. Most of the interviews with the girls were carried out with pairs of girls who had developed a trust in one other.³⁶ This way, the girls were invited to reflect and react on what the other one was saying and sometimes they even started asking questions to each other. Some of the girls preferred to be interviewed alone, and this preference was accommodated.

Interviews with the parents

This study analyses teenage girls in their social environment, especially in relation to their parents. Apart from the innumerable hours I spent with the girls, I therefore dedicated a lot of time to interviews and conversations with the girls' parents. Apart from three group discussions with mothers, where three or four women participated at each session, I interviewed most of the parents on an individual basis, either privately in their homes or in the communal building. The girls' mothers especially were very open with me and seemed to enjoy having the opportunity to tell me about their dreams, fears and their lives in general. Interviewing the girls' fathers was a bit more difficult. Some of them worked many hours outside the *barrio* and were too tired for an interview after work. For them, being invited to talk about their opinions and ideas also seemed more difficult. As a general rule, I tried to get interviews with at least one parent of every girl, sometimes with both. I was in the end able to interview a total of ten mothers and five fathers.

36 In fact, this decision came about rather accidentally. As a result of miscommunication at my first interview appointment, two girls showed up at the same time. I decided to interview both of them simultaneously, something which ended up working really well.

Participatory observation in family life

In order to both learn about family life from the inside and to look behind the stories and accounts of my respondents, I spent a good deal of time in the house of one of the girls. In this family, which consisted of a father, mother and seven (later six) children living at home, I came to be considered the oldest daughter and sister, both by the mother, Maria-Teresa, and by her children. Although 'normality' of course is an illusion, my position in the family seemed to be relatively 'normal'. I slept together with one of the older girls in one bed, ate what was cooked and in my position as older sister I could talk to 'my' younger siblings about their behaviour.

Church and school

Although the focus of this research was on the girls in their families and on their relationship with their parents, I also spent some time studying other socialising spaces in which the girls' lives took place. Most important in this respect were school and church. Both at school and in the church meetings, my focus was mainly on themes that were related to the family. Relevant questions were, for example, to what extent the norms and values constructed and transmitted in these places differed from those in the families. Another question was how, in general terms, the concept of the family was constructed in these places. For two weeks, I participated in the school attended by one of the girls and sat in on most of her classes. At that school, I also held short interviews with the director and with a few teachers. In the church, I mainly focused on the preparation for First Communion and Confirmation. Apart from joining the girls for a number of preparatory meetings and in the Confirmation and First Communion ceremonies, I also carried out interviews with the church volunteers who led the meetings.

Reflection

As is probably clear from my description of the research methods, I chose to become involved to a fair degree in the lives of the girls I studied. As Scheper-Hughes (1992) did in her study on poverty, illness and death in Brazil, I chose to be a rather active and engaged researcher. This led to a 'dual role' that, in the words of Scheper Hughes (ibid:18), always remained "a difficult balance, rarely free of conflict". In the girls' meetings, for example, I not only talked with the girls about their lives and concerns; I also engaged in what could be called *social work*. I gave the girls advice about personal problems, encouraged them to be reflective about their lives and also provided sexual education. Most of the time, I think the girls (and their parents) saw me more as a teacher or social worker than as a researcher.³⁷ A concrete example of my active involvement in the girls' lives is the following. After one of the girls got pregnant, another girl admitted to me that she was having a sexual relationship with her boyfriend as well. I brought up the issue of contraceptives with her and insisted that she had to use them in order to prevent the pregnancy that she did not want. After a number of conversations, the girl decided to start with the pill. The first time I accompanied her to the health centre. Subsequently, her boyfriend went with her.

It is characteristic of ethnographic research that the research and the researcher in some way or other always influence the researched group. Although this is intrinsic to such research, it is not in itself problematic. What is important is to reflect critically about the

37 These roles were of course also easier for them to understand.

impact of such a phenomenon. A first issue is the possible impact of the researcher's presence or of the research itself on the *well-being* of the researched group. This is an ethical question, dealing with the prevention of any harm to the researched group. In principle, the limits are clear: when your research harms your respondents in some way or other, the research should not be carried out. In practice though, it is difficult to assess the exact impact of your presence. I remember a very intense discussion during my first fieldwork period with a researcher colleague. She knew the neighbourhood where I was doing my fieldwork and also knew some of the girls. The conversation was about one of these girls. During the past few months, this girl had become very rebellious at home and had also quit school. Coincidentally, this girl had also been actively participating in my research. She always came to the meetings and seemed to be very eager to learn about new things and other worlds. In the end, the discussion with my colleague was about the extent to which my presence as a white, western researcher in this poor neighbourhood had contributed to her development. A definitive answer to these kinds of questions cannot be given. In this specific case, I think that I had little influence. I was there for only a short while and, more importantly, her parents also told me that they had already had problems with their daughter before my arrival. However, the events led me to be even more self-critical about my behaviour than I had been before.

The impact of the researcher on a group or individual can also have contradictory effects. Take the example of the girl who, on my advice and with my practical support, started to use contraceptives. This girl told me more than once that she felt more reassured now about the risks of pregnancy and that if she were able to continue her studies, this would be partly because of my intervention. The girl's decision to use contraceptives however, also led to a family crisis. At one point, her mother (who did not want her daughter to be sexually active at all) found the contraceptive pills in her daughter's drawer and started a quarrel. Fortunately, her mother never knew about my intervention and she actually saw me as the only person she could trust to talk to about her feelings.

The second question is more methodological and has to do with whether the researcher's decisions and attitudes influence the validity and reliability of the research. I see at least two different issues here. The first issue is about the researcher's influence on the reality he or she studies. In other words, to what extent does the researcher actually see and record what also would have been there without his or her presence? The answer to this question also depends on the central theme and goals of the research. What were at stake in my research were people's constructions and reactions to certain situations. Of course, situations may have been influenced to some extent. I also may have put the girls in situations they would not normally have found themselves in. For my 'farewell party', for example, I invited the girls out to the cinema in one of the very modern shopping malls. Visiting such a middle or higher-class entertainment centre is not something normally within the reach of girls in the *pueblos jóvenes*; it is something strange to them. The way they deal with this kind of situation, however, is their own. The way in which they, for example, positioned themselves towards the other visitors (specifically higher-class girls), the things that struck them and the reactions the visit to the cinema evoked, all say something about them.

These same reflections apply to the case of the girl who started to use contraceptives. On the one hand, we could say that because of my presence and behaviour, I influenced an aspect of her reality that was relevant to my research. Practically, preventing a girl from getting pregnant is definitively not a minor distortion. At the same time though, my aim was not to give any numerical data on the number of girls getting pregnant. Instead, I was interested in

the discourses and practices around issues such as sexuality and the future. In fact, the whole process by which this girl decided whether or not to use contraceptives taught me a great deal about the concerns and issues that are at stake here. And, in addition, it also taught me why it is so difficult for girls in general to start using contraceptives.

I still remember a quote from a researcher whom I met at a conference about the influence she had on her researched group. Her idea was: “You can’t help it, so you may as well use it”. During my fieldwork, the idea that the research also held benefits for the girls involved probably contributed quite a bit to their willingness to participate.³⁸ Furthermore, my rather active participation has added considerably to the trusting relationships I was able to foster with the girls. The fact that they had the idea that I was ‘on their side’ made them more open about their deepest thoughts and concerns. Only in this relationship of *confianza*, could the girls feel free to express their ideas about their lives and concerns, including about more intimate themes such as sexuality and personal problems.

Design of the book

After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 focuses on the *pueblos jóvenes* themselves (i.e. the geographical context of this research). The chapter starts with an overview of the history of rural-to-urban migration that has taken place over recent decades. Against that background, the neighbourhood Los Pinos, where the girls in this research have been raised, is described in more detail. The rest of the chapter analyses the processes of poverty and exclusion that people in *pueblos jóvenes* are subject to. In this analysis, a more theoretical discussion on poverty and exclusion is combined with a more empirical approach to what poverty means to people in Los Pinos.

The third chapter could also be seen as a contextual chapter, but now on a micro level: it discusses the family in the migrant popular neighbourhoods. It first gives a brief historical overview of some demographic changes with respect to family structure and then focuses on the internal dynamics within families. This will be done, first of all, from the angle of gender patterns and representations. Then the focus will shift to the parenting styles and parenting culture. The final section of Chapter 3 is dedicated to a reflection on domestic violence in *pueblos jóvenes* families.

Chapter 4 presents the girls who were the main subjects in this research. Although their views and experiences are also present to some extent in the previous chapters, it is here that the girls, their dreams and their concerns come into the spotlight. The themes that are discussed are a reflection of what the girls themselves presented as the most important in their lives. First of all, this is school, followed by household-related activities. The third section of the chapter sketches the hobbies and leisure time activities of the girls. The fourth section pays special attention to two special events in teenage girls’ lives, i.e. the *quince años* (15th birthday) and the *promoción* (high school graduation). This section is followed by a discussion on the place of religion in the girls’ lives. The chapter concludes with an overview of the girls’ dreams and expectations for the future. Just like the previous chapters, the chapter is a mix between emic views and perspectives and more theoretical discussions on girls and childhood in general.

Chapter 5, on sexuality, continues where the previous chapter left off. Whereas the former presents the girls’ lives by the themes they themselves talk about, this chapter deals with

38 See also Scheper-Hughes (1992:118).

issues that the girls do not talk about a lot: sex and sexuality. Although these issues play a very important role in their lives, it is not something the girls talk about in public. Because of this condition, some of the important data for this chapter had to be gathered from more indirect sources, such as fictitious stories written by the girls. The chapter starts with a brief methodological discussion on the use of stories as research method. Then, we will see how the girls in Los Pinos deal with sexuality. Based on a chronological order of events, the chapter analyses consecutively the moment at which girls get involved with boys, their first sexual experience, the use of contraceptives and finally the theme of abortion.

In Chapter 6, we leave the girls' perspective for a while to turn back to the family level, more specifically to the parents and the way they try to educate their daughters. The chapter focuses on the parental educational messages and argues that these messages in fact can be divided into two components. First of all, they comprise the element of (formal) education: girls are encouraged to do their best at school, in order to 'become someone' in life. This emphasis is combined with a call for moral sexual behaviour (being a *señorita*). Both of these elements, as I will explain in Chapter 6, are directly related to the migrant popular neighbourhood context and together they form a rather prescriptive socialising framework for the girls.

Chapter 7 looks at teenage pregnancy. The chapter deals with the issue in a chronological way, paying attention to the moment in which girls find out they are pregnant, the moment in which they tell their boyfriend and parents, the period of pregnancy and finally, the first months or years of motherhood. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the possible futures of the girls who became mothers. In this chapter, we will return to many of the themes and issues from previous chapters.

Chapter 8 draws together the most important points raised throughout the various chapters. It will link the main issues to the questions raised in the first chapter and summarise the main findings of this study.

Photo 2 View of a section of Los Pinos



Chapter 2. Poverty and survival in the *pueblos jóvenes*

In the brief life-impressions of the four girls described in the first chapter, a number of characteristics emerged which are not unique to the lives of these girls. These characteristics are part of a broader story - the story of survival in a *pueblo joven*, or migrant popular neighbourhood. It is this story that will be the central theme of this chapter.

For decades, Peru has been a divided country in socio-economic terms. According to Instituto Cuanto (2000), the Gini coefficient for expenditure³⁹ reached 0.40 in 2000, greater than the 0.386 of 1997 and the 0.39 of 1994. Spending of the lowest quintiles (I and II) diminished by 17% from 1997 to 2000, while spending of the highest quintile grew by 3%. The Gini coefficient for family income in 2000 was 49.8. One of the geographical areas in which poverty is concentrated is the migrant popular neighbourhoods, located on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima.

Generally speaking, in Metropolitan Lima there are two different kinds of popular neighbourhoods. First, there are the older popular neighbourhoods, located within the original city limits. Secondly, there are the (newer) migrant popular neighbourhoods, or *pueblos jóvenes*, which emerged from the 1950s onwards, on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima, wherever there was some land available to build a house (Driant, 1991; Riofrío, 2003).⁴⁰ Although not all residents of the *pueblos jóvenes* are straightforward rural-to-urban migrants (i.e., some of them may be the offspring of inner city families who were unable to find a house nearby) the overall character of the *pueblos jóvenes* is migrant-oriented. The situation and problems in the inner city poor areas and the migrant popular neighbourhoods are to some degree similar. In both of these types of neighbourhoods, the inhabitants belong to

39 The Gini coefficient, a measure commonly used to indicate income or expenditure inequality in a society, is a number which has a value between zero and one. The higher the value of the coefficient, the higher the degree of income inequality within the society being measured.

40 Over the decades, a variety of terms have been used for the newly formed neighbourhoods where the poor majority of people live. They were known in Peru as *barriadas* (settlements or shantytowns) in the 1950s, *pueblos jóvenes* (young towns) from the 1970s on, and have also been referred to as *asentamientos humanos* (human settlements) since the 1990s. The latter term is preferred by the Peruvian government because of its presumed neutrality. In my opinion, the distinctiveness of the neighbourhoods is not just based on poverty, but is also cultural and political in nature. Therefore, I prefer to use the terms 'migrant popular neighbourhoods' and *pueblos jóvenes*. As said in Chapter 1, 'popular' is used in this dissertation in the same sense as the Spanish *popular*, referring to the lower socio-economic classes of society. The term *pueblos jóvenes* refers to the young age of the neighbourhoods, and also reflects their village-like character, in addition to alluding to the rural background of the inhabitants. Furthermore, it is a term that those living in the neighbourhoods themselves use. In this dissertation, the terms 'migrant popular neighbourhoods' and the term *pueblos jóvenes* are used interchangeably.

the poorest groups of society. In addition they are, more than in the rest of the city, subject to problems of unemployment, poor infrastructure and violence. However, especially with respect to stigmatisation and discrimination, as well as the construction of identity, there are also some relevant differences.⁴¹

Most of the *pueblos jóvenes* in Metropolitan Lima emerged between the late 1960s and the early 1980s. During this time, immense numbers of people migrated from rural to urban areas in search of a better life for themselves and their children. Some migrants succeeded in their aims: they established new, successful lives and are now a part of Peru's middle class. Most migrants, though, got stuck in the numerous and extensive zones on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima. The migrant background of its residents markedly influenced the identity and culture that emerged in the *pueblos jóvenes*. People combined rural and urban elements and complemented these with new elements typical of their lives in the new environment of the *pueblos jóvenes*. Solidarity and collaboration became central values.

Today, as we will see in this chapter, life in the *pueblos jóvenes* is characterised by a continuous struggle for survival amid poverty. This poverty is primarily, and most obviously, economic in nature, on account of the relatively low income levels of the inhabitants. Poverty also has social and cultural aspects: there is a lack of good services and people are discriminated against for both racial and socio-economic reasons. Both the multidimensional nature of poverty and the ways that people have developed to deal with this situation of poverty (survival mechanisms) will be the central subject of this chapter. Let me begin, however, with a more extensive introduction of rural-to-urban migration and its effects on Metropolitan Lima, along with a presentation of more general information about Los Pinos, the neighbourhood where the research for this study was carried out.

Migrant popular neighbourhoods: emergence and consolidation

One of the main characteristics of the *pueblos jóvenes*, like Los Pinos, is that inhabitants are migrants from the *provincias*. It is in fact through the enormous waves of migration that these suburbs emerged. The process of rural-to-urban migration in Peru started in the 1950s. Lima, in the 1940s a city with only 500,000 inhabitants is now an enormous metropolis with a population of about 8,000,000, implying a growth percentage of almost 5% per year (Driant, 1991; Kruijt, 2004b). In the first decades, migration was mainly for economic reasons: people came in search of work and a better life. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s an additional push factor was the escalating violence in the highlands of Peru, related to increasing terrorist operations by the Maoist movement Shinig Path in that region.

Lack of space within the city limits forced many newcomers to settle in the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima, in the so-called *conos* (cones), which at that time consisted of nothing more than desert plains and hills. Today the northern cone, following the population

41 In various conversations, a difference was suggested between the migrant neighbourhoods located in the southern cone and those in the northern cone of Metropolitan Lima. In the latter, people were said to be more entrepreneurial and commercial and supposedly there was a bigger flow of money and trade within these zones. Because of a lack of comparative research on this issue, it is difficult to draw final conclusions. One marked exception in my view, though, is provided by Villa El Salvador, one of the largest districts of the southern cone. Apart from its history of solidarity and cooperative planning, this district also is distinctive because of its extensive industrial zone.

42 Both Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 are partly based on discussions with Prof. Kruijt. See also Kruijt (2004b).

Table 2.1 Population in selected districts of Metropolitan Lima, 1961-2005⁴²

Zones	1961	1972	1981	1993	2000*	2005*
Metropolitan Lima	1,836,000	3,295,000	4,608,000	6,346,000	7,695,000	8,187,000
Older, inner-city districts (relatively poor zones)						
Lima	339,000	354,000	371,000	340,000	286,000	354,000
Rimac	144,000	173,000	184,000	190,000	192,000	220,000
La Victoria	205,000	266,000	271,000	227,000	206,000	242,000
Older, inner-city districts (relatively wealthy zones)						
San Isidro	38,000	63,000	71,000	63,000	60,000	75,000
Miraflores	88,000	100,000	103,000	87,000	88,000	101,000
New districts (migrant zones)						
<i>Southern cone:</i>						
San Juan de Miraflores	-	107,000	166,000	283,000	388,000	393,000
Villa Maria del Triunfo	-	181,000	313,000	264,000	342,000	349,000
<i>Eastern cone:</i>						
San Juan de Lurigancho	33,000	86,000	259,000	583,000	751,000	787,000
Comas	-	173,000	283,000	404,000	470,000	507,000
<i>Northern cone:</i>						
San Martin de Porres	97,000	231,000	405,000	380,000	448,000	490,000
Los Olivos	-	-	-	228,000	344,000	315,000

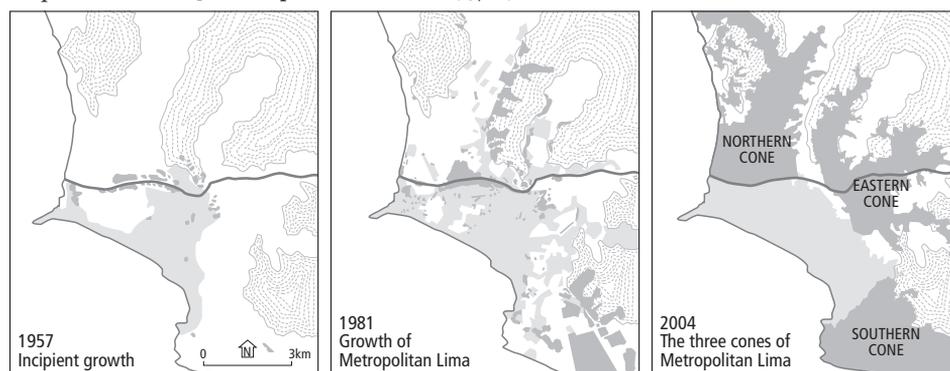
Sources: Driant (1991:55, 66, 67, 69); Webb and Fernández Baca (2001 and 2005)

* = estimated

growth of the 1960s, has an estimated 2,100,000 inhabitants, 26% of the total population of Metropolitan Lima. The southern cone, gaining growth in the 1970s, now contains 1,300,000 inhabitants, 16.6% of Lima's population. The eastern cone, consolidated in the 1980s, today has 1,600,000 inhabitants, 19.5% of the Metropolitan population (Matos Mar, 2004:132-133). The enormous growth of these zones during the past four decades (and the concomitant stagnation of older, more inner-city zones) is shown in Table 2.1 and the Maps 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, below.

Most of the migrant popular neighbourhoods emerged out of *invasiones* (land occupations), on the sandy slopes of the hills surrounding Metropolitan Lima. This means that the new inhabitants illegally occupy the place they are planning to build on and install

Maps 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 Metropolitan Lima in 1957, 1981 and 2004.



Source: Matos Mar (2004:149-153)

themselves provisionally in the hope that they are not kicked out. There are also a significant number of neighbourhoods, especially in the somewhat more accessible areas, that were formed in a more legal and formal way, usually in the form of a cooperative.⁴³ In both of these cases though, most of the new inhabitants were migrants from the *provincias*. Some of them had come to Metropolitan Lima very recently; most of them, however, had already lived for a few months or even years in some other parts of the city (usually with friends or relatives, or in rented rooms).

The construction and consolidation of the new neighbourhoods took place in stages and 'real houses' only emerged years later. The first step was often the construction of a provisional dwelling built directly on the sandy ground, with reed mats, plastic and some triplex. In the years thereafter, the house was improved whenever there was money available to do so.⁴⁴ In these first stages of neighbourhood construction, life for the pioneer residents was hard. There was usually no water and electricity (water had to be purchased from water trucks that came by a few times a week) and the physical infrastructure was poorly developed. In the beginning, the level of attention of local and national authorities in terms of infrastructure or public investments was rather low. It was only after five to ten years that the state started to recognise the new neighbourhoods officially and some basic services were starting to be provided. The consolidation process was further enhanced by a growth of social networks and support structures (Kranenburg, 2002:26) In sum, as Anderson (2000:6) concludes: "Establishing a house and family in a squatter settlement is for the young and the brave" (see also Barrig, 1981; Degregori et al., 1986; Lobo, 1982).

Today, land tenure in most of the neighbourhoods seems to be resolved. Most people own the piece of land they are living on and they have started to build their houses. The next challenge in the area of housing therefore will be how and where to accommodate the grown-up children and their new families.⁴⁵ Although the large majority of *pueblos jóvenes* were founded between 1960 and the mid 1980s, new neighbourhoods have also emerged in recent decades. As the most suitable land has by now already been occupied, most of these neighbourhoods are located farther away from the centre of Metropolitan Lima, on the steep slopes of the surrounding hills. On these marginal lands, problems are only to some extent comparable to those seen in previous decades. Also here, people start building their houses with simple materials and only over a period of years do durable houses emerge. In today's

43 In that case, the municipal or central government is asked formally for a piece of land to start building a neighbourhood. On average and especially in the first years after the birth of the neighbourhood, the situation in the formally constituted neighbourhoods tended to be a little bit better than the situation in the illegally occupied areas. Not confronted with the risks of removal because of the condition of illegality, people in the former situation could more easily concentrate on the construction of the houses and consolidation of the neighbourhood. Moreover, participation in a cooperative implied an entrance fee, a requirement which tended to attract people who were better off financially.

44 According to the NGO Alternativa, the average period a family takes for the construction of a basic house is 15 years. After this period, further improvements and new investments (e.g. provision of space for grown-up children) are made (El Comercio, 15-4-2004). In general, there does not appear to be any relationship between legacy of tenure and the subsequent level of consolidation of self-help housing (Gough, 1996).

45 Source: Public lecture by Gustavo Riofrío, CEDLA, Amsterdam, 26 November 2004. See also Riofrío (2003).

new neighbourhoods, however, land entitlement and service provision is a much bigger problem than in the neighbourhoods formed two or three decades ago. Another difference is that whereas in the earlier founded neighbourhoods, the inhabitants were mainly coming from the *provincias*, the population in the new *pueblos jóvenes* is much more heterogeneous. About 70% of the people is coming from the same urban region and about 20% comes from other zones of Metropolitan Lima. Usually they are the children of the former migrants, who cannot find a cheap place to live in the original area. Less than 10% could be called migrants. This implies that there has also been a change in the motives for *invasiones* and neighbourhood founding. As Riofrío put it in a public lecture: “People now live in slums because they are poor, and no longer because they are migrants”.⁴⁶

Over the years, women always played a specific role in neighbourhood consolidation. First of all, they were the ones who were responsible for daily survival, a task that was often a real challenge. As Anderson (2000:6) states: “Keeping water available, buying and preparing food, protecting against theft and keeping the dust down to acceptable levels was a daunting task for the women” (see also Rivera, 1993). Furthermore, as we will see in greater detail in the section about labour, women have also worked together with men in income-generating activities. Related to the responsibilities entailed in this dual role, a lot of women have started to organise themselves, for example, in *ollas communes* (communal kitchens), or *clubes de madres* (mothers’ clubs). Although originally emerging as practical answers to real needs, these associations often also led to processes of empowerment of women. Despite the fact that these processes were often very complex and conflictive, women increasingly became aware of their own capacities and needs and they also learned how to express their opinions (Blondet, 1986 and 1991; Ypeij, 1995). Furthermore, as Grompone (1991) states, in these organisations, power divisions were usually less hierarchic than in their homes.

San Juan de Miraflores

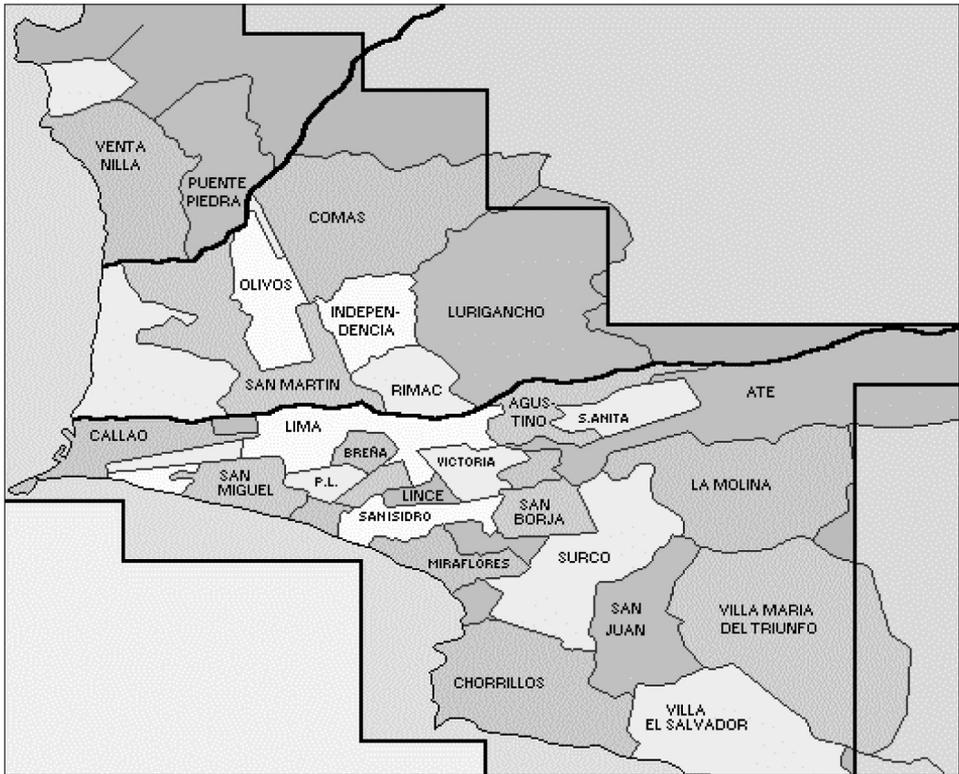
The most important impetus for the *invasiones* in the cones occurred on Christmas Eve, 1954,⁴⁷ when about 5000 people installed themselves on what until then had been unoccupied land south of the city, baptising it ‘Ciudad de Dios’. The founding of Ciudad de Dios was the first step towards the occupation of many other zones on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima (Driant, 1991). Ciudad de Dios was itself the genesis of the district of San Juan de Miraflores, where the neighbourhood of Los Pinos is located.

Today, San Juan de Miraflores is a district with 600,000 residents, located about 15 kilometres from the centre of Metropolitan Lima (see Map 2.4). The bus ride from the centre takes between 45 minutes and two hours, depending on traffic. When heading from the neighbouring district of Chorillos toward San Juan de Miraflores, passengers first pass a sort of no-man’s land, where one might get the feeling that they have already left the city limits. It is only at night that specks of light on the horizon indicate that a whole section of the city lies ahead. In this no-man’s land and in San Juan de Miraflores itself, there are hardly any trees or plants. It is as if you have suddenly entered the desert. The two exceptions to this are

46 Ibid.

47 Although *invasiones* were not a new phenomenon by that time, it was the first time in the history of Metropolitan Lima that it took place so massively and so far away from the rest of the city and its commercial activities. Until then, most new neighbourhoods had emerged on the hills northeast of the city and alongside the river Rímac (Driant, 1991).

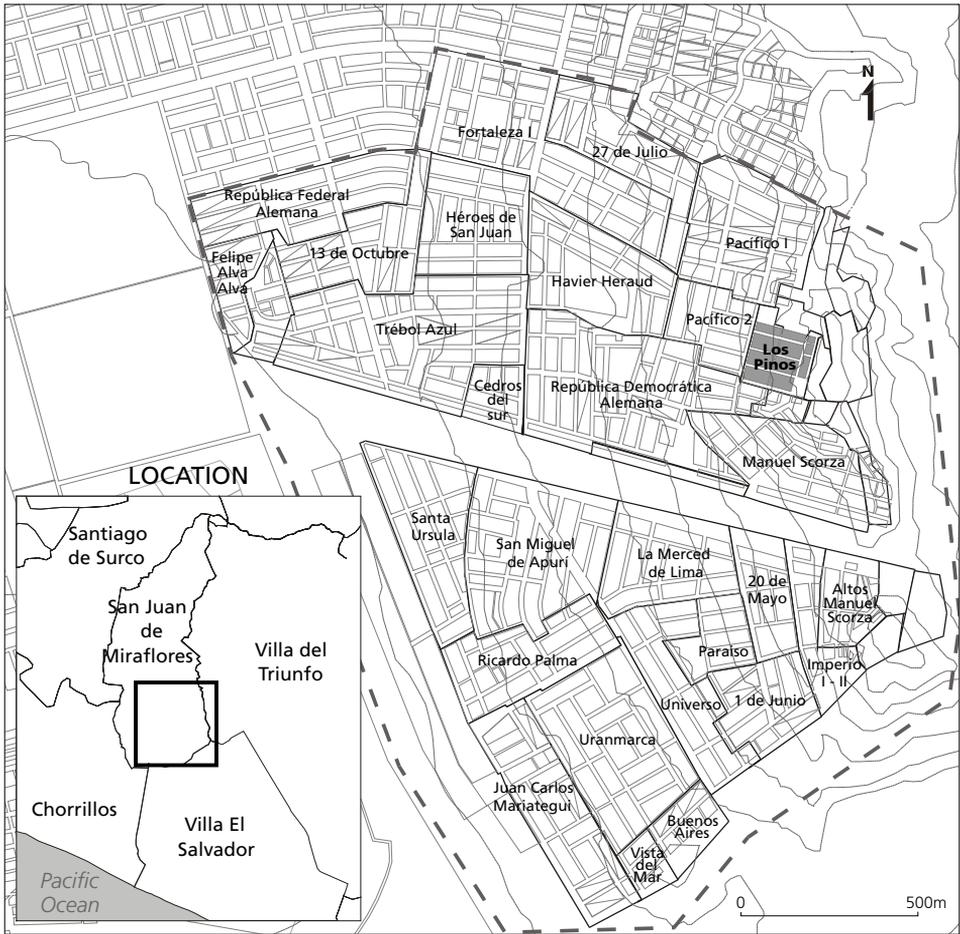
Map 2.4 Metropolitan Lima – Municipal districts



the Huayna Cápac municipal park and a green area next to a large military cemetery that looks like an oasis in the midst of all the sand. The transition from the no-man's land to San Juan de Miraflores is marked by a tunnel, which goes below the Pan Americana highway. The sounds of honking car horns redound through the tunnel and there is a nauseating stench of urine and exhaust fumes. Especially in the summer, when many people have their car windows open, the tunnel is a favourite place for street robbers, who snatch bags from the laps of passengers in stopped cars.

San Juan de Miraflores is a busy district, with both commercial and residential areas. The oldest part, Ciudad de Dios, is the commercial centre and is a very busy area with many shops and huge indoor and outdoor markets. Streets that are meant for three lanes are packed like sardine cans with five rows of buses and cars (mainly taxis). Pedestrians who try to cross the street do so at their own peril. On top of all this is the incessant Peruvian honking of car horns, something which hardly contributes to either the tranquillity of the environment or orienting oneself within it. Most roads in Ciudad de Dios are paved, but they are usually full of potholes and are generally in terrible condition. Situated around Ciudad de Dios, especially up towards the hills, are outlying residential areas, in varying stages of consolidation, where the poor reside. One of these sub-districts is Pampas de San Juan, where Los Pinos is located (see Map 2.5).

Map 2.5 Pampas de San Juan, subdistrict of San Juan de Miraflores⁴⁸



Pampas de San Juan consists of 44 neighbourhoods, all in different phases of consolidation. The smallest neighbourhood has only 20 households, the largest more than 700. In total, Pampas is home to an estimated 50,000 inhabitants. Most of the people, except for those in more recent settlements, have obtained the property rights to the land they are living on, whether collective (in the case of cooperatives) or individual. The individual land titles were mostly obtained through the ‘Integrated Municipal Housing Project of Pampas de San Juan’, a project that started in the middle of the 1980s in order to legalise land ownership and avoid further corruption and speculation (Hordijk, 2000:109). Pampas is one of the poorer areas of San Juan de Miraflores and the higher you go uphill, the greater the incidence of poverty.

48 Special thanks to Dr. Michaela Hordijk for providing this map.

Box 2.1 Public transport to Los Pinos

To reach Los Pinos, small buses or *combis* leave from the centre of San Juan de Miraflores. The buses with the signs P en B are heading towards Los Pinos. They leave long after they are full. After a short while, the road starts to rise and while going up the hills, the level of consolidation of the houses gradually decreases. Many of the overcrowded *combis* have difficulties with the hill. Fortunately, on the trip up, people gradually get off the *combi*. On their way back down, empty *combis* gradually fill up with passengers. There is hardly any traffic between the different points of the hills and the only relevant form of transport and contact is that between the hills and the rest of San Juan de Miraflores and Lima. When the biggest incline of the road has been surmounted, there is a stretch of about one kilometre where on clear days the views of the city are impressive. At night, the panorama of lights lying below is really spectacular. The road, by the way, is in remarkably good condition, as it was built only a few years ago. To the left and the right of the road, small sandy streets head into different neighbourhoods. One of these roads leads into the neighbourhood of Los Pinos. There are no official bus stops and *combis* stop at street corners as necessary to pick up and drop off passengers. From the 'bus stop' near Los Pinos, it is only one block further uphill that Los Pinos starts.

Los Pinos

About half way up the hill of Pampas de San Juan, lies the neighbourhood of Los Pinos. As was already described in the previous chapter, the neighbourhood was founded in 1984. Only the row of houses on the north side (*manzana A*) was built more recently, in 1995. Above Los Pinos, more neighbourhoods emerged. These are newer than Los Pinos and therefore less consolidated. Today, the neighbourhood consists of nine *manzanas*.⁴⁹ The roads in the neighbourhood are unpaved and every car that drives by kicks up enormous clouds of dust. Because of their steepness and bad condition, many of the sandy roads are not accessible for cars. In 2002, the higher parts of the neighbourhood were made more accessible to foot traffic by the construction of steps.⁵⁰ In 2003, the road just beneath the neighbourhood, passing the market, was paved. In some sense, this meant an advance, as transport has become easier. At the same time though, the cars that pass tend to go very fast and the first accidents have already occurred.

Los Pinos contains a total of about 130 plots (15 to 20 plots per *manzana*), sometimes with more than one family living at each plot. The total number of inhabitants is roughly 750. All plots have the same size (140m²), but there are some differences between the lower row of *manzanas* and the upper row; the former are situated on a much flatter area and the average state of the houses seems to be a bit better. In both of these rows, most of the houses have individual water connections and a sewage system. The least developed part of Los Pinos is *manzana A*. It is the youngest *manzana*, where people have been living since the beginning of

49 A *manzana* refers to a block of houses, usually 100 by 100 metres.

50 The construction of the steps was done in cooperation between the neighbours, delivering their *mano de obra* (labour), with a mayoral candidate offering most of the materials. Political sponsoring of local infrastructure works is very common; many popular neighbourhoods have small projects like this, especially during an election year.

the 1990s. In 2001, many houses in this area were still rather provisionally made of reed mats or wood, often with a so-called 'semi-concrete' floor. For water and electricity, the residents depended on neighbours in the other *manzanas* and wastewater was thrown just outside the house. During the last few years, however, in *manzana A* people have started to build houses using durable materials. Recently, waterworks have been installed as well.

Little shops operate out of various houses in the neighbourhood. These are usually very small, but the most essential groceries and other practical items can be obtained there. There is also a morning market, just below the playfield, where vegetables, chicken, groceries and some small household utensils are sold. Facing the market, there is a concrete playfield. Here, children play football and other games and in the afternoons the square is often used by a group of youth and adults to play volleyball or football. At the eastern end of the playfield, there are steps where, especially at night, the youth of Los Pinos and adjacent neighbourhoods gather to chat and drink. Both the playfield and the steps were constructed by the community a few years ago, with the help of a small NGO, Ayni Mundo.

During the last ten years, Los Pinos has progressed quite a bit with respect to the housing conditions. In a 1996 INEI study,⁵¹ more than half of the houses in Los Pinos were reported to be made of wood or reed mats (INEI, 1996). My observations for the period 2000–2003 suggest that this number has gone down to about 10 to 20%. Still, there is large heterogeneity with respect to the consolidation of the houses. Ideally, the roof is also to be made of cement; in many cases, though, this is still not the case. There are already a few houses which have a second floor, constructed by simply putting a second block on top of the first. A close look at the houses where the girls who participated in my research were living revealed varying conditions among the dwellings. Most girls lived in simple one-floor houses in which at least some walls were made of stone. Sometimes the roof was also made of durable material (stone). One of the families managed to build a second floor. At the same time though, there were also four girls who lived in very draughty and leaky homes, where the walls were made of wood and reed mats. Especially in the winter it could be very cold in such dwellings.

Most people in Los Pinos have a migrational background. When looking at the parents of the girls who participated in my study, it appears that all but four parents are originally from the *provincias* (see Appendix 1). With respect to the region of origin, no general tendency can be discerned. People come both from the *Andes* region and from the *selva* – the highland and lowland regions of Peru respectively. Many people came to Metropolitan Lima when they were in their teens. Usually, they first lived somewhere else in the capital and only came to Los Pinos when they began to start their own families.

The neighbourhood has a *local comunal* (communal building), in the north part of the neighbourhood, between *manzanas A* and B. Until 2000, a PRONOEI, a non-official crèche, was run here. The crèche then moved to a new building a few metres off to the side, built by the community in a joint effort with the already mentioned NGO Ayni Mundo. As a result, in 2001 the *local comunal* came back into the hands of the community and after a makeshift renovation of the roof, the idea was to use the building for a variety of communal activities, such as meetings, workshops and possibly the establishment of a number of small businesses.⁵² In the years thereafter, however, the building deteriorated rapidly and as far as I know, hardly any activity is taking place there today.

51 The INEI data are based on research done in 1992 and 1993, when the neighbourhood only had existed for about five to eight years.

Culture of poverty

In Los Pinos, as in other *pueblos jóvenes*, people's lives are framed by different forms of marginalisation and exclusion. Over the decades, both the causes of poverty and exclusion and the impact these processes have on people have been the subject of many academic debates. In the 1960s, one of the most influential authors on urban poverty was Lewis (1959, 1961 and 1965). Based on his research on poverty in Mexico and Puerto Rico, he concluded that in a situation of poverty, people develop a way of life that although appropriate and useful in the short term, will perpetuate their poverty on the long run. According to Lewis, this culture of poverty is a condition that is usually found among marginalized groups living in a class-stratified highly individuated, capitalistic society (Lewis, 1965:xliv). In such a context the reactions that people have to long-term poverty, and the adaptations that they make in response to it, may lead to the emergence of a specific culture, which is transferred from one generation to the other. Lewis: "Once it comes into existence it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effects on the children" (ibid.:xlv). This implies that children from families living in a culture of poverty will not be geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities that may occur during their lifetime (ibid.). According to Lewis, people who are living in a culture of poverty are in fact subscribing to most of the values that are common in the middle classes. On the whole, though, because they are also aware of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of broader society, this adoption of values remains mostly at a verbal level, and is not transferred into action. Therefore, it is important to distinguish explicitly between what people in these kinds of situations say and what they do.

On the individual level, the culture of poverty is characterised by (among other things) a strong feeling of marginality and dependence, a strong present-time orientation, a widespread belief in male superiority and a high degree of passivity and sometimes even apathy. People are, in other words, losing the hope that, in the near future, things may actually get better. On the family level, Lewis mentioned the absence of childhood (under normal circumstances an especially prolonged and protected stage of the life cycle), a relatively high incidence of abandonment of wives and children, a strong predisposition to authoritarianism, and a trend towards female- or mother-centred families, the latter resulting in a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives. On the local community level, the culture of poverty is usually characterised by poor housing conditions, crowding and gregariousness. In comparison to the broader society there seems to be significantly less internal organization. Moreover, the often-mentioned high degree of solidarity between different people, both within one family and among the whole community, is merely verbal. There may be some voluntary associations and informal temporary groupings but the moment the issue at stake begins losing momentum, the organisation falls apart (Lewis, 1965).

Lewis' approach to poverty has been widely criticised by other academics (see, for example, Lomnitz, 1975; Perlman, 1976; Portes, 1972). One critique held that his approach was too simplistic and that it did not take into account the many other factors and causes of exclusion within the rest of society. According to the *dependencia* thinkers of the 1970s, for example, Lewis' approach was an egregious example of 'blaming the poor' for a situation which in fact had its roots in much broader processes and inequalities. Furthermore, he was blamed for

52 The *local comunal* is also the place where most of the group discussions and girls' *talleres* that I organised took place.

being too fatalistic and for neglecting the abilities of poor people to survive and to overcome their situation. To some extent, these critiques are apposite. When focusing on processes and on how these are taking their own course, there is indeed a risk of underestimating the possibility that people might break out of these processes. It is also true that Lewis' analysis merely focused on the question why people have so much difficulty breaking out of a situation of poverty instead of on the question how a situation of poverty and inequality comes into existence in the first place. To borrow the terminology from the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Lewis seemed to be paying more attention to the 'maintainers' than to the 'drivers' of poverty (cf. Moore, 2005).

There are a number of important points that I would like to take away from this debate. First, I think that many of the criticisms do not do justice to what Lewis was trying to show: in other words, the way that his critics have presented his arguments is not accurate. It is not true, for example, that Lewis did not include the broader context in his analysis of poverty. He clearly stated that the number of traits of the culture of poverty that are found among poor people and the way they are interrelated may vary from society to society and from family to family. Even more revealing is his statement that not all poor people necessarily develop a culture of poverty. Most likely, candidates are people who are experiencing sudden change and who for various reasons feel alienated from their original stable situation. Migrants who move from the rural areas to the urban centres are a very good example of this phenomenon. Lewis also emphasised the direct links between developments in broader society and poverty for certain groups. Many of the characteristics of the culture of poverty can in fact be viewed as local and informal solutions for problems that are not met by existing institutions and agencies. This occurs either because people are not eligible for these institutions, because they cannot afford them, or because people are ignorant or suspicious of them. A good example is the field of credit and savings: as a result of the inability to obtain credit from formal banks, many poor people are developing their own informal means of obtaining credit.

Secondly, I would say that Lewis has made an important contribution to the debate surrounding families in poverty. He was the first to point out that poverty entails more than just economic deprivation and that, in the long run, as a result of specific ways of dealing with poverty, the situation of poverty may become self-perpetuating. It also argues against the belief that poverty could be addressed by focusing on economic growth at a macro level or by just enlarging the opportunities for poor people. Today, the basic ideas of a 'culture of poverty', meaning the risk of being trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty and survival strategies that becomes an obstacle to social mobility, can still be found in many theoretical and empirical studies on poverty.⁵³ As Harper et al. also conclude in their review of different poverty studies: "Overall, the literature suggests that individuals can break out of intergenerational poverty, but perhaps to a lesser extent than commonly believed". Moreover, "people who move out of poverty are likely to move [not further than] into the ranks of the slightly lesser poor" (Harper et al., 2003:537).

Lewis' focus on the existence of internal cultural maintainers of poverty, though, should be combined with a more explicit recognition of the importance of the broader socio-economic context and a focus on agency. Within the constraints set by the broader context, poor people

53 In the Peruvian context, Pimentel Sevilla speaks of a *síndrome de pobreza urbana* (syndrome of urban poverty), which includes problems in the material and the subjective fields and also includes problems related to exploitation and discrimination (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996:11).

are actively constructing their own lives and, insofar as is possible, they act strategically. In the long run, though, because of internal and external factors, many of these strategies are not very productive.

This conclusion is taken further when we focus on the issue of poverty transfer from one generation to the next. This issue, which as we saw was already part of Lewis' analysis, has led to a lot of academic contributions during the last decade. The conclusion from this literature is that although transfer of poverty may take place in some cases, one always has to take into account the highly contextual nature of this process (Harper et al., 2003). Whether and to what extent poverty is indeed transferred from parents to children is highly dependent on the possibilities for social mobility in broader society, the educational and employment opportunities, parental or neighbourhood role models, familial and child aspirations, health and nutrition, a child's position within a family and when in a child's life poverty occurs (Harper et al., 2003:537; see also Moore, 2005). In addition, as Moore (2005) emphasises, poverty is not transferred from one generation to the next as a package, but as a complex of positive and negative factors that affect a child's chances of experiencing poverty. These transfers can take place through socialisation, but also through the investment of time and capital in health or education or through (genetic) inheritance (Moore, 2005:12-13; see also CEPAL, 2000:145).

One of the more recent contributions to the debates on youth poverty and the intergenerational transfer of poverty is the concept of 'vulnerability'.⁵⁴ This concept, popular in World Bank circles, stresses that, in order to understand the intergenerational transfer of poverty, factors at both the family level and the broader societal level should be included. Together, these factors can lead to both an upward and a downward spiral. In this approach, the role of the family is crucial, as it is here that negative effects and events from outside can be prevented or reduced. This concept in fact combines the two sides of the debate discussed above: on the one hand poverty is dependent on broader societal structures, on the other hand it is 'mediated' by individual or group actions. To put it briefly, it focuses on both the impact of structure and the possibilities of agency.

In the rest of this chapter, the focus will be on a more empirical discussion of poverty in the lives of *pueblos jóvenes* residents. The multidimensional nature of poverty as outlined above will serve as a guide. In the following section, I will first look more narrowly at the economic aspects of poverty. Then I will move to some other aspects of poverty that are experienced by the neighbourhood's inhabitants. As we come closer to the situation of the inhabitants of Los Pinos and more specifically of the girls who are growing up in this neighbourhood, it will become clear that the poverty that people in *pueblos jóvenes* experience needs to be contextualised within the broader macro-economic context of hampered economic growth and an unequal distribution of resources. On a local level we will also see, however, examples of agency in combination with many aspects of the 'culture of poverty' as described by Lewis.

Poverty in Peru

Poverty and exclusion in the *pueblos jóvenes* are reflected first of all in the high rates of economic poverty prevalent in these neighbourhoods. To a large extent, this problem relates to a national trend. A retrospective view on the poverty levels in Peru over the last 15 years

54 I heard of this concept through a presentation by Anne Kjølland, at the Conference 'Childhoods 2005' in Oslo, Norway. See also <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/164047/howknow/definitions.htm>.

shows that poverty figures rose considerably in the early 1990s and have remained high ever since then (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Poverty in Peru (1985-2000)

Year	Total population (x 1000)	Total poor (x 1000)	Percentage of poor in Peru
1985-86	19,490	8,400	43
1991	22,000	12,145	55
1994	23,130	12,350	53
1997	24,370	12,355	51
2000	25,660	13,890	54

Source: Mauro Machuca (2002:23)

The poverty figures presented in the table above are calculated by using the *canasta básica de consumo*, a measure representing the purchasing power necessary for acquiring a certain minimum number of basic goods and services. A related measure, for extreme poverty, is the *canasta básica alimentaria*, which refers only to the minimum amount of food that a person or family needs. In Table 2.3, both the total poverty and the extreme poverty figures for Metropolitan Lima and the rest of the country are presented for three discrete points during the 1990s. Both of these types of poverty in Metropolitan Lima declined somewhat in the mid-1990s, but they have risen again since then (Instituto Cuanto, 2000). In June 2000, about 45% of all people in Metropolitan Lima lived below the poverty line and almost 5% did not even pass the extreme poverty line. Figures for the years after 2000 do not show much improvement.

Another way of measuring poverty that is often used in Peru is the *basic needs measure*. The question here is to what extent certain basic needs are fulfilled. Examples of the basic needs that are included in this measure are adequate housing; access to school, health care and other public services; and socio-economic characteristics of the household. In Metropolitan Lima, the basic needs most often lacking are related to adequate housing (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.3 Evolution of poverty, 1994-2000 (percentages of total population)

	Total poverty Measure: <i>canasta básica de consumo</i>			Extreme poverty Measure: <i>canasta básica alimentaria</i>		
	June 94	Nov 97	June 2000	June 94	Nov 97	June 2000
National	53.4	50.7	54.1	19.0	14.7	14.8
Metropolitan Lima	42.4	35.5	45.2	5.5	2.4	4.7
Urban coast	51.9	58.3	53.1	12.2	7.6	8.4
Rural coast	63.4	52.8	64.4	26.5	23.6	27.3
Urban <i>sierra</i>	51.6	37.7	44.3	14.6	7.7	6.6
Rural <i>sierra</i>	64.7	68.1	65.5	37.7	32.6	30.2
Urban <i>selva</i>	43.0	44.2	51.5	12.0	7.2	11.6
Rural <i>selva</i>	70.1	64.9	69.2	38.6	36.4	31.5

Source: Instituto Cuanto (2000)

Table 2.4 Peru: population with unsatisfied basic needs, 1998 (percentages)

Unsatisfied needs	Inadequate housing	Overcrowded house	House without internal plumbing	Households with children not attending school	Households with high economic dependency ⁵⁵	Population with at least one unsatisfied basic need
Peru	10.8	20.9	23.8	4.1	2.0	42.1
Metropolitan Lima	8.9	11.7	3.1	1.6	0.4	18.8
Other coastal areas	10.5	11.3	18.2	3.2	2.3	31.5
Sierra	5.0	29.2	43.8	5.7	2.7	60.4
Selva	31.4	34.7	23.8	6.4	2.5	61.0

Source: INEI (1998)

Other basic needs, such as school attendance, seem to be less problematic in the urban areas of Peru (see also Chapter 4).

The poverty figures in Table 2.4 are considerably lower than those derived from the *canasta básica* approach. Fortunately, a lot of people even in the poor *pueblos jóvenes* own their small piece of land on which, over the years and sometimes with the help of favourable credit facilities available under the Fujimori government,⁵⁶ they built a small dwelling or house. Most of these people also have access to electricity and water. As a result, many people in the urban areas have relatively high scores on the basic needs measure.

Most of the tables and figures on poverty do not make explicit reference to the situation of poverty in the *pueblos jóvenes*. In fact as, a recent World Bank report states, “because of the relatively low incidence of poverty in cities [as compared to the rural areas] and Latin America’s high inequality, urban statistics are almost never representative of the urban poor” (Fay, 2005:1; see also Satterthwaite, 2005). One exception is Riofrío (2003), who uses the example of Villa El Salvador (a district with a high proportion of *pueblos jóvenes*) to show that in that district the percentage of people with at least one unsatisfied basic need is considerably higher than average (Riofrío, 2003:11). CONAM also showed that in districts like Pueblo Libre and Magdalena, where no *pueblos jóvenes* are found, the percentage of households with unsatisfied basic needs is considerably lower than in San Juan de Miraflores and Villa Maria del Triunfo, districts with a high number of *pueblos jóvenes* (CONAM, 2000). The same conclusion can be drawn from the poverty figures that are mentioned at the San Juan de Miraflores municipal website. In contrast to the general figures for Metropolitan Lima (45% poor and 4% extremely poor) in this district 55% of the population is poor and 10% is extremely poor.⁵⁷ Overall, the figures for poverty are averages; on the lower end of the

55 Households with high economic dependency: this is an indirect indicator of income, including 1) labour tenancy of household members 2) level of education of the main income provider in the household and 3) the economic burden. The latter is determined by dividing the total number of household members by the number of employed household members. In other words, it is the number of dependent household members per employed household member.

56 Examples of the credit facilities are ENACE and the *Banco de Materiales* (Materials Bank).

57 Website: <http://www.munisjm.gob.pe/numeros.php>, consulted October 2005.

spectrum (i.e. in the poorer areas), poverty figures are worse. A more hidden point is that the calculations that are used for poverty and extreme poverty are based on average family size. As family size in the *pueblos jóvenes* is usually larger than it is in the rest of Metropolitan Lima,⁵⁸ figures for both 'normal' and 'extreme poverty' are even higher there. In general, women (and especially female-headed households) are the worst off.

In Los Pinos, most people indeed own their own piece of land. Many have also constructed a small house, however poor and run-down it might be. Most people have access to electricity and water networks. However, many of them have problems paying the monthly costs for these utilities, resulting in temporary shut-offs. Many lack the financial resources for maintaining and repairing their house. Particularly problematic is the situation for specific vulnerable groups within Los Pinos. We can, for example, think of the previously mentioned female-headed households but this also goes for the young couples or families just starting life on their own. Today, favourable credit facilities are no longer available and building a house now is a much greater financial burden than before.⁵⁹

Children are generally over-represented among the poor (Van der Gaag and Winkler, 1996). According to GIN (1999),⁶⁰ about 60% of the children (0-18) in Peru live in poverty. With respect to extreme poverty, no definitive figures are cited. What is clear though, is that of the three and a half million people who are mired in extreme poverty, about two million are children and adolescents (see also Aramburú, 1996). Growing up in poverty has various effects on children. First of all, poverty has direct effects on the physical well-being of children (malnutrition and physical underdevelopment). Parents may have to divide the little food there is between various children and sometimes children are sent to bed without dinner. This, in turn, has its repercussions on their concentration at school and on their ability to learn in general (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996). Poverty also entails practical problems, such as the long hours parents have to work, especially when they have jobs in the informal sector. Children are left at home without any adult guidance and the housework is left to the children, especially to the girls. The latter are also expected to take responsibility for the younger children (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996). Apart from the responsibilities within the realm of the house, children and adolescents may also engage in productive work outside the house in order to support the family (Coronado, 1996). Leaving some responsibilities to children is not a bad thing in itself, nor is it a direct result of poverty. According to both Anderson (1994) and Miles (2000), in Andean cultures, where many people in the poor districts have their roots, the participation of children in daily work is common and part of the socialisation process. This way, children learn certain basic norms and values, such as autonomy, solidarity and reciprocity. It is also a means of gender-role training. However, in circumstances of poverty and economic crisis, this common and accepted custom is stretched so much that it may become harmful for children (Mansilla, 1996; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996).

58 It appears that, in non-poor families, average family size is 4.2, in poor families this is 5.5 and in extremely poor families 6.1 (INEI, 1997).

59 For example, when Michaela, one of the inhabitants of *manzana A*, inquired about a loan for building her house in 2002, they told her she would have to pay back at least 400 US dollars a month for 20 years (for a 6000 US dollars loan). Security could be either provided by her land title, or by 10% of the loan in cash.

60 GIN, *Grupo de Iniciativa Nacional por los Derechos del Niño* (National Initiative Group on the Rights of the Child) is one of the main NGOs working to monitor and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Peru.

Many of the studies on children and adolescents growing up in poverty are rather pessimistic about the (future) well-being of these children. One exception is the more psychologically oriented literature on resilience, which argues that, when a number of preconditions are fulfilled, children are remarkably capable of coming out of difficult situations well (Kotliarenco et al., 1996; Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar, 2003; Wolin et al., 1999). Examples of protective factors are the presence of one or more persons a child can confide in, or the approval and support a child receives from a parent. Personal characteristics of the child such as having a good sense of humour appear to play an important role as well. In an attempt to use resilience for an analysis of children's possibilities in Peru, Panez et al. (2000) analyse the situation of children in the Andes. According to them, there are in the Andes many characteristics that tend to produce rather resilient children. Children are carried on their mothers' backs until they are two years old, something that contributes to the child's feeling of self-confidence. The emphasis on carrying out certain tasks in the Andes is also seen as positive, at least when parents explicitly express their approval and give feedback.

Poverty in Los Pinos

With respect to the levels of economic poverty per family in Los Pinos, exact figures were difficult to obtain. Take Maria-Teresa, Angelica's mother, who sold chicken at the local market. Over a period of months, I repeatedly asked her for an estimate of her income. The answers she gave were always very vague and contradicted earlier statements that she had made. She did not keep any records of her earnings and many people were buying on credit. Moreover, she often used chicken leftovers in order to prepare meals for her family. Clearer answers were provided by the few people who had more stable jobs. Take Erica's mother, who worked five days a week cleaning an office in the commercial district Miraflores. She earned a monthly salary of 900 soles (about 210 US dollars). The general picture that emerged from my observations is that those families in which one of the parents has a relatively stable job and those families in which both of the parents work, have around 800-1200 soles to spend per month. In other families, this can go down to 250 soles (about \$60) a month. With these incomes, people often have to sustain large families.

These examples show that, as in the case of other *pueblos jóvenes*, poverty is not equally distributed among all families. Following Santos Anaya (1999), I would say that, first of all, there is a small group of families who for a variety of reasons (for example, a significant period of continuous employment) have made some economic progress. Their houses would easily fit in with a typical middle class neighbourhood. In Los Pinos, I would say that about 10 to 15% of the families fall into this category. The second group of families are those families who can cover their basic necessities, but who do not have the capacity to accumulate savings. In Los Pinos, this applies to about 40% of the families. Finally, there is a significant group of families - I would say about 50% - who live in a precarious situation. They often live in crumbling houses and/ or have difficulties providing their children enough food and other basic necessities. These families are a long way from attaining income stability, and their possibilities to acquire savings and to spend on recreational activities are minimal.

In response to the question of how they looked back on the economic situation of their family over the last five years, most of the inhabitants of Los Pinos stated that things had become worse. Their incomes had decreased and they had lots of difficulties making do with the little money available. Consuela's mother told me that she was buying some of the food they needed on credit. Several girls' mothers explained to me that they were cooking more

simple meals, with fewer and cheaper ingredients than before. Many families were eating soup more often than before and, almost always, the main part of the meal was rice. Although this kind of diet fills the belly, it is far from nutritionally adequate. Luz, the mother of Lilia, Carolina and Celeste, and Maria-Teresa, Angelica's mother told me how they deal with the economic problems:

Luz: As long as I can give, I give. Unfortunately, I cannot give what I don't have. They might have to eat bread and tea, and if they have to do this, so be it. If there is food, we eat and if not, then not. I should get them used to this, shouldn't I?

Maria-Teresa: Sometimes I do not have breakfast and I keep going until the afternoon – just to be able to give something to my children. They need the bus fare in order to get to school.

Andrea, Marisol's mother, compared her current circumstances to life in the rural areas:

Over there, in the fields, everything is cheap. But here, everything is about money. Everything costs, if you need something, you need money; when you want to give your children something, you need to have money. However, over there, in the sierra, it is not like that. There, you can get... for example, clothes that you don't use anymore, you can change it for something else, for example, food. And sometimes, when people are worse off than you, who cannot buy their clothes and then someone gives them something. But here, everything is different – much more difficult!

The girls' parents were usually rather frank when it came to expressing their difficulties in socio-economic terms. The word 'poor', however, was not always received with agreement. Instead, most of the people in Los Pinos preferred to see themselves as *gente humilde* (humble people), a word that for them stresses that, although they may have a lot of economic problems, they still have their pride. Later during the same interview, I asked Andrea, Marisol's mother, whether she considered herself poor. Andrea answered:

Well, yes. I think of myself as a humble person. Yes, I may be poor, but I am honest, clean and I don't feel poor. Sometimes we don't have enough to eat, but the most important thing is respect. I don't want to fail my children. What I have, I like to share with my children and my friends. I don't like to be stingy.

The girls' views on poverty are more mixed. Many of them said they were poor and some girls also concluded that, because of poverty, they were not leading a normal adolescent life. At the same time, though, most of the girls pointed to the fact that there are always worse cases, both within the neighbourhood and outside. Listen, for example, to Carina and Angelica:

JO: Do you think your family is among the poorest families in Lima?

Carina: Yes, that is definitely true.

JO: And in comparison to other people in Los Pinos? Is your family as poor as other families?

Carina: Well, as poor? No, that is not true either. I mean, there are people who are more ... There are neighbours who do not have anything to eat, ... but we do have that. My father works, as you know and that is why he can take care of us. He is very hard-working.

JO: Do you think your family is poor?

Angelica: Well not really. Because, poor - really poor - implies that you are living on the street and that you do not have money for clothes and food.

The girls also emphasised that, although they were living in a difficult socio-economic situation, they still had many other important things, such as good health and both of their parents (or one, in the case of single mothers) close by. In their answers they also emphasised that, although they would not want to be in their parents' position, they all admired their parents' industriousness. In other words, the poverty they were living in was not seen as their fault. The following two interview excerpts, from the interviews with Britney and Silvia, are illustrative. In both of these cases I asked them whether they would consider their lives as poor. Their answers were:

Britney: No so much, because there are people who are worse off: people who do not even have [money] for food. Besides, sometimes, let's say they may have sufficient money, but they do not have a mother... Because, well, I had a friend who had a good deal of money, her parents were quite rich; she had everything, but no love from her parents. Because they go off for work and they did not have time for her. So, there was no time to talk a little. Later, her mother died and she was left alone even more. So, you could have a lot of money, but not the love of your parents, of the persons with whom you are living. So, I may not have money, but I do have the love and support of my mother. That is the big difference.

Silvia: Well, on the one hand, it might be that for some persons [in the higher classes], it may be easier, because the only thing they have to do is spend money, money, money and they are not in need of anything. But it is very possible that there are also people who have money, who have everything, but they do not have love, there is no love from the parents, there is no understanding.

Although children were hardly oblivious to the poverty of their lives - something that would be quite difficult in a situation in which the consequences of poverty in daily life are felt so acutely - it seemed to me that in adolescence the girls became more aware of the problems. They increasingly adapted their own behaviour and wishes to their limited external reality. One of the girls, for example, concealed from her parents the fact that, before Christmas, the *promoción* party (high school graduation)⁶¹ would be taking place. She told me she did not want to embarrass her parents; she knew there would no money for it. Two other girls told me that when they turned 15 years old, they had told their parents a celebration was not necessary. The 15th birthday in Peru is an important rite of passage for girls, and is usually celebrated with a big party.⁶² The girls in question, however, did not want to burden their parents with the necessary expense.

'Getting by': informal labour and society

The high levels of poverty in *pueblos jóvenes* like Los Pinos, are directly related to the more general developments occurring in the urban labour market over the last 20 to 25 years in

61 See also Chapter 4.

62 See also Chapter 4.

Peru and, in fact, all over Latin America (Gindling, 2005; Hardy, 2003; Kruijt et al., 2001). Most important in this respect has been the sharp reduction in formal employment in the 1980s and the 1990s, due in large measure to the adjustment programmes applied during that period. The reductions in state bureaucracy and the rationalisation of former state-owned companies following privatisation led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs, both in the public and the private sectors (Portes and Hoffman, 2003). Whereas at the beginning of the 1980s still 65% of the economically active population (EAP)⁶³ of Peru was receiving a regular wage or salary, this category declined in about 15 years to only 45% (see also Table 2.5 below). Due to the limited job availability, competition in the formal labour market is harsh and, especially for the residents of the *pueblos jóvenes*, it is very difficult to get a formal job. They are disadvantaged because of a relatively low level of education and, maybe even more important, they suffer from stigmatisation and discrimination based on their different ethnic origin as well as stigmas surrounding the very fact that they live in the *pueblos jóvenes* (Nopo et al., 2004). Women are doubly discriminated against in the labour market, not only because they are ethnically different and migrants, but also because they are women.⁶⁴ Another factor in the formal labour market that has led to poverty during the past few decades has been the enormous fall of real incomes during that time. In 1993, the average incomes for the male and female population were equivalent to 33% and 30% respectively of the average incomes in 1980. Since 1993, real wages have again slowly risen, and by the year 2000 had reached 65% of 1980s income levels (ILO, 2003a).

The relationship between poverty and labour market developments means that over the last several decades two types of poverty have emerged. The first more traditional type of poverty, known as structural poverty, is linked to illiteracy or low levels of formal education, bad living conditions, exclusion and marginality. This poverty now coexists with a second type of poverty that is conditioned by the labour market, by low incomes and regressive distribution as well as by the increase of socially unprotected employment. This second kind of poverty is more difficult to tackle for governments, as it is more related to the open dynamic economy and international developments (Hardy, 2003:7; see also Kruijt et al., 2001:35).

As a consequence of the decreased possibilities in the formal labour market and significantly declining wages, many people tried to create their own jobs, opting to work in what is often called the informal sector. In Peru and, in fact, all over Latin America, it was especially during the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s that the informal sector experienced a boom, creating the totally new and dramatic socio-economic phenomenon so vividly described by Matos Mar as a *desborde popular* (popular spill-over) (Matos Mar, 1984 and 2004). Over the years, informality became a notion that was not only related to economic conditions, but increasingly came to include a much broader spectrum of factors, leading to what could be called a new civil society, “whose features have been marked in equal measure by poverty, informality and social exclusion” (Kruijt et al., 2001:22; see also Grompone, 1991).

63 EAP, or Economically Active Population, refers to that part of the Peruvian population that is working (in the formal or informal sector), or looking for paid work, between 15 and 54 years old.

64 See for example Zamudio (1995) whose life story makes clear the double marginalisation and exclusion that women experience in urban Peru.

In a narrow sense, the term 'informal sector' is used to encompass all those economic activities that are not formally registered.⁶⁵ General characteristics of these activities are irregular income, the high use of family labour, and the absence of any form of social security. Furthermore, the entrance barriers are quite low - in principle everyone can start right away and, there is usually no need for specialised knowledge and education. Finally, working hours are high but they can be easily adapted to individual possibilities and situations (Mendoza, 1996; Rakowski, 1994).⁶⁶

As a result of the unregistered nature of the informal sector activities, exact figures are difficult to find. However, the ILO estimates in Table 2.5 for the period 1990-2002 show that in Metropolitan Lima, between 50 and 60% of people are employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2003a). Data from Kruijt et al. (2001) and the latest information from the Ministry of Labour⁶⁷ show that these figures may even be in excess of 60%. In any case, it is clear that these figures are among the highest in Latin America (Bonifacio and Falivene, 2002).

In Table 2.5, three different types of urban informal workers are distinguished. The first category of informal activities is that of the domestic servants, or *empleadas*. In this group, young women often of rural origin are over-represented, as they are thought to be more willing to work long hours. Especially with respect to the *empleada cama adentro* (live-in domestic servant), employing families prefer young girls just arriving from the rural areas. These girls usually do not yet have their own household and, as newcomers in the city, their only focus will be the work in their employers' family. The situation of domestic servants is often rather bad. Salaries are really low and working hours are extremely long. Besides, because of their relative isolation within the family they do not see many possibilities of doing something to improve it.

In the conversations with the girls' mothers in Los Pinos, it appeared that quite a few had worked for a few years as domestic servants. Maria-Teresa, for example, had already worked for a *señora* when she was only seven years old. For some of the women, working as an *empleada* was the reason for coming to Lima. Today, many adult women in Los Pinos still work as *empleadas*, although now they usually do so only during the daytime. Marisol's mother, for example, works six days a week, 12 hours a day in a family's home, taking care of the household and two children. Other women, like Julia's mother or Nancy's mother, work on a more irregular basis. As Julia's mother told me: *When la señora calls me, I go*. Earnings

65 Note that there is no strict line between the formal and informal sector and that there are many linkages between them. Summarising the developments in research during recent decades, we could say that "much contemporary work [on the informal and formal sector] now assumes that it is polarisation rather than dualism that we are talking about; that there is a continuum rather than a abrupt discontinuity between the opposite poles; and that diversity is important within the sectors as are the linkages between them" (MacEwen Scott, 1995:105-106).

66 For further reading about the informal sector paradigm, see the 1996 spring issue of *Regional Development Dialogue*, dedicated entirely to informal sector research; For Latin America, see also Alba and Kruijt (1994); Palma (1987); Tokman (1992). More specifically on the informal sector in Peru: De Soto (1986 and 2000). Vivid descriptions of the daily struggle in the informal sector are provided by Goldenberg and Acuña (1994); Raffo (1985); Tarazona (1992); Zubieta (1993).

67 Based on personal conversations by Prof. Dirk Kruijt with Fernando Villarán, Minister of Labour, 2001-2003.

Table 2.5 Employment structure in Metropolitan Lima 1991-2000 (percentages of EAP)

		Informal sector (not receiving wages)				Formal sector (receiving wages or salary)		
		Total	Domestic workers	Independent workers	Micro- entrepreneurs	Total	Public sector	Private sector
1991	Total	52.7	4.9	33.4	14.5	47.3	11.6	35.7
	Men	46.3	0.6	28.9	16.9	53.7	n.d.	n.d.
	Women	62.9	11.6	40.4	10.8	37.1	n.d.	n.d.
1995	Total	55.1	4.4	33.0	17.3	44.9	9.3	35.6
	Men	48.8	0.5	26.9	21.4	51.2	n.d.	n.d.
	Women	64.1	11.0	41.8	11.4	35.9	n.d.	n.d.
2000	Total	53.7	5.5	30.2	18.0	46.3	7.2	39.1
	Men	45.3	0.5	23.8	21.0	54.7	n.d.	n.d.
	Women	64.6	11.9	38.7	14.0	35.4	n.d.	n.d.

Source: ILO (2003a)

for this kind of irregular work are between 15 and 20 soles⁶⁸ a day. For the girls, working as an *empleada* was also common. Marisol, for example, sometimes went to help out her mother and, in addition, would go in her place when she was ill. Various girls also had worked as *empleadas* during the holidays.

The second and third categories of informal workers that are mentioned in the table are independent workers and micro-entrepreneurs. In practice, I would say that the two categories overlap to some extent. Both of these categories refer to people who work in informal small businesses or trades, whether their own or someone else's. In Los Pinos, there were quite a number of small in-house shops, usually run by women. There were also people who sold fried potatoes and hotdogs from small stands on street corners. Several men worked as taxi drivers, usually in cars that were rented for the hours that were worked. Others worked in construction, at the markets or as money collectors in Lima's numerous buses.

Many of the informal enterprises are run by one or two persons, often with the help of other family members. They are rather small and survival-oriented and involve long days of work. There are also some businesses that succeed in some capital accumulation (Alba and Kruijt, 1994; Goldenberg and Acuña, 1994; Luna, 1992; Rakowski, 1994). In these cases, the ILO tends to speak of micro-enterprises. In fact, it is this last category of businesses, often considered the most modern segment of the informal sector, that has to some extent changed the picture of the informal sector and thus also the official government's response to it in recent years. Today, most analysts and politicians agree that not all developments in the informal sector are by definition oriented toward short-term survival. There are also possibilities to make things grow and to build up a viable alternative. Unfortunately, among the families I studied in Los Pinos I only found a limited number of these kinds of activities. Examples may be the curtain-decorating business of Erica's father and perhaps also the textile trade of Carina's father.

In official statistics, the formal and informal sectors are often accompanied by a third category - that of the unemployed. This category refers to people who are officially registered as looking for a job.⁶⁹ Since the beginning of the 1990s this figure has been relatively stable,

68 This is roughly between 3.50 and 4.50 US dollars a day.

between 8 and 10% (ILO, 2003a). Note that there are marked differences between men and women, with figures for women being much higher than those for men. In 1998, for example, the official unemployment rate for men (between 25-54 years old) in Metropolitan Lima was 4.3%, whereas for women in the same age group it was 9.6% (ILO, 2000).⁷⁰

The relatively disadvantaged position of women in the formal labour market and the general characteristics of the informal sector make working in the informal sector rather attractive for women, something that was already apparent from the gender-specific figures in Table 2.5. Women often combine work outside the home with care for children and household tasks, and these activities fit well with the flexibility and easy entry into work in the informal sector. Within the informal sector, women are usually over-represented in the less dynamic and more survival-oriented activities and they make less use of the paid labour of others. In general, they have a more limited access to capital, family labour, credits and markets (Ypeij, 1995). Something which I often observed in Los Pinos as well, is women's tendency to perceive their work different than men's work. Whereas a man works for a living, a woman often views her activities as 'just helping her husband' (see also Cáceres et al., 2002a:III).

Another group that is over-represented in the informal labour market is youth. Two groups can be distinguished. First, there is the group of youth (roughly between 12 and 17 years old) who combine work with school. They may, for example, sell candies as an *ambulante* (vendor), clean cars, or help the parents in their small business. It is these kinds of activities that are often referred to as child labour. Exact figures for child labour are difficult to provide because of the fact that many of the activities take place within the businesses of the parents and thus are unpaid. Another factor is that many activities are not even seen as work by the parents and children themselves. The latter goes in particular for the household work done by many girls. Especially when their mothers work, much of the responsibility for maintaining the household, such as cooking and the caring for younger siblings, falls on adolescent girls. The girls in Los Pinos were without exception heavily involved in household tasks such as cleaning and cooking meals. Already from an early age, daughters learn how to cook and Angelica, for example, told me that when she was only seven years old, she was responsible for cooking lunch for her brothers and sisters. Working in place of your mother is usually not as harmful and exploitative as domestic work for a patron, but it can have repercussions for school and homework. According to a study carried out by Mansilla (1996), of all children attending school in Peru, more than 55% perform work after school; 45% of this group (and 58% of the girls) work within the home, mainly performing household tasks.

69 Since so many people cannot find a job in the formal sector and have to resort to the informal sector to earn an income, it is at least questionable to speak of a category of 'unemployed'. The first question that arises is when exactly someone is considered unemployed. Is someone unemployed when this person does not opt for the informal sector? And besides, it is quite probable that most people who are registered as unemployed are also to some extent active in the informal sector. Although there are some social welfare benefits available for people who had previously worked in the public sector, this is usually not enough to sustain a family.

70 In comparison to other Latin American countries, these figures are relatively low. Probably this is due to the fact that most people who are excluded from formal labour create their own work in the informal sector (ILO, 2003a).

In the recent debates about child labour, authors seem to agree that the extent to which an early integration of children in (paid) labour has adverse effects on the child's development is dependent on many different factors. Studies point to the potentially conflictual combination of school and work: in general, working gives children less time for school, homework and leisure activities, which in turn often leads to repetition and, in the worst case, early school desertion (see, for example, GIN, 1997 and 2001a; ILO, 2004b). Other problematic characteristics of child labour are insecurity at the workplace (for example, in the street or in a factory), low pay, and lack of appreciation by the employers (Verdera, 1995). Contrary to these rather negative features, one could argue that if children already perform certain tasks at an early age, they learn specific skills that they can also use as adults. This advantage, however, does not really hold in societies where skills acquired in formal education are so important for the future. In the longer term, the type of work performed by the children such as those in the *pueblos jóvenes* does not supply the required luggage for life (Dahlblom, 1999).⁷¹

Parents in Los Pinos are aware of these tensions. When their children were combining work and school, they often said to me that they were scared that the work was taking precedence over school. What parents feared most was that, by working, children might become used to it. Like Consuela's mother Alejandra said:

It is necessary that she go out to help me, but now that she is starting to earn some money, she might not be willing to go back to school.

A second group of youth that is statistically over-represented in the informal labour market is the group of youth between approximately 16 and 25 years old who have left school (either with or without a diploma)⁷². Because of a lack of working experience and the poor quality of the school they have attended, opportunities in the formal labour market for them are very scarce; unemployment rates among youth are therefore relatively high. The Peruvian government reports official unemployment figures for youth (15-24) that are almost twice as high as for the public in general (15% against 8% in 1997); over 50% of the juvenile EAP is reported to be underemployed with respect to income. In situations of poverty or extreme poverty and in the urban areas, these figures are reported to be even higher (Arróspide et al., 1998:102). Data from the ILO website show sharp differences between female and male youth with respect to the labour situation. In the mid-1990s, for example, unemployment figures for male youth in Peru hovered around 10%, whereas, for female youth the figure was as high as 18%. In the second half of the 1990s figures for male and female youth converged somewhat; in 1998, the figures were 11% and 13% respectively.⁷³

If youth succeed in finding a job, working conditions are usually rather bad and contracts temporary (Grompone, 1991; Valdivia López, 1997). Furthermore, they often end up in the informal sector. With respect to the participation of youth in the informal sector, no exact

71 In Chapter 4, I will go into the daily activities of the girls in Los Pinos in further detail. There we will also see how the girls and their families view their involvement in labour, both inside and outside the house.

72 There is a common joke in Peru that goes as follows: 'we have the country with the most qualified taxi drivers'. Most of these taxi drivers are academics, who are doing that work because of a lack of formal job opportunities.

73 ILO website: www.cinterfor.org.uy/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/youth/dat_est/, consulted October 2005.

figures are available for Peru. The ILO's Latin America and the Caribbean Labour Overview (2000), however, draws some general conclusions for the whole of Latin America:

Increasing informality was stronger than average in the 15 to 19 year old age group, where the loss of formal employment was almost compensated [for] ... by greater access to informal employment during the period. ... This development meant that 57% of occupied non farm youths in the 15 to 19 year old age groups were employed in the informal sector by the end of the decade (ILO, 2000:30).

In an attempt to analyse the bad situation of youth in the labour market, Cortázar (1997:10-12) divides the recent history in Latin American countries into two stages (see also Dávila León, 1995 and 2002). The first phase, the phase of incorporation (which occurred in Peru between 1950 and end 1970) is characterized by a high degree of social mobility produced by many different social transformations, such as a growing number of non-manual jobs in the labour market, the expansion of the educational system, rural-urban migration and the development of a mass culture. In the second phase (1980s and 1990s), these social transformations began to slow down and social differentiation grew, both economically and culturally. As a result, large sectors of society became more and more excluded from the possible benefits of modernization. This is what he calls the period of exclusion. Youth occupied a special position in both of these phases. In the first, they were the group benefiting most from modernization, being increasingly incorporated into society. In the second phase, the process of incorporation was halted and youth became a group that was among those most affected by exclusion.

Usually, children are not paid for the work they do either in the household or in their parents' businesses. When children work outside the family context, they are usually paid. Children are expected to contribute part of their earnings to the household, and to retain the remainder. In this case, parents usually no longer provide for personal expenses like the bus fare to school. Working youth who no longer go to school are also expected to pay part of the earnings to the family household as long as they live at home. However, the extent to which this is done is dependent on the person and sex of the young person. Angelica's older sister, for example, worked part-time in a shop selling office supplies. From the money she earned there (about 375 soles or \$85 per month), she was paying the water and electricity bills of the family. The rest of her income she kept for herself. With the money, she divided off part of her parents' house with wood and a door and bought herself a nice bed and clothing cupboard. Angelica's brother, who still lived at home in the beginning of my fieldwork, was a taxi driver. He did not support the family income at all. To me, Maria-Teresa often complained about her son's behaviour. However, she never brought it up directly with him. This may be because his income was considered a preparation for his own future family. In any event, it seems that, in general, sons are not as consistently expected to help support the household.

Communal strategies

In the literature about poor people living in *pueblos jóvenes*, there is often a considerable emphasis on communal strategies of solidarity. Many of these strategies are directly related to the characteristics of informal labour activities presented above and as such, they are seen as a crucial part of the informal society. Working irregular hours, for example, is only possible when other people in the neighbourhood take over some of the essential tasks (Barrig, 1993; Lewis, 1965). Examples are taking care of the children of neighbours, cooking meals, or taking

over the sales in the little shop attached to the house. Solidarity may also take the form of the creation of *ollas comunes*⁷⁴ (communal kitchens), or the mutual support neighbours give each other when constructing their houses. Support for daily survival can furthermore be found in structures that are brought into the neighbourhood from the outside, such as by churches (or church-sponsored organisations) and by NGOs.⁷⁵ In most examples of communal solidarity strategies, women play a dominant role (Blondet, 1986 and 1991; Ypeij, 1995).

All these forms of mutual support and solidarity are found in Los Pinos. Angelica or her mother often took care of the children of Angelica's sister, who lived behind them. In Los Pinos, there was also a small *olla comun* and although the quality of the food was reported to be low, a lot of people said that sometimes, when they were in need, they purchased food there (for one *sol* per meal). Furthermore, several people were participating in informal savings and credit systems. At the local market lying just below Los Pinos, for example, there were periods of time when the merchants made a daily contribution of ten soles. The money collected each day went to one of the participants. As there are 15 participants, every 15 days, one of the members then had at his or her disposal a relatively large sum of money that could be used to buy new merchandise. Financial support structures also were present in the possibility of borrowing money from others in the case of emergencies such as sudden illness. This took place most often within (both blood-based and constructed) family structures.

A last example of the communal strategies of solidarity were the *parilladas*, *polladas* and *anticuchadas*. These are barbecues and social fund-raising events, organised for a specific goal in which, respectively, roasted meat, chicken or kebab are sold to neighbours. Funds can be raised for both individual and more collective needs (Hordijk, 2000:159). Typical individual circumstances leading to such events are medical emergencies of a family member or prolonged periods of unemployment. In these cases, most often, the initiative for a barbecue is taken by the family that is seeking support from its neighbours. Sometimes, neighbours themselves also take the initiative, because they feel a specific family deserves community support. *Polladas* and *anticuchadas* may also be organised for community goals, such as for collecting money for the restoration of the crèche facilities, or for the organisation of a sports match. Such an event took place somewhere in Los Pinos almost every week.

The various examples of communal solidarity strategies seem to be symbols of a strong communal bond. To some extent though, this picture is too romanticised and it may be better to see them merely as ways of negotiating the challenges of daily life.⁷⁶ Many communal strategies have a rather ad hoc and fragmented character and they are very much linked to specific pressing issues of the moment. After a while, organisation and groupings often tend to fall apart. Among the newer generations in the *pueblos jóvenes*, weaker bonds of solidarity are reported. As Riofrío (2003:10) remarks for the case of women: "Young women feel that

74 See, for example, Lenten (1993).

75 Through churches and NGOs, for example, there may be (free) clothing or food distribution and churches especially may provide help in case of sudden illness or other problems.

76 This is also the case because, as Cotler and Grompone (2000) show, quite a number of the communal organisations were in fact supported and promoted heavily by the Fujimori populist government. Although the exact impact is difficult to establish, it is clear that there was a lot of manipulation. Communal organisations were used by the government for the purposes of maintaining vigilance and in order to create political support.

their priority is not to develop the settlement, nor to construct a house, but to find the means to survive". Moreover, the solidarity relations between people are not always harmonious relations, in which people help each other out of a sense of community. Instead, especially between family members, solidarity relations are seen both as a source of relief and as a burden. People who call upon the support of others always feel a pressing obligation to pay back the favour. One of the girls' mothers told me various times that she was quite tired of the ease with which other family members relied upon the support of her and her family.

Access to healthcare

'Getting an appointment in an Essalud hospital may take more than 60 days' was the headline of an article in the Lima newspaper *El Comercio* in October 2004. The article reported an extensive study that had been carried out by the *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman) in 49 hospitals of Essalud, the national institution responsible for public health care.⁷⁷ The results of the study were rather disappointing: people complained about very long lines and even when someone had very urgent medical problems, appointment could often not be made within a few days. In the study, users of the public health centres also pointed at the low quality of the health care itself and at the rather indifferent attitude of the health personal.

The ugly picture of the public health sector emerging from this article is confirmed by other research. The WHO, for example, concluded that in the year 2000, of all people in Peru who declared symptoms of illness or accident and considered consultation as necessary, 31% did not manage to gain access to health services, primarily due to a lack of economic resources (WHO, 2004:51). Although theoretically the public health care system is supposed to provide health care for everybody who needs it, there are a number of features which discriminate against poorer sectors of the population. One problem is the traditional skew towards bio-medically based curative systems, systems that are usually characterised by expenditures on hospitals, high tech equipment and by medical specialties, all of which have little bearing on many of the medical problems experienced by the poor in daily life, such as infectious diseases and diarrhoea, resulting from inadequate sanitary infrastructure or malnutrition. Also problematic is that the public health care system is often underfunded and loses the best practitioners to the private clinics (Chant and Craske, 2003; Cubit, 1995).

Moreover, although it is often stressed that the Peruvian public health care system is free, or requires only nominal fees, in practice the costs for medicine (which are not provided by the hospital or doctor) and hospital stays are rather high. Many people thus wait as long as possible before they visit a doctor or go to a hospital for a required surgery. Health insurance is not common and is usually related to formal employment (WHO, 2004:51). As most people in the *pueblos jóvenes* earn their income through informal activities, any illness or medical costs constitute a direct financial burden on the family. Given that women are disproportionately concentrated in the informal sector, or work in the home, they are often worse off than men.

There may also be other, more indirect, financial problems resulting from an illness, such as that resulting from the ill person's reduced capacity - or complete incapacity - to work. Angelica's father, Nestor, was often ill. He suffered from diabetes and related medical problems and he was almost blind; he often needed medical treatment and medication.

77 As in many other Latin American countries, the health care system in Peru is divided into private and public components.

Box 2.2 An example of illness in Los Pinos

Maria-Teresa's appendicitis

On Monday, Maria-Teresa was suddenly hospitalised for acute appendicitis. That same day she was operated on. First, she was only to stay in the hospital until Thursday or Friday, but because of complications (fever and infections) she could not be discharged until Monday. It is in these kinds of situations (i.e. hospitalisation), that the value of money again becomes clear. It is very clear that nothing, absolutely nothing, is done without money being paid up front. Every little examination costs money - 20 soles for this, 30 soles for that. And these examinations must be done - and paid for - before you are actually admitted. Jeanine (one of Maria-Teresa's older daughters) told me that they waited for hours in the waiting room of the hospital until, finally, a bed became available (or, more accurately, until the rest of the family had come up with the money). All that time, Maria-Teresa was racked with pain. She was not even given painkillers. Before the operation could start, the family had to buy the medications and the anaesthetics. They also had to pay for a special laser-operation device (200 soles). Only when all this had been taken care of could the operation start. Fortunately, everything turned out well.

Hospitalisation is very costly. All medication has to be purchased by the patient's family, and this can itself be quite a heavy financial burden. For Maria-Teresa and her family, the week in the hospital cost about 1000 soles (medicines, operation, occupation of hospital bed). All family members participated in the search for money. Different loans were negotiated and, insofar as was possible, money was saved. Most important was to pay the hospital bill; what the family was going to eat that night was of secondary importance. An irony here is that a patient may only leave the hospital after all of the bills have been paid. In Maria-Teresa's room there was a woman who, from a medical point of view, could have been discharged several weeks earlier. Her family, however, was still trying to get the money together for the bills, which were accumulating more and more every day. Another consequence of this situation is that, sometimes, people who cannot afford to pay the bills try to escape, for example, by just walking out during visiting hours. As this had happened already twice over the past several days, there were always guards walking in the corridors. Besides, there was a clear mandate for the patients to stay in their beds all day.

Research diary, February 2002

Nestor worked in construction but, because of his illness, he spent most of his time at home. He once told me that he worked about five days a month on average, but actually my own observations and the accounts of his wife Maria-Teresa suggest that he worked even less frequently than that. The family was thus primarily sustained by Maria-Teresa who, as we have seen, sells chicken at the local market.

Since the 1990s, reproductive health care and family planning has been one of the priorities of the Peruvian government. In 1990, the Fujimori administration designed a National Population Programme which included free provision of contraceptives to women. The program was designed to focus on development goals (reducing the number of children is thought to contribute to socio-economic progress) and on improving equality and empowerment. In practice, however, this last part was hardly put into practice (Boesten, 2004:179-184). In general, as Boesten concludes in her analysis of the Population Programme,

population politics in the 1990s was distinctly biased against poor women. Furthermore, she concluded that, although an openly racist position towards the designated problem population was never expressed, the areas, methods and goals of the Population Programme left little doubt about the hidden prejudices that sustained its politics. Because of its sole focus on women and on coercive measures (to the extremes of forced sterilisation), the programmes were in fact abetting existing inequalities rather than improving the position of women (ibid.:211).

Fujimori's population programme and the resulting reproductive policies have been adapted in recent years and forced sterilisation is no longer part of the agenda. However, recent research and my own observations show that in practice not much has changed. In the minds of the men and women in Los Pinos, the memories of, and ongoing rumours about, forced sterilisations still have an impact on the confidence people have in the public health sector in general. Moreover, there are still many complaints about the patronising, hierarchical and often pejorative way that workers in the public health institutions treat their patients. The attitude of health care staff tends to be rather punitive towards, for example, abortion, women's pain, and women's sexuality in general. Women's opinions are often neither asked for nor taken into account (Alva and Vargas, 2001). In one of my visits to the health centre near Los Pinos, a vivid example of this pejorative attitude was provided by the head of the facility. I asked him about the use of contraceptives by young women and his answer was that, in general, girls did not often come there. He added that, in fact this was a general problem with the population: *You know, it is a shitty country, people are very indifferent. They are as hard as the walls, they are serranos, you know.*

As a result of all these constraints, in the daily life of men, women and children in the popular neighbourhoods, formal healthcare is something which, unless very urgent, is postponed and avoided as much as possible. People will first try to solve medical problems themselves, based on their own traditional means and traditions, with the help and advice of neighbours and by resorting to commercial merchants who sell pharmaceutical products that can presumably be used for every medical problem.

Violence and security

People often reacted with astonishment and fear when I told them that I was working in one of the *pueblos jóvenes*: Was it not very dangerous to go there and to walk around there? And why, especially as a *gringa*, would I want to do that kind of dangerous work? Taxi drivers usually expressed the same kind of questions and worries when, for safety reasons,⁷⁸ I took a taxi either to or from the zone of Pampas de San Juan. They could not imagine what I was going to do in this dangerous and hostile area on my own and wanted to keep me from taking risks that they thought I might not have considered. Some of the taxi drivers confessed that they normally did not even go into these areas anyway. Only because I was a *gringa* were they willing to do so. "But please", they often asked me, "before you leave the car, tell me how to return to the main road as safely and as quickly as possible".

Recent contributions to the debates about the informal society point to the coexistence of violence and informality. To quote Kruijt, "informal citizenship also is citizenship with a violent face" (Kruijt, 2004a:95; see also Riofrío, 1996). Empirically, the link between violence

78 Especially at night, I preferred taking a taxi, because this meant that I did not have to wait for connecting buses at street corners where I did not want to be for more time than was absolutely necessary.

and informality is difficult to demonstrate. However, as Portess and Hoffman state, “there is both temporal coincidence between both processes and an obvious affinity between the character and spirit of neo-liberal policies and the decision by at least some of the downtrodden to take matters into their own hands” (Portess and Hoffman, 2003:69) Another factor that explains the coexistence of crime and violence with informality and poverty is that, in a society that is becoming more informal every day, there will also be an erosion of the legitimacy of formal civil political and public institutions (Kruijt and Koonings, 1999). In such a situation, violence increasingly becomes an everyday and democratised phenomenon: “The proliferation of violence, even in its more anomic forms, has reached the stage of mass production and mass consumption” (ibid.:13-15). Behaving violently is no longer the exclusive prerogative of the state. Instead, now many different groups in society become involved in violence. As a result of this increasing violence and the state’s inability to act, many new initiatives have seen the light. Especially striking here are the enormous number of informally employed security services on the streets and in front of important buildings.⁷⁹

Conceptually, urban violence falls into one of four different categories: institutional, economic, social and political, each differing from the other “in terms of the motivation for the physical act that consciously or unconsciously is used to gain or maintain power” (Moser, 2004:4). The four types of violence should be conceived as a single interrelated continuum with close linkages among them. In the everyday lives of slum dwellers in Metropolitan Lima, the three types of violence that are found most are institutional, social and economic violence. To start with the latter, we can say that economic violence is mostly motivated by material gains, being associated with street crime, including violence linked to drugs. Social violence is often gender-based - that is, it is linked to gendered power relations and constructions of masculinities; it includes domestic violence.⁸⁰ Institutional violence, finally, is perpetrated by state institutions, particularly the police and judiciary (Moser, 2004:5).

The rise of violence, its impact and governmental efforts to counteract it, are not equally found in different parts of urban areas. In this regard, Kruijt (2004b) uses the concept of the ‘urban divide’ originally introduced by Walton (1976 and 1977). Kruijt argues that while at first the urban divide was identified with economic and social differences between different parts of the urban society, it now also includes lack of human security and the lack of protecting authorities in specific parts of urban areas, more specifically in the popular neighbourhoods. The prevalence of violence in specific parts of urban areas is related to the phenomenon of ‘local government voids’. These voids exist where the representatives of law and order and the legal authorities are absent and, consequently, a local vacuum of ‘regular’ law and order is created. In the popular neighbourhoods, power is increasingly taken over by new urban warlords - chiefs of the *barrio*’s drug traffickers and leaders of the youth gangs (Koonings and Kruijt, 2004; Kruijt and Koonings, 1999:12).⁸¹

In Los Pinos, none of the inhabitants could escape street violence. Everyone in the neighbourhood experienced various robberies during his or her life. Robberies from houses

79 The panorama of violence in Latin American urban centres is debated in recent studies by Moser and McIlwaine (2004); Koonings and Kruijt (2004); Rotker (2002).

80 For a further discussion of domestic violence, see Chapter 3.

81 See also the literature with respect to *pandillas* and youth violence. For Peru: Castillo (1999); Santos Anaya (2001); Martinez and Tong (1998); Thieroldt Llanos (1998); Villanueva (1999). For Nicaragua: Rodgers (2003).

are usually rather easy. Many houses are made of wood and reed mats and the doors can easily be forced open. When houses are 'constructed' (built with more durable materials), the problem is that the construction is often such that a space is left in the middle of the roof for the stair to the future second floor. It is through this hole in the roof that burglars came into the house of Erica.

Apart from robberies, people also had to deal with *pandillaje*, or the activity of youth gangs. Sometimes on Saturday nights, there were street fights between groups of boys, usually members of different *pandillas* (street gangs). Los Pinos itself did not have a *pandilla*, but inter-*pandilla* tensions sometimes crossed the boundaries of Los Pinos. Besides, some of the Los Pinos youngsters were active in nearby gangs. Most of the time, the violence was only between the gang members and took place at specific moments and at certain places, mainly on Saturday nights. Problems tended to gravitate to places where a party or social gathering was taking place, for example, an *anticuchada* or *pollada* (community fundraising events), or a birthday party. *Pandillaje* violence has a tendency to come in waves. As I already said in the first chapter, during my first fieldwork period, the first months were rather quiet. By the end of the summer holidays though, tensions grew. One gang killed a member of another gang, something that of course had to be avenged. Although these events did not take place in Los Pinos itself but in the neighbouring areas, it also gave rise to tension in Los Pinos. Parents increasingly kept their kids inside after dark and were also themselves more alert and fearful.

Robberies and *pandillaje* are thus real risks. However, when directly asked, most residents of Los Pinos expressed a general feeling of safety. Los Pinos itself was considered reasonably safe. Parents usually permitted their children to be outside in the evening, for example to do some shopping or to go and do homework at the house of a friend. Only the neighbourhoods below and next to their own were considered problematic. This attitude may be a normal way of thinking about one's own personal surroundings. However, it also puts into perspective the exaggerated picture of violence generally presented by the media. Indeed, in a few *pueblos jóvenes* in Metropolitan Lima the security situation is rather bad and, in these kinds of barrios, it would not be advisable to walk around alone at night or during the day, either for a *gringa* or for Peruvians themselves. But these situations are the exceptions. In most areas, the situation could be characterised as potentially violent, with actual violence, which is usually connected to *pandillaje* and *bandas*, frequently occurring in waves. The situation, in short, is one characterised by Kruijt and Degregori as 'low-intensity violence': not as overtly violent as in other cities, but with an ever-present threat (Degregori and Kruijt, 2006).

The role that street violence plays in the lives of youth is different for girls and boys. First of all, it is mainly male youth that participate in the new forms of violence and, although I heard some accounts of girls being active in youth gangs, it seems that in general girls are not active members. However, both for boys and for girls, violence is part of the backdrop of their daily lives and helps define the emotional and social parameters in which they grow up. The actual impact of violence may be even greater for girls than for boys. Adolescent girls are discouraged from going out at night, or are regularly accompanied by older brothers or by their parents. Although this precaution may be also motivated by concerns around meeting up with boys or boyfriends, fear of violence is also an important consideration (Miles, 1994).

For the girls in Los Pinos, violence, *pandillas* and fights seem to be part of life. They know in specific detail who is a member of which *pandilla*, as well as the most important conflicts between *pandillas*. They also know the symbols used by the different gangs. Their feelings about *pandillas* and street violence are somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, the groups of

boys hanging around at street corners give them an insecure feeling. *Pandillaje* is also looked upon as quite childish, a ‘boy-thing’ and as dangerous. On the other hand, girls also seem to admire and romanticise certain aspects of *pandillaje*, something that goes particularly for the street fights. In one of the *talleres*, Elena told of a fight that took place near their house over the weekend:

Yes, they were fighting! It is exciting, don't you think? They get their knives, they have stones, Yes! I like to watch!

On another occasion, Nancy used similar language:

I sort of like it when those boys are fighting. I don't know, but I think it is their movements, one can see that they are agile, that they are very physical, that they can run, that they are good at throwing stones. And, mentally, I think some of them are smart. The smartest, they protect themselves, they hide behind others, they do it in such a way that nothing happens to them, but only to their enemies. Those are the smartest, and that's also why I like it.

***Pueblos jóvenes* identity: pride and discrimination**

In Peru, common labels used for the migrants of rural origin are *cholo* or *provinciano*. In general, especially when used by outsiders and when referring to *cholos* in the city, these words are used in a rather pejorative way in a context of discrimination and stigmatisation (Ascue and Esquivel, 1993; Cosamalón, 1993). At the same time, though, the *cholo* is also regarded as creative and persistent. For the *pueblos jóvenes* residents themselves, the word *cholo* refers primarily to positive values, such as solidarity, diligence and hospitality. They proudly present themselves as *provincianos*, always followed by a reference to a specific region of origin. They are, for example, *Ayacuchano* (from Ayacucho) or a *Charapa* (from the *selva*, the Amazon region). These identifications are strengthened by the strong networks that exist in the city among migrants from the same region. For many of these migrants, identifying as *provinciano* also underlines their feeling that they are not *limeños*. The latter are seen as neither very inventive nor entrepreneurial (*no saben aprovechar*), as arrogant (*se creen mucho, son sobrados*) and as not striving as hard as they themselves are to create a better future (Ascue and Esquivel, 1993; Golte and Adams, 1987:88).⁸²

In the interviews with the girls' parents, recurring stories were those about *la provincia*, where everything was better and where people were more hospitable. *There they actually pay attention to you*, was one of the statements I often heard. Consuela's mother, who is from Huaraz, reacted almost defensively to my questions about her feelings of belonging and stated: *I feel provinciana. How could I be limeña, I am from there!* Marisol's mother, Andrea, who is from the province of Cuzco, told me that she feels quite insecure when interacting with *limeños*. She recalled that when she was looking for work in Miraflores, one of the upper-class districts of Metropolitan Lima, she did not really know how to react when a woman from what she called the ‘higher category’ opened the door:

82 Increasingly, the diminutives *cholito* and *cholita* are also used at pet names between lovers.

When she says something, or asks me something, I don't know how to cope with that; I don't know where to start. You know, if one is from the Sierra, things are different; there are always differences.

Among youth in the *pueblos jóvenes*, who are the children of these migrants, representation as *limeño* is not often found either. In a study carried out by Cisneros and Llona (1997) among youth of different ages in Villa El Salvador, a district in the south of Metropolitan Lima including many *pueblos jóvenes*, it appeared that only 16% seemed to feel represented by the label of *limeño*. This picture is confirmed by the representations that were common among the girls who participated in my research. Nancy, whose father is from the *selva* near Madre de Dios, told me, for example:

Nancy: I feel half selvática

JO: But you have never lived there.

Nancy: No, but I like it, I like the contact with nature, I like to see there are trees, animals, plants, I like that. My father always tells me about it. He also cooks meals from there, the typical meals from the selva. Yes, I feel I am more from there.

The girls in Los Pinos referred to themselves as *provincianos*; they felt, however, less connection to specific regions or provinces. This is understandable, as none of these girls had lived outside Metropolitan Lima; only one had been away for a short holiday. The only stories they knew were those which their parents had told them. They did not participate in the migrant networks to the same extent as their parents either. Therefore, more than for the parents their identification as *provinciano* seemed to be based on a constructed image of the *provincia*. In addition, maybe even more than for their parents, presenting themselves as *provincianos* seemed to be an expression more than anything else of not being *limeños*. The girls' opinions of the latter were clear-cut. As one of them put it: *Most limeños are very arrogant and they don't know how to fight for things*. In addition, the girls often said they felt discriminated against by the *limeños*.

The negative feelings of the girls about higher-class girls and their attitudes coexisted with a somewhat hidden jealousy of them. I remember a discussion among the girls about the differences between them and girls in Miraflores.⁸³ The latter were, according to the girls, more *gringo*: most of them have lighter eyes and that was something they all wanted. I asked them whether they would like to be more *gringo* themselves and their first answer was that they liked the way they themselves were. Then Britney intervened, stating: *come on, let's be honest: who would not want to have lighter eyes! Life would be much easier then!* The other girls nodded and one said: *yes, for them it is much easier to get a job because they are prettier*. Their lighter eyes, in short, were like a symbol for the difference, in status and wealth, between themselves and the higher-class girls.

In order to get a better understanding of the complex and sometimes contradictory constructions of the *pueblos jóvenes* identity, it is useful to go back to the period in which

83 The previous weekend, I had invited them to see a movie in the cinema in Miraflores (it was my last week in Lima and this trip was a farewell event). On this trip they had ample time to observe their peers from the higher social classes, as the cinema and the mall in Miraflores was one of the popular meeting places of that time.

the neighbourhoods were created. As was already described, when arriving in the city, the migrants had to build their whole life, quite literally from the very first stone (or reed mat). In the recently invaded areas on the outskirts of the city,⁸⁴ there was nothing and labour options were more limited than had been expected. As a result, many people opted to create their own jobs in the informal sector. In the literature concerning this phase of migration and community building, authors praise the diligence, creativity and perseverance of the migrants, as well as their mutual solidarity; all values associated with the rural background.⁸⁵ Also, the networks among people coming from the same region or village (who often flocked together to the same neighbourhood) have been mentioned as an important and positive factor during these first years (Adams and Valdivia, 1991; Anderson, 2000; Ascue and Esquivel, 1993; Cárdenas, 1999; Golte and Adams, 1987).

Over the years, cultural *mestizaje* (a process of exchange and synthesis of different cultural influences) has taken place, at least to some extent, leading to what is often called a *chicha* culture⁸⁶ (Degregori, 1985 and 1999; Matos Mar, 2004). This *chicha* culture is often described as a co-existence of rural and urban norms and values. The idea is that certain rural norms still persist, while there are also new norms, which have been taken over from the urban culture. Typical rural values in this respect are diligence, humility, strong attachment and sense of family, reciprocity and sense of duty and, with a more negative connotation, stubbornness, irrationality and short-term thinking. Urban values that have increasingly been assimilated are efficiency, pragmatism, risk-taking and rational thinking (Golte and Adams, 1987; Matos Mar, 1984; Portocarrero, 1993).

In many aspects of daily life in the *pueblos jóvenes*, elements from the rural background of the inhabitants can indeed be recognised. In Los Pinos, for example, every year in February or March, a *yunza*⁸⁷, a traditional Peruvian festival, is organised. On this occasion, people from the neighbourhood - mainly the older migrants - gather to sing, drink and have fun. Other traditions, such as the custom of *ayni* (mutual help) and the celebration of *carnival*, can be traced back to the provincial background of the inhabitants as well. However, it would be wrong to view the *pueblos jóvenes* culture or identity as merely a continuation of rural norms and values, combined with a number of urban values assimilated over the years. First of all, there is the risk of presupposing a rather static concept of not only the rural and urban cultural elements but, even more problematically, of the popular neighbourhood culture itself.

84 According to Thieroldt Llanos, the distance and prejudices that exist between the 'native' population of Metropolitan Lima and the rural-to-urban migrants and their children are partly due to the magnitude and the suddenness of the urban invasion in the 1970s. Integration was also not made easy because of the fact that most migrants, out of necessity, started building their lives and houses in areas rather far away from the already developed areas, that is in the cones (Thieroldt Llanos, 2000).

85 See for example Golte and Adams (1987:74) who explain the big inflow and successes of migrants in the informal sector with the following words: "They started to generate a type of economy, based on their own rules, partly reproducing early capitalist forms, seemingly archaic, both with respect to the organisation of production and in the technical proceedings".

86 The name 'chicha culture' is derived from the traditional beverage of the Andes. Apart from referring to the general culture prevalent in the *pueblos jóvenes* it also refers to a type of music very popular in these neighbourhoods that mixes traditional music with Anglo-Saxon rock, Colombian cumbia and Cuban salsa. In addition, the term *chicha* is also used to refer to the sensational media (Driant, 1991:15-16; Thieroldt Llanos, 2000:204).

Rural and urban are usually connected to the notions of traditional and modern respectively, a notion that suggests that cultural change does not occur in rural areas. It also entails a rather romanticised image of the ‘peasant in the city’ who, because of his or her origins, is naturally oriented towards organisation and collective action (Panfichi, n.d.).⁸⁸ As Panfichi states: “It is not sufficient to classify a group of persons by characteristics external to the daily action patterns” (ibid.:3). Romanticising may also be at work in the way the harsh situation of the *pueblos jóvenes* inhabitants is sometimes positively viewed by outsiders. In other words, by praising the diligence and solidarity of the people, the reality of poverty is hidden. Finally, some of the values that are called rural (for example, diligence) may have a closer relation to the aims and convictions with which the migrants came to the city - and thus with the nature of being a migrant in itself - than with their rural background per se.

What all these critical points have in common is that they warn against an oversimplification of the situation. They are, in other words, a call for recognising the *pueblos jóvenes* inhabitants’ agency to construct their own way of dealing with their origins. In such a process, some of the new choices and activities may appear similar to those in the original setting, but a closer look will reveal differences. Illustrative are the changing ways people make use of the networks among people from the same region or village of origin, something usually regarded as a typical rural element. As Anderson (2000) describes with respect to a case study in one specific migrant neighbourhood in San Juan de Miraflores, it is true that, in the urban context, these networks still play an important role. Over the years, however, the specific use of the networks changed considerably. Initially, the networks played an important role in organizing groups for house-roofing, for providing information and advice about life in the city and for forming political alliances in community power struggles. Over time, it seems that their most important functions have shifted to new arenas. For the adult population, the most important new arena in which the networks are playing a role is companionship. Anderson notes that, “among the women, they worked alongside each other in collective cooking clubs (*ollas comunes*), in household-level fund-raising activities and in day-to-day household tasks. Among the men, they tended to be drinking companions that might get together in the home of one of the men on Sunday afternoons to watch a soccer match on television and complain about the economy” (Anderson, 2000:7). The networks have also become crucial for the adolescent children of the couples whose first work experiences tended to be with their parents’ *paisanos* (referring to people from the same region) and relatives (ibid.).

87 The *yunza* is a traditional Peruvian festival, known also as ‘*umisha*’ in the jungle and ‘*cortamonte*’ in the coastal regions. This festivity takes place in the last week of February or the first week of March and it is traditionally held to honour Mother Earth for a good harvest. The *yunza* is celebrated around a tree trunk full of gifts, around which couples and people dance while holding hands. As they come close to the tree, they drink *cachina* (wine made with wild grapes) and tap-dance for a while. Then, with axes that men carry on their shoulders, they try to cut the tree trunk. If the tree trunk falls, the one who delivered the last, decisive blow is declared the winner. Together with his or her partner, they are then treated as honoured guests during the party and put in charge of organizing the *yunza* the following year. Tradition says that the winners are assured of happiness for the one year and that, if the woman is single, she is destined to be married during that time.

88 References in the document show that it dates from 1999 or later.

Pueblos jóvenes' identity is not only constructed on the basis of migration and the rural-urban mix. It is also coloured by the context of stigmatisation and discrimination in the urban areas. Against this background, people react in various ways. There is, for example, a tendency to see one's own culture and origins as inferior, leading to an attempt to adapt as much as possible to what is seen as urban and modern (Acha, 1993; Ascue and Esquivel, 1993) This is, however, not very easy. As Miles states with respect to migrants in an Ecuadorian city: "Even though rural-to-urban migrants often abandon obvious 'traditional' rural characteristics like dress and hairstyle when they come to the city, they are nonetheless, easily typecast because of characteristics such as short stature, darker skin, poor clothing, surname, manner of address and increasingly occupation" (Miles, 2000:60). The tendency to adapt to the urban way of life is also criticised by neighbourhood inhabitants. Although in general they recognise the need for adaptation in order to be able to lead a good life in the city, they also stress the importance of recognition of the original culture. In this respect, Ascue and Esquivel (1993) point to the construction of two opposing labels, the *cholo con éxito* (successful *cholo*) and the *cholo aculturado* or *cholo a la limeña* (Limean or acculturated *cholo*). In the popular neighbourhood discourse, the former refers to someone who is successful in connecting to the *criollo* culture, without denying or renouncing his own culture, while the latter is framed as someone who gives up his own culture in order to achieve social mobility.

Final reflection

From the preceding pages a somewhat mixed picture emerges. We saw that, in the popular neighbourhoods, people are confronted with processes of exclusion in many different ways. Enormous groups of people are excluded from formal jobs, both because of an absolute shortage of jobs and as a result of discrimination. With respect to public services and institutions like security and health care, poor people also occupy a disadvantageous position in many ways. And finally, as we saw in the last pages, stigmatisation and discrimination by other groups in society play an important role. As a consequence, considerable segments of the Peruvian population are pushed into the informal economy and society, into a new civil society where poverty and exclusion coexist with everyday violence (Kruijt et al., 2001:22; Kruijt, 2004a). In short, people in the *pueblos jóvenes* live as what we could label second-class citizens. Increasingly, the informalisation of society is not restricted only to the popular neighbourhoods. It is spreading over all sectors of society, leading Peru to look at itself more generally as an informal country. However, it is the inhabitants of the popular neighbourhoods that tend to be hit hardest by the exclusionary systems.

To a large extent, we could say that the concept of an informal society, a society in which the different forms of exclusion are responded to by means of inventive but short-term oriented survival strategies, new social identities and newly created parallel institutions, resembles Lewis' account of poor families in Mexico and Puerto Rico. In the informal economy and society, people are bound to each other by complex forms of solidarity and reciprocity and, although their activities are characterised by creativity and inventiveness, they are not very likely to lead to social mobility. Especially with respect to the perpetuation of poverty, aspects of the culture of poverty can be definitively recognised here. Moreover, the people themselves also perceive their situation as rather hopeless.

At the same time, there is also another image emerging from the preceding pages and that is the image of the inventive and active popular neighbourhood inhabitants who, individually or with the help of family or neighbours, always manage to make things work.

When looking at the popular neighbourhoods and its inhabitants this way, the informal sector does not appear in the first place as a place of misery and exclusion, but as an innovative and dazzling place of people creating their own work and income. All of these varied images and interpretations are, in fact, reflections of one and the same reality.

Photo 3 Mother with her children and grandchild



Chapter 3. Family life

When I told people in Peru about my work and about my experiences with the girls and their parents, I heard them on more than one occasion label the *pueblos jóvenes* parents as indifferent and dumb. With respect to teenage pregnancy, for instance, people said this occurred because of parents' lack of affection and care for their daughters. In Peruvian newspapers, it is common to read about popular youth engaged in *pandillaje* (youth violence), about early school absenteeism or about the problems of teenage pregnancy. Either directly or implicitly, many of these articles are rather judgemental about the role of the children's parents, calling them indifferent, authoritarian, or ignorant. In general, parents are held responsible for their children's failures.

In the academic literature, the situation of families in migrant popular neighbourhoods is analysed in a somewhat more balanced and less judgemental way. Authors refer, for example, to the low quality of education as a reason for school absenteeism or to economic problems in the family as setting the stage for tense family relations. At the same time, though, even contemporary researchers tend to portray these families in a rather one-sided way as being highly authoritarian and patriarchal. Furthermore, parents are said to lack the necessary skills and determination to raise their children well (Ingoldsby, 1991; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1996). Vega-Centeno, for example, speaks of a general lack of parental guidance in many *pueblos jóvenes* families, leading to what she calls a *desamparo afectivo* (affective neglect), a feeling in children that "everything their heads was filled with in the past as to how things should be, is not how it is and even less how it is supposed to be" (Vega-Centeno, 1993:202).

In this chapter, we will take a closer look at family culture and parenting styles in the *pueblos jóvenes*. The guiding premise is that there are many changes taking place. This is particularly visible with regard to both demography and gender relations within the family (see sections 1 and 2 of this chapter). In the field of parenting styles, however, change seems to occur less rapidly. During my fieldwork, I realised that many of the conclusions from the literature were true: the parent-child interaction in many families is still rather authoritarian, particularly when it comes to the interaction with daughters. It was also something the girls in Los Pinos complained about a lot. More interesting than that conclusion per se, however, is to look behind these parenting styles and ask why parents resort to these kinds of behaviour. This is what I will do in this chapter. The final section will be devoted to the issue of domestic violence, an issue that, because of its high incidence in many families, deserves separate attention.

Family life in the *pueblos jóvenes*: demography and historical changes

In recent decades, there have been many changes in the structure, size and nature of the Peruvian family. These general shifts were also visible in the *pueblos jóvenes*, although often in a somewhat different form. One of the major shifts that have taken place in recent years - mainly as a result of the growing use of contraceptives and women waiting longer until they

Table 3.1 Fertility rates⁹⁰ 1972-2003, Peru and Metropolitan Lima

	Peru	Metropolitan Lima
1972	6.2	-
1976	5.3	3.4
1986	4.3	3.1
1991	-	2.7
1996	3.5	2.5
1999	3.0	2.1
2003	2.8	2.0

Sources: Promudeh,⁹¹ completed with data from Ferrando (2002:11-12) and Indexmundi⁹²

marry⁸⁹ - has been the steep decline in fertility rates and, consequently, of average family size (Anderson, 2004:16; INEI, 2001). Table 3.1 clearly shows the decline in fertility rates over the last three decades, both in Metropolitan Lima and in Peru as a whole.

In terms of demographic transition, Peru is about to reach the end of the 'opening' phase, in which a decreasing mortality rate was combined with a rather high birth rate. Between 1960 and 1980, the growth rate in Peru was between 2.6 and 2.8; now it has gone down to 1.7. Life expectancy at birth has increased from 57 years in 1975 to more than 70 years in 2005,⁹³ an increase due in part to a rapid fall in infant and child mortality.⁹⁴ Peru is still a rather young country, with 40% of its population younger than 18 years old (Riofrío, 2003:2).

Despite the fact that, everywhere in Peru, fertility rates are now lower than they were a few decades ago, there is still wide variation within the country itself. On average, the lowest fertility rates are found in Metropolitan Lima (as seen in Table 3.1) and in the rest of the coastal area. In the *sierra* and in the *selva*, the total fertility rate is still rather high (Ferrando, 2002:12). Table 3.2 provides an overview of the fertility rates by region.

There are also differences in fertility rates within urban areas. Especially in the inner-city slum areas and in the *pueblos jóvenes*, both the fertility rate and family size are higher than the average for Metropolitan Lima. In these zones too, however, the use of family planning methods by adult women is increasingly accepted and rather widespread and fertility rates are considerably lower than those in the Highlands and the Jungle (Ferrando, 2002).⁹⁵

89 As a result of higher levels of education and increased participation in the labour force.

90 *Fertility rate* refers to the average number of children a woman has during her fertile years (between ages 15 and 49).

91 Source: Promudeh website: www.promudeh.gob.pe/poblacion/fecundi.htm, consulted July 2002. Promudeh (Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano) was previously known as the Ministry of Women and Human Development. Since July 2002, this ministry has been known as MIMDES (*Ministerio de la Mujer y de Desarrollo Social* or Ministry of Women and Social Development).

92 Source: Indexmundi website: www.indexmundi.com/, consulted September 2004.

93 Source: INEI website: <http://www.inei.gob.pe>, consulted November 2005.

94 In only 22 years (between 1980-2002), the infant mortality rate (i.e. the probability of dying between birth and one year old, expressed per thousand live births) has declined from 89 to 30; the under-five mortality rate (i.e. the probability of dying between birth and five years of age, expressed per thousand live births) has declined from 126 to 39 (Globalis website: <http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/>, consulted October 2005).

Table 3.2 Fertility rate by region, 2000

Region	Fertility rate
Metropolitan Lima	2.0
Other coastal areas	2.4
Sierra [Highlands]	3.7
Selva [Jungle]	3.8
Urban	2.2
Rural	4.3

Source: Ferrando (2002:12)

A second demographic trend in Peru is the nuclearisation of families.⁹⁶ Today, most families are considered nuclear families (instead of extended families), which are composed of a father, a mother and a number of economically dependent children. Ties with the rest of the family are shaped differently than before and (extended) members of the family no longer live within the same house (Mendoza, 1993; Nieves Rico, 1999). For families in the migrant neighbourhoods, the situation is often more complex. On the one hand, we might say that here the process of nuclearisation has accelerated. In most cases, only the younger generations moved to the city and grandparents, who in the rural areas formed a more integral part of families, are now much farther away (Anderson, 2004; Cárdenas, 1999). On the other hand, though, we see a large variety of family structures so, overall, it may be more accurate to speak of ‘newly constituted extended families’ rather than ‘nuclear families’. Just as in rural areas, there are a lot of so-called ‘created’ family relations with people outside the direct family. Usually these take the form of *padrinazgo*, or ‘godparenthood’. The first time that godparents are designated is either when a child is baptised or at the moment of the so-called *cortepelo* (the first time a girl infant gets her hair cut). Later events that involve godparents are the end of primary and secondary school, the First Communion and the *quince años* (15th birthday) for girls. Sometimes, the same persons are designated godparents for each of the rites of passage. More typically, however, a new pair of godparents is selected for each separate event. In this way, a complex support network is built (Anderson, 1994:10-12 and 1999).

A second factor that influences the structure of the *pueblos jóvenes* families is the fact that, quite often, one or more adult daughters, who already have children of their own, still live in their parents’ home. Of the girls in my research group, Britney,⁹⁷ Erica and Silvia stayed at their parents’ home after they had their babies. Angelica at first lived on her own, but is now also living at her mother’s place. When a girl with a baby stays with her parents, her position in the family is no longer the same as it was before. To a certain extent and especially when the baby’s father is contributing something to the baby’s welfare, she is now regarded as

95 See also Chapter 6.

96 Factors contributing to the rise of nuclear families include better health of older adults (which makes it possible for them to live independently) and the decline of young married women living with their in-laws (a phenomenon related to the stronger economic position of women) (Chant and Craske, 2003).

97 Britney’s family is in fact a very good example of the ‘newly constituted extended family’. In this all-female household we see Britney and her baby daughter living with her mother who also takes care of her son’s two daughters. The mother of these girls immigrated to South Korea. The girls’ father has remarried, and although he provides financial support for the girls, he prefers to leave them with their grandmother.

forming a separate economic unit. Yet, at the same time, she is also seen as part of the family and usually, costs for food, water and electricity are shared.⁹⁸

The presumed dominance of nuclear families in *pueblos jóvenes* is further challenged by the fact that frequently one or two family members from the region of origin move in temporarily. They may come to the city either in search of work, in case of illness (looking for treatment in the city) or, especially in the case of parents from the provinces, just to visit their children and grandchildren. Because of the long distances, these family visits tend to be of fairly long duration, sometimes lasting several months. During my fieldwork I saw many examples. Erica's grandmother visited the family in 2002 for about ten weeks and, in Silvia's case, a niece from her parents' home village visited for a couple of months. She had come to Metropolitan Lima in order to study, but ended up doing nothing more than helping her sick grandmother in the home. Michaela, a young woman with two children, often hosted family members from the provinces. Most of the time, a nephew was staying with her. He was working as a taxi driver and paid some money for room and board. Michaela also was visited by a distant niece of hers, who came to Metropolitan Lima after having a child at the age of 16. In order to get her away from her boyfriend (who was said to have had a bad influence on her) her mother sent her to the city to help Michaela out with her children. After about eight months, the girl was sent back home, after having become pregnant again.

The popular neighbourhoods contain a large proportion of mono-parental homes, usually female-headed households. These families, as we have seen in Chapter 2, are usually worse off in economic terms than families in which both of the parents are present. The neighbourhoods also have a fair number of so-called 'reconstituted homes',⁹⁹ meaning homes being shared with a number of partners over the life span, often containing stepchildren and/or half-siblings (Cárdenas, 1999). At least three girls in my study grew up in reconstituted homes, with half-siblings and/or with a stepfather. Three girls were living in families headed by their mother alone.

A third demographic trend that has influenced family life is the decline in marriages and the related rise in consensual unions (cohabitation of unmarried couples). For all of Peru, statistics show that, over the last two decades, the number of marriages has decreased (Mendoza, 1993; Nieves Rico, 1999). More remarkable is the observed difference between socio-economic classes. INEI statistics¹⁰⁰ show that in Jesús María and Barranco, two better-off districts, 68% and 91% respectively of all couples are married, with the remainder of the couples in each district bound by consensual unions. For San Juan de Miraflores, the numbers are 70% for marriage and 30% for consensual unions. In Villa El Salvador, the district adjacent to San Juan de Miraflores, more than 60% of the couples are cohabiting without marriage. To

98 I will come back to this issue in Chapter 7.

99 According to Chant and Craske, one factor contributing to this high number of reconstituted homes is the large number of consensual unions. Although they can be as enduring as marriages, research shows that the absence of legal impediments to separation means that they are more likely to be temporary, especially in circumstances of material deprivation (Chant and Craske, 2003:173). The phenomenon of reconstituted homes is not a new thing in itself. However, whereas before it was usually caused by the death of a partner, it is now to a larger extent the effect of second marriages, or of unions after divorce or separation (ibid.).

100 INEI website: www.inei.gob.pe, consulted November 2005. These data are based on the national census of 1993.

some extent the relatively high number of consensual unions in the poorer districts may be due to changing norms and values concerning marriage and gender relations in general. An additional factor is the high cost of formal marriage proceedings (Chant and Craske, 2003). Quite often, a man and a woman simply start living together and it is only after they have saved enough money that a formal marriage ceremony is performed.

In the interviews and conversations with the girls' parents in Los Pinos, it appeared that many of them were in reality not officially married. They had started living together, usually at the moment that the woman got pregnant. Most people I spoke with did not seem to bother that much about the formality of their marriage; not being married was not considered any less valid than being married. At the same time though, marriage remained the ideal and most people stated that they would like to have a formal wedding and celebration in Church after saving up enough money. The value of marriage was also stressed within each of the various Catholic churches in the district.¹⁰¹ Only people whose marriage was celebrated in Church (and who had fulfilled other obligations like regularly confessing) were allowed to receive Holy Communion.¹⁰²

In popular speech, no real difference was drawn between formally married couples and consensual unions. A couple was called 'married' when they started living together or when the woman became pregnant. This also held for youth: when a girl got pregnant, this led the whole community to refer to her and her boyfriend as *maridos* (man and wife). As her *marido*, the boy was supposed to take care of her, as if they were officially married. Even when the girl was not yet pregnant, but after their relationship had become publicly known and gossiped about, it was said that the girl already had her *marido*.

Changing gender patterns

My father is a bit of a machista, Lilia said when I asked her about the gender relations within her family. When I asked her what she meant, she said:

Well, he often behaves very machista, I don't like it when my father is like that and I don't like that... For me, machista means that a man has power over other persons, that he has power over a woman. In other words, that he feels superior to her; that is machismo. My father is machista, because he feels superior. He can just do what he says he will, just because he wants to and he doesn't think of other persons. I don't like that!

Lilia's description here is consistent with the way in which Latin American family relations are usually represented in literature: as closely related to the *machismo-marianismo* complex (cf. Stevens, 1973 and 1977). *Machismo*, just as Lilia described it, stands for the power that men exercise over women in many instances of daily life. It is a celebration of men's strength and virility. Within *machismo*, women are seen as inferior human beings: they are weak and vulnerable and therefore they need the protection of men (Fuller, 1993; Steenbeek, 1995).

101 For the families participating in my research and within Los Pinos in general, Protestant or evangelical churches were not very relevant. See Chapter 4 for more information regarding religion.

102 Possibly, this exclusion of non-married people from Holy Communion is not standard practice in all Catholic Churches in Peru or in Latin America generally. It is common, however, in the churches around Los Pinos, perhaps due to the involvement in these churches of a rather conservative Italian religious order, the *Comunidad Misionera de Villa Regia*.

Marianismo emphasises another side of women: it presents women as superior in moral terms. According to Fuller, the marianistic code refers to representations like “the moral superiority of women and the belief that she has a different special sensibility, which is related fundamentally to her role as mother and her way of experiencing her sentiments” (Fuller, 1993:195). The idea within *marianismo* is that women stand on a pedestal, from which they look down on the men around them. From this angle, men are seen as childish, irresponsible and sinful. However, this is not their fault, it is simply the way they are (Steenbeek, 1995).

According to Fuller, in the original *marianismo* construct, direct reference is made to the Catholic Church: the ideal of femininity is based on the Virgin Mary: spiritually holy and mentally strong. Today, according to Fuller, this association is partly replaced by a new association, one that is less directly related to Catholicism. Increasingly, female superiority is linked with motherhood or, more specifically, to the relationship that exists between a woman and her children (Fuller, 1993:72). Furthermore, her superiority is no longer based on motherhood alone: it is not just her role of mother that makes her better, but her capacity to take on anything and everything (ibid.:201).

Both *machismo* and *marianismo* contain images of both masculinity and femininity. Although *machismo* primarily constructs the male part and *marianismo* the female part, each of these complexes also suggest elements of its opposite. To further muddy the waters, in *marianismo*, two related but different images of femininity co-exist. That is, *marianismo* portrays the ideal woman or the ideal image of femininity. In doing this, it implies that women who do not comply with these images do not deserve the label of holiness. As a result, two categories of women exist: virtuous and holy women, who are potential candidates for marriage, and ‘fallen’ women who, while providing men with sexual pleasure, remain unworthy of their admiration. Women in this latter category are seen as ‘bad’ and are not regarded as potential candidates for a long-term relationship. The two categories do not necessarily refer to different women; instead, labels of or ideas about women can apply simultaneously to an individual woman. The only woman who is *always* holy is a man’s mother.

The *machismo-marianismo* complex has come in for a good deal of criticism on the part of scholars working on gender in Latin America (Steenbeek, 1995:46). It is said to be one-dimensional and static, presupposing a rather dualistic opposition between men and women. In addition, as Steenbeek argues, the image that is constructed of femininity in *marianismo* is too unilaterally based on motherhood alone and neglects other possible factors that shape femininity. Nencel (in a personal conversation with Fuller; see Fuller, 1993:37) also stated that the *marianismo* model is basically a Mexican model, where it is linked to the national cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In Peru, women would not feel the same identification with the Virgin Mary, nor with the painful negation of sexuality that is associated with such identification.

Another approach to gender relations in Latin America that has come under increasing criticism is the idea of a ‘public-private divide’ (Cubitt and Greenslade, 1997:52). The basic idea behind this dichotomy is that men’s main responsibilities and strengths lie in the public sphere (in paid labour and politics) whereas women’s responsibilities are at home. There, she can work on what is supposed to be her most important task: raising children. This division, according to Cubitt and Greenslade, “enjoyed enormous currency in the political and social sciences, and has been a focus of feminist theorization of women’s oppression and emancipation” (ibid.:53). The critiques of this idea are manifold and they are in substance similar to those of the *machismo-marianismo* model. Most important is that the divide

suggests a dichotomy, whereas in practice the two spheres are inextricably interrelated. In addition, as Walby suggests, we should acknowledge that, in both of these spheres, similar kinds of patriarchal¹⁰³ domination structures could exist. This means that, even if women were able to overcome the exclusionary mechanisms of private patriarchy, the move into the public world subjects them to a collective patriarchy (Walby, 1990). Labour-oriented studies have also argued that just entering the labour market (the public domain), does not in and of itself lead to an improvement in women's standing. For certain groups, such as lower-class women stuck in informal jobs, it seems that increased involvement in the labour market has only added another dimension to their subordinate position (MacEwen Scott, 1995; Ypeij, 1995).

As a reaction to these (and other) critiques to the 'public-private divide' Cubitt and Greenslade propose a dialectical approach to the analysis of women's action and empowerment processes in Latin America. In contrast to the dichotomous public-private divide, they propose as a starting point Giddens's theory of structuration, in which the mutual constitution of structure and agency is central (Cubitt and Greenslade, 1997:57). The starting point in Giddens's theory is that structures (relations of production) frame and potentially limit people's actions. At the same time, though, it is emphasised that human behaviour can potentially influence and reconstitute structure.

Perhaps one of the main conclusions to be drawn from the discussions on *machismo-marianismo* and the "public-private divide" is that, in today's Latin America, gender relations can no longer be schematised in simple terms. Rapid economic change shaped and altered traditional labels and different groups experience these changes in different ways. Research focusing on these multiple experiences and realities is therefore necessary.

During the last decade, a number of studies have been carried out on the subject of gender relations and gendered identities in Peru. They all show enormous variety and complexity with respect to gender constructions and representations. One such study is that of Raguz (1995). In her study, she asked 600 men and women open questions about their understanding of the constructs 'male', 'female', 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. It is remarkable that, for each construct, a large variety of elements were mentioned and that no single element clearly emerged as dominant (none of the elements was mentioned by more than 20% of the respondents).

Research by Nencel (1996) showed that distinctions that are made between different types of women are not always straightforward. The essential difference between 'good' and 'bad' women, for example, is not a woman's behaviour but the value that is attached to it. Nencel describes how among (male) youth a distinction is drawn between *rucas* or *pacharacas*¹⁰⁴ ('easy girls') and *chicas de su casa* (quiet girls, 'good' girls). This difference is not necessarily a question of being sexually active or not. A relationship with a *chica de su casa* can be sexual as well, but in this relationship a man's emotional involvement will be greater. It is almost a holy relationship; she remains the woman who is protected and treated with respect and for whom certain feelings are reserved. Quoting Nencel, "it is not whether a woman is sexually

103 Patriarchy, according to Walby, is defined as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby, 2000:20).

104 Nencel also distinguished between the *rucas* and the *pacharacas*. Both labels are used to designate girls with whom men can let loose their sexual desires. The difference lies in the fact that normally a *ruca* is an acquaintance while the *pacharaca* is a stranger. The latter are commonly found in bars, restaurants and discos, making it known by their dress and behaviour that they want to be picked up (Nencel, 1996:69-70).

active that constructs difference but, rather, if she sexually conforms to the label she is given” (Nencel, 1996:76).

All studies on gender patterns and representations in Peru conclude that representations of gender and gender relations are undergoing change. In recent decades, the most important factor that influenced constructions of femininity and womanhood has been the increased participation of women in paid labour. Traditionally, femininity and womanhood were always regarded as closely connected to motherhood and family. Recent research reveals that this bond continues to be a strong one. However, labour has become just as important a factor in shaping the image of womanhood, especially among the middle classes (Anderson, 2004:18-19; Fuller, 1997 and 2004; Hite and Viterna, 2005).¹⁰⁵

There is some disagreement about the effects that increased women’s participation in paid labour has on gender relations in families. On the one hand, studies have shown that women becoming co-providers to the household would lead to greater equality between husband and wife. Increasingly, women earn their own income and thus they may be better able to fend for themselves economically. Women feel they are more equal to their husbands and thus make sure they get a say in what is done with the money (Chant and Craske, 2003; Fuller, 1993 and 1997).

Other authors, on the other hand, mention the increased labour market participation of women as leading to increasing tensions and conflict within families (Anderson, 2004; Fuller, 1993, 1997 and 2004). The increased independence and power of women, for example, is often felt as a threat to their male partners. As Chant and Craske (2003:165) say: “Men who fail to fulfil their obligations to household survival are under greater threat of losing their wives”. According to Coronado and Mendoza, men are and will be the ones who are seen as providers in economic terms: with the exception of very flexible families, in which changes may occur, labour market participation of women leads in many cases to a more rigid authoritarian structure, stronger authority of the father figure and to more conflict between partners (Coronado, 1996:62; Mendoza, 1996:70-71). Furthermore, as Chant and Craske (2003:186) emphasise, although employment could in the end have positive outcomes with respect to empowerment and declining dependency of women, “pragmatically [for now] this means heavy double burdens of labour, less time for leisure and friendships and little scope for reflecting on how their critical efforts in household survival might be a route to more egalitarian gender relations”. And although women may have increased their paid labour market participation, they are far from entering the labour market on an equal footing with men. They are hampered by lower levels of education and vocational training and also by domestic and child-rearing responsibilities. There is therefore debate over the extent to which women’s rising participation in income-generating activities has translated into real changes in identity or personal power (Chant and Craske, 2003; Fuller, 1998).

In the *pueblos jóvenes*, gender relations are also experiencing increased tensions. In Chapter 2, we already saw that, as a result of women’s roles in the formation and consolidation of the

105 As in the rest of Latin America, female participation in Peru’s labour market increased dramatically over the last decade. Between 1980 and 2000, the male economically active population (EAP) grew by just 2.3% to a rate of 70.6%, while the country’s female EAP grew by 13.5% reaching 38.1% in 2000. Peru’s female EAP is projected to continue increasing to 45% by 2015, while the male EAP is expected to remain steady around 72%. The main increase in female EAP has taken place in the service sector (CEPAL, 2004:8; see also CEPAL, 2003).

migrant neighbourhoods, an empowerment process had begun (Raez et al., 1991:29; Rivera, 1993:20-21). As is the case among the middle classes, the increasing participation in the paid labour force played an important additional role. According to various authors, however, changes in the popular classes have taken a somewhat different form than those described for the middle classes above (Cáceres, 2002a et al.:188-192; Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993:172-175; Kogan, 1996; Raguz, 1995:140; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995). To some extent, this may be due to economic reasons, as economic necessity and crisis may not leave much time and space for negotiations over power. The most important difference, however, according to Fuller, lies in the value that is attached to women's labour (Fuller, 1993 and 1998).

In the popular classes, women's participation in the labour market, even after having increased significantly, is still merely seen as an extension of their responsibilities towards the family (and to some extent also towards the community). Their paid labour activities are seen as just a small 'support' to the family, even if this work takes more than ten hours a day and provides the majority of the family's income. This is in contrast to the middle classes, where the value of labour is constructed in a more individual and personal way, including the idea of work as a means of personal development (Kogan, 1996; Raguz, 1995; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995; Ruiz Bravo, 1996). In this respect, Fuller speaks of the difference between the *madre moderna* (modern mother) in the middle classes and the *madre heroica* (heroic mother) in the popular classes. In both of these constructions of female identity, the traditional femininity shaper 'motherhood' has been joined by 'participation in paid labour'. In the first case, however, women are in the first place seen as individual persons, for whom labour contributes to personal development. The heroic mother, on the contrary, is more family and community oriented and her work activities (paid and unpaid, inside and outside the house) are always in the function of her mother role (Fuller, 1993:70-74).¹⁰⁶

Constructions of masculinity and femininity are changing in Peru and different models seem to co-exist. According to Fuller, these different models are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is as if they have found their own niches: the image that is based on the traditional marianistic ideal appears within official contexts, within the Catholic Church and on ritual occasions (e.g., *Día de la Madre*, or Mother's Day). The modern mother is represented most of all in the 'expert' discourses sent out by those who present themselves as possessors of 'legitimised knowledge', discourses directed at the middle classes. The heroic mother, finally, is particularly found with popular class women (Fuller, 1993:74). Fuller warns that behind this apparently new and changing discourse, the same symbols of femininity can still be discerned: symbols which identify a woman by the characteristics of motherhood, affection and seduction. Although less explicit, these associations are still very much present (ibid.:96).

According to Anderson, the different change processes in the *pueblos jóvenes* are also related to the history of migration and more specifically to the first years of the urban adventure. Quoting her, the reinforcement of the hegemonic gender identities has much to do with "the fact that a population of mostly poor, rural migrants was seeking to reinvent itself as urban and non-poor. The result was a sort of 'super-correcting' wherein both women and men sought to present themselves as conventional gender performers according to what they *perceived* to be predominant urban models" (Anderson, 2000:16). In addition, the demands for

106 For similar analyses of changing gender patterns in Mexico, see García and De Oliveira (1997); Tiano and Ladino (1999); for Chile: Dávila León (2002).

uniting as a community (in the phase of building up) created pressures to “establish a single standard of value and behaviour” (ibid.:16).¹⁰⁷

Anderson also points to a possible paradox when it comes to the position of mothers and their daughters in the *pueblos jóvenes*. On the one hand, as we saw above, women increasingly participate in the paid labour force. Furthermore, women always devoted a lot of their time and energy to building up the community and keeping the family going. Despite the barriers listed above, in the end most adult women have succeeded to some extent in empowering themselves (Anderson, 2000; Barrig, 1998:109). This empowerment, however, is not always passed on to their daughters. The most important obstacle in this connection is the fact that, in many cases, adult women have only been able to work outside the home and empower themselves because their daughters took care of the household and their children at home (Anderson, 2000:16). In other words, what Anderson suggests is that, to some extent, the empowerment of one generation is built on the inhibited empowerment process of the next one.

In Los Pinos, the complexity and multiformity of gender relations and gender patterns was very visible. With respect to the division of labour within families in the neighbourhood, for example, the general rule was that women were responsible for the household and the children; men were responsible for bringing in the money. This did not mean that women were not engaged in paid labour: on the contrary, often their incomes were a welcome contribution or sometimes even the main contribution to the family’s income. Even then, the formulation *es una ayuda* (it is [just] a help) was often heard. Men, apart from their role as economic providers, were also expected to do something in the household and to play their part in child-rearing. The basic division, however, was such that women were in the first place responsible for the children and household whereas men were responsible for working and earning income outside of the home.

Another example is provided by the decision-making process within families. Usually, the girls saw their fathers as the most authoritarian person in the family. When I asked the girls’ parents in Los Pinos about the decision-making process in their families, most of them stressed that the more important decisions were always taken by mutual agreement. Daily decisions, particularly those regarding the children, were made by women. With respect to the financial management within families, some women said that all decisions with respect to finances were taken jointly. Others said their husband just gave them a daily or weekly allowance for the household expenses. Some women did not know how much their husbands earned. Women also told me that they sometimes hid part of the money they had earned and kept it as extra spending money for themselves, without telling their husbands about it. My impression was that, in the end, men may have more influence on longer-term decisions than women. However, as Illizarbe Pizarro (1997b:9) suggests, women may exercise power to a greater and different extent than meets the eye. Furthermore, the

107 In this respect, it is important to note that that what often is referred to as traditional gender structures are not necessarily structures that belong to the migrants’ own history. Quite often the so-called traditional gender structures were taken over by the migrants when arriving in the city. In the Andes family structures, a sexual division of labour and some hierarchy within the family existed as well; however, it is commonly agreed that this was more practice-based and that it did not involve as many inequalities with respect to women’s position within the family (Anderson, 1994; Arnold, 1997; Miles, 2000).

actual power balance within families is probably highly dependent on the situation and the individual persons involved.

One of the areas in which gendered power relations are put into practice is (women's) sexuality. Within the *machismo-marianismo* complex, women's sexuality is usually approached as directly related to the family's honour and, therefore, it is closely watched by male family members. Freely exercised sexuality does not fit in with the idea of moral superiority and with the image of the 'holy mother'. Men, on the contrary, have much greater freedom to be sexually active and, for them, sexual activity is crucial for the confirmation of their male identity. As in the broader area of gender relations, change is also occurring here. The greatest changes have taken place in discourses among women and in the middle classes (Cáceres et al., 2002a; Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993:172-197; Kogan, 1996; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995). Dissatisfaction among women is most of all heard with respect to the double moral standard in sexuality. In the interviews by Fuller with women from the middle classes, the women recognised that the double moral standard was still there, especially among men. However, for them it had nothing to do with differences in nature, but only with the unjust organisation of gender relations. As Fuller summarises: "They directly labelled it as machismo" (Fuller, 1993:174).

Changing discourses and practices inevitably lead to tensions both among persons and within a single individual. To start with the latter, it is not always easy to deal with the various coexisting discourses and to 'decide' how to put them into practice. Often, this leads to a situation in which, at different moments or in different areas, apparently contradicting practices or expressions surface. During the conversations with men and women in Los Pinos on sexuality, for example, some people expressed their disapproval of men's behaviour and about the moral double standard regarding sexuality. This was, however, combined within the same conversations or interviews, with remarks such as 'this is just how they are', or 'in the end they cannot do anything about it' (see also Illizarbe Pizarro, 1997a:13-16).

Between people, tensions may arise when understandings of crucial elements differ. This is particularly so when, as was suggested by several authors writing on dynamics in sexuality, women seem to be a bit more progressive than men, at least in their speech. Between men and women (for example in a marriage), conflicts may arise. Furthermore, we could expect that part of the difference between women's discourses and practices is explained by the fact that, although women would like things to be different, they still feel bound by how men expect them to be. Among the girls in my research, I often heard references to this situation. Most girls agreed that for them the moral standards for girls and boys should be the same. They stressed, for example, that in a relationship, neither men nor women should be unfaithful. Furthermore, they more than once talked about girls who in their eyes undeservedly had received the label of 'easy girl'. At the same time, however, they were all very aware of the risks of image loss and adapted their behaviour to this risk. This way they thus conformed to what they thought boys would like.

Family culture and parenting styles

Following the preceding overview of family structure and gender patterns, it is now time to take a closer look at family and child-raising culture in the *pueblos jóvenes*. How do parents interact with their children, and specifically with their daughters?¹⁰⁸ In the literature on child raising, four types of parenting styles are typically distinguished (Baumrind, 1989 and 1991). Each of these parenting styles reflects different naturally occurring patterns of parental

Table 3.3 Parenting styles

		Demandingness (behavioural control)	
		Low	High
Responsiveness (parental warmth or supportiveness)	High	Permissive- indulgent	Authoritative or Democratic
	Low	Permissive- neglecting	Authoritarian

Source: Baumrind (1989)

values, practices and behaviours and a distinct balance of the dimensions ‘responsiveness’ and ‘demandingness’ (see Table 3.3). It is important to recognise that, because parenting style is a typology rather than a linear combination of responsiveness and demandingness, each parenting style is both more than, and different from, the sum of its parts.

The first parenting style in the scheme developed by Baumrind is the permissive-indulgent style. Parents who follow this style “are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation” (Baumrind, 1991:62). On the opposite end of the spectrum within this model are the authoritarian parents who are more demanding and directive and not very responsive. They provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules. These parents “are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation” (ibid.:62). Authoritative parents, the third type, are both demanding and responsive. “They monitor and impart clear standards for their children’s conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative” (ibid.:62). Finally we have the permissive-neglecting parents, who are low in both responsiveness and demandingness.

In addition to differing on responsiveness and demandingness, parenting styles also differ with respect to a third dimension, which is psychological control. According to Darling (1999:2), it is especially this factor that is crucial in the distinction between authoritarian and authoritative parenting:

Both authoritarian and authoritative parents place high demands on their children and expect their children to behave appropriately and obey parental rules. Authoritarian parents, however, also expect their children to accept their judgments, values, and goals without questioning. In contrast, authoritative parents are more open to give and take with their children and make greater use of explanations. Thus, although authoritative and authoritarian parents are equally high in *behavioral control*, authoritative parents tend to be low in *psychological control*, while authoritarian parents tend to be high (italics in original).

¹⁰⁸ In the literature, there is usually no clear reference to parent-daughter interaction as such. Therefore, most of the literature that is used in this section is on parent-child interaction in general.

Implicitly or explicitly, the four different parenting styles outlined above are used as a basis for a lot of studies on youth and child-rearing. In the Peruvian literature, examples are provided by the studies by Mendoza (1996), Pimentel Sevilla (1996) and Vega-Centeno (1993 and 1996). Often, the ways in which the parenting styles are employed are rather value-loaded, presupposing, for example, the superiority of democratic parenting styles over more authoritarian ones. Furthermore, links are too easily made between certain parenting styles and the (lack of) parental love. Instead, it is necessary to take into account the implications of different cultural and social settings in which children grow up (Rogoff, 2003; De Wit et al., 1995). In a multiform and dynamic society, for example, in which changes occur rapidly, the development of children's autonomy and a certain degree of flexibility is very important. In such cases a more democratic and authoritative style might indeed have good results. In other situations, such as earlier times in Europe, where being successful had more to do with following in the footsteps of one's parents, a more authoritarian parenting style might have been more suitable (De Wit et al., 1995:108). For adolescents growing up in an environment with greater social risks and fewer economic possibilities, such as the *pueblos jóvenes*, a more authoritarian attitude is also understandable and to some extent defensible (De Wit et al., 1995:108). In this respect, Berk's conclusions about child-rearing in violent neighbourhoods in the United States are illustrative: in neighbourhoods with higher crime rates, setting strict limits helps protect children from engaging in problem behaviours and from becoming victims of crimes (Berk, 2002).

Family culture in the *pueblos jóvenes* of Metropolitan Lima is usually described as a combination of authoritarianism and permissiveness, or *laissez faire*. Translated into the labels of Baumrind's scheme, the parenting style could be positioned in the lower part, as moving between the permissive-neglecting and authoritarian styles. This would imply that parents are relatively low on parental warmth and support and that demandingness towards their children is variable. I will first discuss the literature on family culture in Peru and compare it to my own observations of family life. At the end of this section I will come back to the usefulness and accuracy of these labels.

In the literature on popular family culture, parents are reported to exercise strict control over their children. There is a high degree of demandingness, with open and egalitarian communication between parents and children usually lacking. The authoritarian family culture is reflected in a rather vertical transmission of norms and values and quite directive conduct mandates (Mendoza, 1996; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1993, 1994 and 1996). Moreover, the affection that parents express toward their children is often linked to good behaviour. Vega-Centeno (1993:203) speaks in this respect of an *amor condicionado* (conditional love).

The authoritarianism in *pueblos jóvenes* families is not only shaped by age (leading to an authoritarian attitude by parents toward children), but also by gender (Coronado, 1996:62-63; Ingoldsby, 1991; Miles, 2000). In this structure the father is ascribed the highest degree of power and the young girl's position is, in many ways, at the bottom. It also implies that brothers can exercise power over their sisters (Nieves Rico, 1999:75-76). In the case of the girls in Los Pinos, the power of brothers was sometimes quite visible. Especially when a girl's father was totally absent (as in the case of Marisol and Elena) or not often at home (as in Angelica's case), girls complained about the overbearing way their brothers (both older and younger) treated them. Marisol, for example, told me several times that her brother (who is

two years younger than she is) threatened to kick her out of the house because she was not behaving the way he wanted her to.

Authors also point to a general neglect of children, a lack of parental guidance and a low level of responsiveness to the individual needs and desires of the child (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1996:110-111). This *laissez faire* attitude does not necessarily contradict an authoritarian one, as one might initially think. Both of these attitudes co-exist and either may come to the fore at different times or for different children (Vega-Centeno, 1996:111). Parents may, for example, vary their attitude according to how important they consider the subject at hand. According to Ennew, an authoritarian attitude emerges especially when the assigning of children's *responsibilities* is at stake: "Parents expect each child to fulfil his or her obligations, to work hard and to share the burdens of family life. However, once this attitude is impressed on the child, the relationship between parents and children is generally non-authoritarian" (Ennew, 1986:60). Parents may also draw a distinction between boys and girls. For girls, themes that give rise to high levels of control are contact with the opposite sex and virginity, in sum everything related to their sexuality (Vega-Centeno, 1996:113).¹⁰⁹ Overall, girls seem to be subject to a more authoritarian style than boys. Finally, age plays a role. In general, teenage girls are subject to more control than their younger siblings.¹¹⁰

In my fieldwork, I saw many examples of both the permissive, seemingly indifferent side and the more authoritarian side of the parental attitude. During my extended visits with Angelica's family, I was often surprised by the apparent lack of attention the children received from their mother. Apart from recurrent yells to stop doing something, or to start doing their homework, the children's mother did not engage in any constructive activity, like sitting next to her children to help them with their homework. I was also struck by the rather harsh way of talking to the children and by the fact that, more than once, I saw Maria-Teresa hit the younger children. Below are two excerpts from my field notes.¹¹¹ They both concern Angelica's family, the family with whom I spent the most time.

Early evening in Angelica's family:

The children are watching television, a soap opera from Brazil. It is quiet now, quite different from the situation only half an hour ago. Then, the children were running around and were making a lot of noise. Maria-Teresa [Angelica's mother] tried to establish some order, shouting abusively and telling them that, if they would not stop, she would hit them: "I will hit you, I will hit you hard!" Despite the undertone of love, communication in the family seems to be often rather brusque and negative. If the children ask something, they are called burros (donkeys) and there is a lot of threatening with a belt. In the end, this almost never is done, but what is going on is a long way from what I would call normal communication.

Later that night:

Whenever the children are tired, they go to sleep. They sleep in the clothes they are wearing during the day and in the place where they happen to be when they fall asleep. Vilma and Angel

109 The most important themes for boys that give rise to authoritarianism are those related to the risk of taking up bad ways and getting involved in *pandillaje* (youth violence), drugs or criminality.

110 See Chapter 6 for a more extensive discussion on the control exercised by parents over their daughters.

111 Observations in Angelica's family, 28 May 2002.

have already fallen asleep, in the spare bed in the room where their mother also sleeps. When Daniel and Andreas linger too long in the room, they are sent away: "Get out of here, go to sleep. Leave us alone!"

In other families, examples of the apparently indifferent attitude could be found as well. Especially at a younger age (that is under 12 or 13 years old) children were allowed to be in the street a lot, without their parents knowing what they are doing. When the parents worked outside the house, leaving an older sister (or brother) in charge, there was usually little control over what children were doing. Furthermore, there was hardly any initiative displayed on the part of parents to engage in what psychologists and educators would call stimulating educational activities with their children. Playing was not promoted at all. Children and youth were either active in work or household related activities, or they were hanging around doing nothing and being bored.

In the interviews and informal conversations, the girls repeatedly reported authoritarian behaviour in their families. Looking back at these stories, this authoritarianism fell into two somewhat distinct categories. First of all, the girls told me about the attempts of their parents to control their lives and to confine the (physical) space in which they move. The girls were, for example, instructed to come home right after school and they were often not allowed to meet friends outside of the neighbourhood. Secondly, the girls stated that their parents gave them very little opportunity to have a say in things they considered important. They were only to a very limited degree involved in decisions that affected their lives. Both of these aspects of authoritarianism were represented by the same complaint: *no me dan confianza* ('they don't trust me').

Most girls did not see the controlling behaviour of their parents as a lack of love or affection. Quite the contrary, as I clearly realised in one of the *talleres* with the girls. In the presence of my father, who was visiting me for a few days, we were talking about parenting styles and about the differences between Peru and The Netherlands in this respect. At one point the conversation among the girls focused on the question of how parents should go about the sexual education of their daughters. They already knew that my first sexual experience was at the time that I was still living at home. After many hesitations and laughter and after asking me (in Spanish, which my father did not understand), whether they could ask my father something about it, they asked him whether he knew about his daughter's sexual initiation. When he answered that he did know, they asked him how he felt about it and whether he felt regretful for not being more strict or controlling. When he answered that he was not, they were totally astonished. *Did he really love his daughter?*, one of the girls exclaimed.

This incident was revealing. Although the girls complained a lot about being controlled by their parents, they apparently did not see this as lack of love or parental warmth. In the conversation that ensued after the initial laughter and astonishment, the girls said they thought a certain degree of control and guidance was necessary. They stressed, however, that a better balance between this control and some degree of autonomy was necessary. In their own words, what they wanted was more communication and trust.

The notion of trust is something that came up very often in the interviews both with the parents and with the daughters. Trust can be defined as the parental belief in their daughter's responsibility, and consequently as the degree of freedom that parents give their daughters to go their own way. Trust is clearly relational and interactional: it is something that parents

feel they have to give to their daughters (*darles confianza*) at least to a certain extent. It is also something that the daughters have to gain (*ganarse la confianza*). Because of this double character, it constitutes a major issue around which negotiations between parents and their daughters evolve. To make it more complex, *confianza* is also used to refer to the existence of open communication between girls and their parents (*yo (no) tengo mucha confianza con mis padres*). In Chapter 6, the different interpretations of *confianza* will be discussed in greater detail.

To come back at Baumrind's scheme of parenting styles and the discussion around it, I would conclude that, in broad terms, the labels attached to the *pueblos jóvenes* parenting styles are correct. Parents indeed tend to act in a rather authoritarian way, with this authoritarianism sometimes co-existing with elements of the 'permissive neglecting' style. At the same time, these labels do not say much. First of all, as we have seen, authoritarianism can take different forms and, in fact, when girls referred to the interaction between them and their parents, they preferred to use the word *confianza*. This implies that, for them, the main problem lies in the lack of communication between them and their parents. In addition, and just as important, is the observation that the girls did not equate the authoritarian parenting style with a lack of parental warmth or love. Finally, even more important than labelling the dominant parenting styles in the *pueblos jóvenes* is answering the question of why parents act like this. This will be the theme of the following section.

Socio-cultural embedding of child-raising in the *pueblos jóvenes*

In the search for an understanding of family culture and parenting styles in the migrant popular neighbourhoods, the literature offers a number of explanations. Some of these focus specifically on authoritarianism and permissive parenting styles, whereas others are more concerned with underlying communication problems. With respect to authoritarianism and the permissive-neglecting parenting style, investigators repeatedly refer to family culture in the regions of origin, particularly in the Andes. Generally, the idea is that socialisation practices that were used over there were brought into the cities when people migrated.

One of the authors who did extensive comparative research on socialisation in the Andes and in the urban areas is the American anthropologist Jeanine Anderson.¹¹² According to her, in the Andes, the control of conduct and obedience each played and still do play very important roles (Anderson, 1994:27). Especially when it comes to certain values and specific tasks, rules are strict and children are expected to perform well. However, and this may help in understanding also the more permissive-neglecting attitude of parents, it seems that, in the Andes, the main socialisation arena is not limited exclusively to the parents. Instead, a child is educated by the broader community, with older brothers and sisters and the peer group having especially important roles (Anderson, 1994:14; Brondi Zavala, 2001:31; Silva, 2000:42).¹¹³ Because of their parents' extensive work responsibilities, children may be more socialised by what happens in the street and at the workplace than in their families. Furthermore, children are not supposed to learn (just) by explicit teaching, but also by copying the models and roles

112 Jeanine Anderson is an American anthropologist who has been working in Peru at the Universidad Católica for more than 20 years.

113 Often, the term *ayllu* is used, which includes parents, brothers and sisters but also other family members, friends, godparents, and other people with whom an individual has a special relationship (Brondi Zavala, 2001:38).

of others, usually of adults (Mendoza García, 1995:49; Rogoff, 2003).¹¹⁴ In the *pueblos jóvenes*, parents still seem to rely on many of these socialisation practices (Anderson, 1994).

Some authors, like Pimentel Sevilla (1996) and Germaná (1996), are more negative about the relationship between socialisation in urban *pueblos jóvenes* and in regions of origin. According to them, the problem in the migrant neighbourhoods is that older socialisation practices have been entirely left behind without new ones being taken up. Families, in the words of Pimentel Sevilla (1996:14), have evolved from 'supportive structures' (in the Andes) to 'atomised entities' (in the city). As a result of the economic crisis and the sudden rupture with Andes structures, these atomised families are no longer capable of fulfilling the basic functions of a family:

[an atomised family is ...] a family that is not capable of alleviating the emotional tensions of its members but instead makes them greater; a family that is not capable of educating the children, a function which is increasingly assumed by mass media, and particularly television (Germaná, 1996:37).

In these kinds of families, the authors state, it seems that, on the one hand, parents have neither the time nor the inclination to really look after their children. On the other hand, especially in contexts where the norms are in crisis, they are sometimes imposed with extreme rigidity (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996:96; see also Kliksberg, 2005:30).

In my conversations with the parents in Los Pinos, they often referred to the supposed difference between Metropolitan Lima and their own region of origin. For most of them, however, the relevant issue was not so much the changed family life, but instead the new extra-familiar environment in Metropolitan Lima that they perceived as threatening. Many parents explicitly used the comparison between the situation 'here' and the situation 'there' as an explanation for the rather authoritarian attitudes and the prohibiting mandates 'here'. They saw the urban context as dangerous; they saw youth in Metropolitan Lima as loose and they therefore felt the need to protect their children against it. Parents referred to at least two different types of danger. The first kind of dangers was related to the physical environment, to 'being on the street' in general. Parents were afraid that their daughter would be robbed, or even worse, that she would be raped or get pregnant. Consuela's mother told me:

There are so many things happening here. Violations, killings, robberies, all these things you hear about today. That is why I am very afraid when she leaves the house. For example, last night, she had left the house to sell [sweets], it was already 10.30 p.m. and the bus still hadn't arrived. Oh, I was very nervous! No, in general I don't let her go out a lot.

¹¹⁴ This is, in fact, a common means of socialisation in a society with a high number of 'post-figurative elements' (cf. Mead, 1970:4). In such societies, different generations live in close proximity to one another, sharing the same activities and places. Children are raised with the idea that their lives will be roughly the same as those of their parents (and grandparents). In these kinds of cultures, respect for older people and for traditions is key. Continuity and communality are more important than individuality, as the latter can only endanger the societal organisation that is seen as indispensable for the survival of the group (ibid.:4-8).

The second type of danger that parents identified were the ‘bad examples of other girls’. This danger refers to girls who got pregnant, who were living together with their boyfriends, who were going out a lot, or who were just *said* to do be doing all those things. Parents saw these girls as bad examples and they did not want their own daughters to spend too much time with them.

The strong and pronounced way in which parents spoke about the threats of the environment reflected constructions of the urban and rural reality that were only to some extent based on objective assessments of these realities. Parents seemed to have a rather romanticised picture of the rural areas, something that may be partly related to a feeling of ‘homesickness’ for the *provincia*. In addition, in their constructions, the situation in the rural areas in the early days was easily seen as being identical to the current situation in these areas. Another factor that influenced the dualistic construction of parents is that many of them still did not feel at home in Metropolitan Lima. They still identified themselves as *provincianos* and as such, they felt more connected to the rural areas than to the city where they now lived. Many of them also told me that they still did not feel very confident when they were out in the streets. They felt unsafe and, to make things worse, they were usually treated as second-class citizens. Apart from the dualistic opposition between the quiet countryside and the risky city, the parents also constructed a strong dualism between youth here and youth there. One of the occasions in which I spoke quite extensively about the presumed differences between growing up in Metropolitan Lima, in comparison to growing up *en el campo* (in the rural areas), was with Gisela and Sebastian, Erica’s parents. What follows are some excerpts from the interview with them:

Gisela: Before, en el campo young people were more responsible.

Sebastian: Yes, they were more responsible and ... how can I explain it to you, more responsible and more reserved, for example, with their first boyfriend.

Gisela: Yes, in Huancavelica¹¹⁵ you never saw a couple kissing in the street. In Lima, this is normal and they always told us that we had to be careful in Lima. There, things are really different.

Sebastian: Here, young people have become corrupted, or well, corrupted, no, but they are more advanced. To put it differently, today, young people confuse freedom with being able to do whatever they want. And in the older days, it was not like that, young people used to be more quiet. There was no pandillaje either. Youth from there, from the sierra are more quiet. They are more dedicated to work. There is no television and there are no discotheques. And maybe that is why... here there is more danger. Here things are different. They see things on the television, they hear about music and discotheques, that is different; friends, the whole environment, everything is different.

Later in the interview, Erica’s parents reflected more generally on the dilemmas for *padres provincianos* (parents from the provinces, meaning, in this case, from the Andes):

JO: Why do you think there are so many teenage pregnancies here?

¹¹⁵ Huancavelica is a small Andes town (about 35,000 inhabitants) and capital to the department with the same name. It is the town where Erica’s parents come from.

Sebastian: maybe, it is because we are provincianos, don't you think. And we still believe that [...things are the same as...] in the era that we were raised in; and we still try to do things the same way. But it is not like that anymore.

Gisela: Things have changed!

Sebastian: Things are different, they are just the opposite now. We have to give them more room, more communication and explain to them how to go about things. And if she has a boyfriend, well, that is life, but you have to explain things to her: look, this is this and this is how things go. But, in general, provincianos are more authoritarian.

Gisela: Yes, they are more authoritarian and reserved. They are not so open.

In addition to the migrational background, there are other factors that explain the predominant parenting styles. One important factor in this respect has to do with the extensive work obligations of parents (Vega-Centeno, 1996; Mansilla, 1991). In Los Pinos, many parents were absent from their home and their children for many hours during the day. Angelica's little brothers (9 and 11 years old) and sister (7 years old), for example, were often left alone when their mother had to go to the market to sell chicken. Even when the parents were at home, there were a lot of responsibilities and worries that conflicted with one another. Let us listen to Soledad, Britney's mother:

Well, the problem with today's youth is that there is less dialogue between parents and their children. This is because of work, parents go out for work and the children stay at home alone and are left free. They live their lives like little birds in the field, free to wander and without any guidance. Sometimes parents do not even have time on Sundays, as they are too tired or because they have to do all those things they do not have time for during the week. So, maybe that is where the rebelliousness comes from. I think, there should be dialogue between a father or mother and their daughter if only for about half an hour a day, just half an hour of talking, at night, for example. Especially because at night there may be some time, during the day parents are working. I have always tried to do that with my children.

The parents in Los Pinos recognised the risks of working long hours outside the home and realised that the attention they could give to their daughters was not always as much as they would have liked. They expressed feelings of powerlessness and despair, related to the limited hours they had available for their children. Paradoxically, what I saw is that sometimes this awareness and the resulting frustration led to an even more authoritarian attitude on particular issues and at critical times when influence seemed possible.

When it comes to communication problems in general, the literature often points to the link between these problems and the frustrations and tensions resulting from the large socio-cultural distance that exists between parents and their children. A certain distance between parents and their children is thought to be typical for the relationship between generations. However, whereas usually the relationship between older and younger generations may be described as a 'generational gap', this gap here broadens into a 'generational rupture' (Franco, 1996:120) or 'generational obsolescence' (Macassi, 2001b:29). In the case of a generational gap, the (supposed) opposition between the 'traditional' values of adults and the more liberal values of youth is not unbridgeable and communication between both of these sides is possible and does indeed occur. In the case of generational rupture, however, the distance has become so great, that patterns from the past have become totally obsolete in the current situation.¹¹⁶

Communication between the generations hardly exists and, if there is any communication, it is not effective (Franco, 1996; Macassi, 2001b).

The growing distance between the generations can be ascribed more generally to the speed of today's modernisation processes. It is however reinforced in the *pueblos jóvenes* by the fact that parents with a migrational background have an inherently different 'reading of reality' than their children, who have been born and raised in the city (Vega-Centeno, 1996:90-91). It is, as Anderson¹¹⁷ says, as if the parents and children are living in two totally different worlds: "Children do not recognise themselves in their parents' struggle. They see the image of the neighbour and the notion of solidarity as a caricature. It is not so much about poverty, but about the fact that they [parents and children] are from two [different] worlds." The degree of distance between the two worlds is of course dependent on many personal factors and the individual personalities of parents and children. In general though, as Aramburú states, the distance is greater when one or more of the following factors is present: migrant parents, older parents, parents with low level of education and parents who have not lived in Metropolitan Lima for a long time yet. Factors on the side of the adolescent girls that increase the distance between them and their parents are: having (had) a boyfriend and degree of sexual experience.¹¹⁸

There seemed to be little change in the way parents interacted with their adolescent daughters when the latter grew older. Even at an age of 17 or 18, parents did not seem to give their daughters much more autonomy or responsibility for their own lives and decisions. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, this may be related to the fact that most parents are not used to the extended period of social moratorium that exists today. The concept of 'social moratorium', as we saw already in Chapter 1, emphasises the fact that the period of youth is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood; it is a stage in which persons increasingly distance themselves from child roles and take up new adult roles. Preparation for being an autonomous and responsible adult is a central element (Cortázar, 1997). In recent years (mainly as a result of the increased participation in education), the length and importance of the period of adolescence and youth has increased in urban Peru (Panfichi and Valcarcel, 1999:13). Parental behaviour towards this older youth has not always changed accordingly. For parents, who did not know the same kind and length of social moratorium in their own youth, it is not always easy to deal with the needs and capacities of this group. They may recognise that their daughters are no longer children. To a certain extent, this may be translated into giving the girls more responsibility within the household. When it comes to work activities outside the house, the girls may also obtain greater freedom. These responsibilities, however, are usually given to a much smaller extent when it comes to the girls' personal lives. Here, parents generally keep emphasising that their daughters are not responsible enough yet and that therefore control and guidance are necessary.

Many of the dilemmas that parents are facing will be revisited in Chapter 6, where I will be talking about the concrete educational messages of parents to their daughters. To conclude

116 In a similar analysis for Chile, Benado Calderón (1999), uses the notion of 'mental modes'. According to her, there is a growing and almost unbridgeable difference between the mental modes of children and those of their parents. The result of this situation is a growing disintegration of families.

117 Personal conversation with Jeanine Anderson; 18 June 2002.

118 Personal conversation with the Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Aramburú; 19 June 2002.

the current chapter, a separate section on domestic violence in *pueblos jóvenes* families follows; an issue in which we can again recognise the tension between ideals and daily practice.

Domestic violence

A separate issue in relation to family life in the popular sectors of Metropolitan Lima is domestic violence. Although domestic violence is sometimes said to follow naturally from authoritarianism, for parents in Los Pinos these are two essentially different phenomena. Parents in Los Pinos see a certain degree of authoritarianism and control as necessary for the socialisation of their daughters. In no case, however, do they justify domestic violence. Of course, this does not mean that it does not exist in the neighbourhood.

In recent years, domestic violence¹¹⁹ received increasing attention in Peru, and several studies on the subject have been carried out (Espinoza Matos, 2000; Guezmes et al., 2002; Nieves Rico, 1999; Pimentel Sevilla, 1995).¹²⁰ The general picture that emerges from these studies is that domestic violence is a widespread phenomenon in all sectors of Peruvian society and that as such it frames the family context in which children are raised. There are signs that, over the past decade, - partly as a result of increasing media attention to the issue and the implementation of the *Plan Nacional contra la Violencia hacia la Mujer* (National Plan to Combat Violence Against Women)¹²¹ - perceptions and opinions about domestic violence are changing. Increasingly, a man beating up his wife is seen as negative and not acceptable. Still, as we shall see, the reality of the situation is rather complex and many challenges remain.

Most studies on domestic violence draw a distinction between psychological violence (for example humiliation or insults), physical violence (such as hitting, pushing, or pulling the hair) and sexual violence. A 1996 research in Peru among women in the middle and lower classes showed that 88% of these women reported to have been victims of some sort of violence carried out by their male partners (Nieves Rico, 1999:83). Most women (84% of all respondents) reported psychological violence and a smaller but still significant group of 31% reported physical violence (Nieves Rico, 1999:83).¹²² In another study, focusing on domestic violence in Metropolitan Lima, the percentage of women that reported having been victims of physical violence by their partner at least once in their lives was even higher (51%) (Guezmes et al., 2002). Percentages reported for sexual violence are somewhat lower than for either physical violence or psychological violence. However, in the study by Guezmes et al.,

119 Usually, domestic violence refers to violence perpetrated by male members of the family against female members of the family, and by older members of the family toward younger family members. In practice this means that the victims are almost all women, girls and boys, and that the violators are men, older brothers, and sometimes also adult women (i.e., toward their children).

120 In recent years, more women have reported domestic violence cases. The question arises as to whether this means that there has been an increasing amount of aggression. It is more likely that the increased reporting is the result of a greater awareness of the possibility of making such reports, and a greater readiness on the part of women to report violence. Important factors in this respect have been the implementation of new laws, and the opening of special *Comisarias de Mujeres* (police offices for women).

121 For a more extensive assessment of the *Plan Nacional contra la Violencia hacia la Mujer*, see Boesten (2004:224-227).

122 These percentages do not add up to the mentioned 88%, as there is overlap between the groups. Many women who reported physical violence also reported psychological violence.

slightly more than 20% of the women reported having been victims of sexual violence at least once in their lives. For all types of domestic violence, it seems that most acts of violence take place within the home (Espinoza Matos, 2000:96).¹²³

With respect to domestic violence directed towards children, figures are equally alarming. When, in a study by Espinoza Matos (2000:78),¹²⁴ people were asked about the most common ways in which people in their environment tried to solve problems with their adolescent children, more than 30% mentioned the use of beatings. For the lowest socio-economic strata, this figure rose to more than 40%. Indications from children themselves are found in a study by Nieves Rico, done among eight-grade children in five different sectors of the country. More than 60% of these children said they had been victims of some sort of physical violence by their parents; within this group, about a third reported that they had been victims of serious physical violence (Nieves Rico, 1999:91-92). It is remarkable, according to Nieves Rico, that although on the one hand mothers are recognised as the ones children trust most and with whom relations are better than with the fathers, it is also mothers who are reported to exercise most physical violence. Her explanation is that because childcare is regarded as typically a woman's task, so is maintaining control and exercising discipline. Other studies, like Vega-Centeno (1996:112), on the contrary, argue that the person in the family who uses the most physical violence is the father.

For my own fieldwork setting, I find it rather difficult to give an assessment of the domestic violence situation. Much of it is hidden and this goes specifically for violence inflicted upon women by their husbands. In many instances, I was told by a woman that, especially when her husband was tired or depressed (for example because of being fired or not being able to find a job), he was sometimes very rude to her and the children. In several interviews and conversations, women suggested that they had been beaten by their husbands. With respect to violence toward children, I saw several instances of violence, mostly verbal but sometimes also physical. And, just like in the family situations I described earlier in this chapter, there were many *threats* of physical violence toward children. Often, mothers warned their children (both young children and teenagers) that if they would go on doing this or that, their father would punish them severely. In most cases, this threat was not put into practice. On more than one occasion, I saw parents actually beat their children, with a belt, a shoe or their bare hands. That physical violence was actually taking place was also confirmed by the

123 A general problem with all the statistics in this section is that, because of the taboos and secrecy surrounding the issue of domestic violence, they do not always reflect the truth. In addition, it is difficult to compare statistics because of the different interpretations that researchers and respondents attach to the concept of violence.

124 Espinoza Matos' analysis is based on a large INEI study 'Encuesta de Hogares Sobre Vida Familiar', conducted among 2460 women between 15 and 56 years old in Metropolitan Lima and Callao. The study approached the issue of domestic violence by means of indirect questions. Respondents were not asked whether they had been victims of some sort of violence, or how they themselves would react in a certain situation. Instead, they were asked about what was going in families in their direct environment and how they viewed these situations. The final aim of this study was to get more insight into the social representations of domestic violence. Thus, although it did not provide statistically accurate figures about the prevalence of violence in society it was very revealing with respect to the ways violence permeates society.

fact that, when I asked a mixed group of seven girls and boys whether as a child their parents had beaten them, they all answered affirmatively.¹²⁵

A visit to the local police station *Laderas de Villa*¹²⁶ in May 2002, taught me that, in general, police are aware of the problem of domestic violence. The police officers I spoke with said that they were always open to women who wanted to report domestic violence. Domestic violence is also recognised as a separate crime in the police records. According to these records, in 2002, there were about 60 reports of domestic violence per month in Pampas de San Juan,¹²⁷ mostly referring to physical violence of men toward their wives or ex-wives. For violence toward children, for which the records are kept in the *Defensoría Municipal del Niño y Adolescente (DEMUNA)*, the records for 2000 showed that, each month, there were about 30 to 50 cases of child abuse in San Juan de Miraflores. Probably, the actual number of domestic violence incidents is much higher. Police records in Latin America are known to be rather inaccurate and more specifically with respect to domestic violence there is usually a high degree of under-reporting as a result of what has been called a ‘culture of silence’ (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004:101). People may also be reluctant to denounce domestic violence because they do not expect the police or other institutions to do anything about it. Relevant in this respect may be that, in the Andes, the region of origin of most of the *pueblos jóvenes* residents, extra-judicial conciliation is a common method of solving violent domestic disputes (Boesten, 2004:230).

During my visit to the police station, I witnessed a number of cases in which women came to report cases of domestic violence or just to seek advice about how to deal with it. Overall, the attention the abused women received was rather sympathetic. Officers were friendly, asked the women to sit down and then took the time to listen to their stories. In most cases the conclusion of the police officer, however, was that the role of the police was unavoidably minimal. Often, the main problem was that *no está calientito el hecho* (literally, ‘the fact is not “hot” anymore’) and women were advised to call the police immediately after the violence took place. Given the lack of direct action that police could take, women were more than once encouraged to take justice into their own hands. Often, the message communicated to them was: “why don’t you hit him back?” Notable in this respect was the case of a woman who came to report her ex-husband, who quite often came to her house drunk and wanting to have sex with her. After listening to her story, the police officer told her: “Just hit him, use a stick. You have to defend yourself. Just take a stick and hit him hard. Then he will learn!”

Explicitly and implicitly, the general message at the police station seemed to be that women are often themselves largely to blame for the abuse. They are the ones who let it happen and who only come to the police after things have gotten out of hand. Illustrative of this attitude was the reaction of a police officer to a woman who came in to report psychological violence by her husband: “Why did you wait so long to come here. You are supporting the abuse yourself. Apparently you either love him or the abuse too much. And now, without any proof, what do you think we can do?” The various cases I have described here are of course only random cases. They do, however, reveal that, although the police are

125 *Taller* (May, 2002) with boys and girls.

126 The *Comisaría Laderas de Villa* covers the district of Pampas de San Juan (sub-district of San Juan de Miraflores, where Los Pinos is located) and parts of the adjacent district of Villa El Salvador.

127 Pampas de San Juan is a sub-district of San Juan de Miraflores and is the sub-district where Los Pinos is located.

generally attentive to domestic violence, in practice their actions are limited. Women in Los Pinos are aware of these limits and generally they do not regard the police as helpful for victims of domestic violence. There is, in sum, much to be desired when it comes to the practical treatment of domestic violence cases and victims.

At the police station and the DEMUNA office, it was emphasised that, in the zones where they were working (i.e., the *pueblos jóvenes*) the degree of domestic violence was significantly higher than in other areas. Critical factors according to the police officers and the DEMUNA psychologist were the high degree of *machismo* thought to be typical for people coming from the *sierra* and the *selva*, the high degree of unemployment and economic problems (leading to frustration) and problems related to alcoholism. Official studies on domestic violence do not agree as to whether figures for domestic violence are significantly different in different socio-economic sectors of society. Neither are they conclusive regarding the link between domestic violence and ethnic origin. In one study by the *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos*, in cooperation with the research centre Cuanto, significant differences were found between poor and non-poor with respect to domestic violence towards women (IEP, 1997).¹²⁸ Other studies (Espinoza Mata, 2000:92; Fagan, 1993) confirm these differences. Studies by Gonzales and Gavilano (1998:22-38) and by Nieves Rico (1999), on the other hand, stress that domestic violence is something that occurs across all socio-economic strata. The only clear correlations Nieves Rico derives from her data are those between work activities and salaries of women, on the one hand, and the prevalence of violence, on the other. In general, she says, violence occurs more often when women do not have an income of their own and thus have to ask their husbands for money. Also the *level* of a woman's income seems to be important: higher salaries are linked to lower probability of a woman being a victim of violence. And if women with relatively high salaries are victims of violence, they more often defend themselves by hitting back, calling the police or by leaving their husbands (Nieves Rico, 1999:88-89).

Although there might not be a direct measurable link between domestic violence and socio-economic position or ethnic background, there are a number of specific factors in the popular sectors that influence the emergence of domestic violence as well as the specific forms that violence takes (Boesten, 2004:227-229). One possible source of family tensions in the popular sectors is the previously discussed changes in gender relations (Barrig, 1993; Fuller, 2004).¹²⁹ As we have seen, these changes do not always work out positively in the short run. Men may feel frustrated when their wives are no longer available 24 hours a day for childcare and household tasks. It may also affect their sense of masculinity, which traditionally has been attached to work and other remunerated activities for the welfare of the family. As noted by Fuller: "Work is represented as a masculine space *par excellence* because it is where the male accumulates the social, symbolic and productive capitals that are their contribution to their families" (Fuller, 2000:111; italics in original).

A number of the factors that were mentioned by the police officer and by the DEMUNA psychologist come into play here as well. First of all, there is poverty and the lack of resources within the family, which may easily translate into frustrations, mutual demands

128 Whereas, for example, in that study, 63% of the group of poor reported being victims of serious psychological violence at least once in their lives, figures for the non-poor were only 50%. Sexual harassment was reported by 53% of the poor and only by 38% of the non-poor (IEP, 1997).

129 As we have seen, working outside the house is not confined to the popular sectors. However, it seems that, in the popular sectors, more than in the middle classes, doing so leads to friction between the partners.

and reproaches between partners (Coronado, 1996; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996). Arguments tend to start verbally, but may escalate to physical violence, which may then also be directed towards the children (Del Carmen, 1996; Mendoza, 1996:71). In the study by Mendoza, women complained about depression, based on the feeling that they were all on their own (ibid.:18). Both men and women indicated that they felt frustrated about not being able to meet the basic requirements their children had (ibid.:22). Relevant in this connection is the previously discussed emergence of atomised families resulting from the economic crisis. In these kinds of families internal family relations are under severe pressure and the next step to violent behaviour by one or more family members can in such cases be small (Germaná, 1996; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996). Domestic violence in a context of poverty also entails other possible problems. It is usually more difficult for poor women to leave their violent husbands because of financial and social dependency (Espinoza Matos, 2000; Boesten, 2004:230; Nieves Rico, 1999). More practically, calling the police in the case of acute domestic violence is more difficult when (functioning) telephones are not close by.

As I said at the beginning of this section, over the last decade, domestic violence has received increasing attention from institutions and the media. Among the public, the use of violence against women and children is now often a theme of discussion and disapproval of domestic violence is becoming more and more vociferous. In the study by Espinoza Matos, for example, all respondents said they preferred other ways of problem-solving over more violent ones (Espinoza Matos, 2000:69;80). Furthermore, they pointed without hesitation to the harmful effects of all types of violence on women and children (ibid.:102). The study also showed the complexity and the internal contradictions in people's attitudes. To the question 'why do you think mistreated women stay with their husbands?', 17% of the respondents said they do so because this was just a normal situation (ibid.:104). It is also revealing that almost 30% of the women thought abuse by men of their wives could be justified in the case of her being unfaithful. Other justifiable grounds for domestic violence were 'her neglecting the household or the children' (mentioned by 10% of the women), 'spending time with other people' (7%), 'spending money unnecessarily' (7%), 'not obeying' (7%) and 'not being willing to have sexual relations with him' (5%) (ibid.:98).

Final reflection

The overarching conclusion that could be drawn from this chapter is that, for *pueblos jóvenes* families, change is omnipresent. Shifts have taken place with respect to the structure and formation of families and with respect to gender relations. Overall, there is more multiformity and several models co-exist. When focusing more particularly on the interaction between parents and their daughters, fewer changes seem to have taken place. Parents still approach their children, and particularly their teenage daughters, in a rather authoritarian way. There is little room for open communication about themes like sexuality or the use of free time. One explanatory factor for the authoritarian parental attitudes lies in the migrational background of many of the parents. In the regions where they come from, authoritarian child-rearing was common. Furthermore, their migrational background leads to a relatively large socio-cultural distance between them and the generation of their children. An important factor brought up by parents themselves was their feeling of insecurity in the city and, more particularly, the fear that their daughters would be victims of some sort of violence. Practically, parents' long working hours also play a role.

It is important to note that many parents do in fact struggle with the way they raise their children. They hear the complaints and calls for more *confianza* from their daughters. They also realise that their way of dealing with things does not always have the results that they intend. Most parents are increasingly aware of the fact that the way they have been raised may no longer work so well. Against this background of slowly increasing discontent, some parents are trying to do things somewhat differently. They search for alternatives that meet both the requirements of modern urban life and their own norms and values. They try to be more open with their daughters and more responsive to their expressed needs. In Chapter 6, where I will be speaking of the interaction between parents and daughters regarding two specific matters, we will see several examples of this.

For many people and on many occasions, the changes that take place around and within families offer new possibilities. It is clear that, because of the dynamics in the labour market, a lot of women have experienced an empowerment process. In addition, the smaller number of children in families potentially gives parents more time, energy and money to spend with those that they do have. However, change also implies conflict. This is visible, for example, in the sometimes rather conflictive relationship between parents and their daughters. The most important thing to realise is that the changes that are taking place in the *pueblos jóvenes* imply an enormous challenge for the parents who are raising their children in these neighbourhoods. Their main aim is to prepare their daughters for lives that will be better than their own. Attaining this objective in such a dynamic situation, though, is probably one of the most difficult tasks imaginable.

Photo 4 Girl dressed for her *promoción*, with three of her friends



Chapter 4. *Mostrando mi vida:* the lives of teenage girls in the *pueblos jóvenes*

In ‘Contrajuventud. Ensayos sobre juventud y participación política’, the Peruvian sociologist Venturo (2001:23) states that, in today’s Peru, youth as a social category is by nature heterogeneous. There is no *one* youth; there are different types of youth. Therefore he calls for an approach that starts from ‘micro-realities’. One of these micro-realities is that of teenage girls in migrant popular neighbourhoods. In Chapter 1, I already stated that, generally speaking, little is known about this group. Their lives revolve for the most part in and around their houses. They do not get attention as a result of their violent or deviant behaviour like some of their male peers do. The only aspects of their behaviour which give rise to concern are those related to sexuality and, more specifically, pregnancy.

This aim of this chapter is to enable the girls of Los Pinos to each speak in her own voice. Here these girls will present themselves and speak of their daily lives, their hopes and dreams, and also of their fears. The personal experiences they relate here do not permit easy generalisation to other youth. However, through the experiences and concerns discussed by the girls in Los Pinos, we gain valuable insight into several important aspects of girls’ lives in general. Both Chapters 4 and 5 are based on the girls’ own experiences and perspectives. Chapter 4 deals with more general aspects of their lives and Chapter 5 more specifically with sexuality. Both of these chapters make extensive use of creative products the girls constructed during the *talleres*. These *talleres*, apart from being joyful experiences for the girls, were an important source of information for my research.¹³⁰

In one of the first *talleres*, I asked each of the girls to make a big poster using drawings, text and photographs to represent the most important aspects of their lives. The girls used either pictures clipped from magazines or photos that they themselves had taken. I had brought in small disposable cameras and, working in groups of two or three, the girls made a series of photos of what they saw as important to their lives. The result of the poster *taller* was eight large posters that gave an interesting and personal view of the lives of each of the girls. Under the heading *mostrando mi vida* (showing my life), most girls portrayed what they saw as a normal day in their lives in Los Pinos, complemented with some of their dreams for the future. In later *talleres* and in the interviews, their views about their own lives were further explored. In one of the *talleres*, as we shall see later in this chapter, they were asked to discuss and explore the most important differences between adolescence and adulthood.

Both in the interviews and in the *talleres*, it became clear that growing up in a *pueblos jóvenes* context impacts the lives of female youth in many ways. Being involved in household responsibilities and work outside the house, for example, leaves the girls very little time for themselves. Take Marisol, who told me in an interview:

130 For a more extensive explanation of the *talleres* as a research method, see Chapter 1 (section ‘Research methods’).

Sometimes when my mom does not work and maybe I have some work.... Well, then I am the one who supports my family. And that is why, well, sometimes I am not living the life of an adolescent, isn't it? Because, in adolescence, one wants to have fun, think of other things. But in my case, it is not like that. I am a different girl, different from many others, I would say. Because, well, I sometimes have some time free, when I give myself a little time off and then I go out. But at other moments, I don't. I am dedicated more to my family, because I have to support them. And, as I am the oldest, I am responsible for everything. I come home after work, the money I got is for my family, I am focusing on my brothers: in sum, I am not a normal adolescent, just spending time with friends.

The narratives of the girls showed that, apart from the difficulties they experience in their lives, there was still some time for fun and recreation. After their household chores and school homework was done, they met each other at the central square or sat down to watch television.

The sections in this chapter cover the different issues the girls brought up as important in their lives. The first theme is school, followed by household and work responsibilities. The third section deals with the girls' hobbies and leisure time activities. The fourth section focuses on the role of religion in their lives. This is followed by a section on two rites of passage experienced by most teenage girls between the ages of 14 and 18: the *quince años* (their 15th birthday) and the *promoción* (graduation from high school). The chapter concludes with a section on the girls' expectations for and concerns about the future.

School

One of the most prominent themes in the representations of the girls was school. When I started my fieldwork, all of the girls were attending school. Most of them said they liked going to school, mainly because it was seen as essential for their future success. Of course, the girls were sometimes bored with school. They complained about teachers, homework and other school-related things and, like girls all over the world, most girls mentioned breaks and free periods as their favourite things. Without exception, however, they said that they would never leave school: *I have to finish my studies* (Silvia); *I know that what I am studying is for a better future* (Lilia); *Then I would not have a career to get ahead with* (Elena); and *Study will be of use for my whole life and it is not good to lose time* (Joanna).

Apart from a place where the girls prepare for future careers, school is a place for social interaction and emotional support.¹³¹ School is sometimes a place where the girls get the emotional support they cannot find at home or in the neighbourhood. Elena, for example, told me several times about one of her teachers, who *always gave us advice, about how we should behave. We always talked with her. We ate together.* More than at home and in the neighbourhood, school is also the place where the girls can interact relatively freely, and without direct parental supervision, with their peers and, more specifically, with boys (Tovar, 1995). In this respect, it does not come as a surprise that many of the boys the girls had fallen in love with, or with whom they had been going steady for a while, attended the same school

131 See also De Waal, writing about teenage girls in the Netherlands in the 1980s: "For most girls, school is most of all a place for social interaction, in which the formal curriculum only occupies a minor position". She goes on to say that "school is a fact of life and girls are just 'making the best of it' ...their priority is 'having a good time'"(De Waal, 1989:82, quotation marks in original).

as they did (see also Chapter 5). The interaction with peers was often mentioned as important motivation for going to school. For some girls however, their peers had also led them away from school. Both Britney and Carina stopped going to school for a while. In an attempt to explain their actions, the two mentioned the influence of 'bad friends'.

All of the girls attended public schools. Peruvian public schools hold classes in three shifts: morning (8 a.m.-12.30 p.m.), afternoon (1 p.m.-5.30 p.m.) and evening. In principle, the three shifts offer the same quality and content of education. In practice, however, the education provided during the night shift is inferior to that of the day shifts. Because of time constraints, the curriculum focuses only on the basics. Usually, subjects like religion, labour preparation and English are left out.¹³² Of the girls participating in the study, about half attended school in the mornings, one attended the night shift and the remainder went in the afternoon.

Whether children attend the morning or afternoon shift depends on several factors. Parents seem to have a slight preference for enrolling their children in the morning shift, as discipline and structure are supposedly greater at school in the morning than in the afternoon. However, because of enrolment limits and the fact that the child may have other responsibilities, a lot of parents sign their children up for afternoon classes. The vice-principal of a secondary school told me that she saw a clear difference between the pupils in the morning and those in the afternoon. In general, the pupils in afternoon classes were from poorer families, in which the children's labour was needed in the morning. Some of the children had already put in a full day of work before coming to school. In the afternoon classes, there were also a higher percentage of children of 'migrants', a term she used to refer to families that had arrived in the neighbourhood only recently. Since there were no places left in the morning classes, the newcomers could only enrol their children for afternoon classes. As a result of their somewhat different background, the vice principal stated, children in the afternoon classes were usually a bit more focused on school. They felt it a privilege to be at school and they were more conscious about the need to study. At the same time however, because of the situation at home, they often had to put household-related work before school and homework. As a consequence, she concluded, in the end the pupils in the afternoon classes usually have somewhat poorer results than those in the morning shifts.

The night shift is meant for those students who are unable to attend school during the daytime. They are engaged in work or have a baby to take care of. In general these students are somewhat older. Night classes are also seen by young people as an escape from the greater demands of the daytime classes.

The high degree of school participation among the girls in Los Pinos is consistent with general figures for school attendance and enrolment in Peru and Metropolitan Lima.¹³³ For about four decades, the educational system in Peru has expanded enormously. Figures with respect to school attendance and school enrolment are among the highest in Latin America. Today, net school attendance¹³⁴ in urban areas is about 95% for primary school and 70%

132 Source: interview with Britney, 10 May 2001; Britney herself attended night classes.

133 In the rural areas, the situation with respect to school attendance is considerably more problematic. There is a higher proportion of over-age students, more school desertion and more children who start primary school late (CEPAL, 2002; Promudeh, 2001).

134 Net school attendance: percentage of children in the age group that officially corresponds to a certain grade level who are actually attends that level.

for secondary education. In Metropolitan Lima, the average number of years that children attend school is almost ten (INEI, 2000c). This figure is relatively high, both in comparison with the situation only one or two decades ago and also in comparison with other middle-income countries in the region. It comes close to what according to CEPAL is the minimum educational capital needed for reaching a higher 'poverty immunity' (cf. CEPAL, 2000:145). As a rule, young people need ten years or more of education to reach 80% on the poverty immunity scale (ibid.). Number of years in school is positively correlated with economic productivity, improved health, delayed marriage, lower fertility and less teenage pregnancy (Population Council, 2004).

In general, school attendance and performance of the educational sector in a country are measured by the gross and net enrolment rates.¹³⁵ The data in Table 4.1 show that, in Peru, school attendance in primary education is higher than in secondary education. The data also show that, for secondary education, both the gross and the net enrolment have grown significantly over the past two decades. During that period, the slight discrepancy between boys and girls has remained roughly the same. The data also leave many questions unanswered. In primary education, for example, the figures for gross enrolment have hardly changed between 1985 and 2001. This can mean that in the whole period about one-sixth of the school population stayed in school seven years or longer. It can also mean, however, that children do not start school until the age of seven or eight and as a result also finish later. With respect to secondary education, the gross enrolment rate has increased more than the net enrolment rate and the question arises as to why this is so. Does it mean that more children above the age of 17 now go back to school to complete their education after having earlier abandoned it? Or does it mean, just as in primary education, that many pupils are repeating the same grade.

Urban area figures for girls and boys with respect to school participation and performance are remarkably similar. Illiteracy in the urban areas, for example, is low for both boys and girls (i.e., less than 2%;¹³⁷ INEI/ Unicef, 2004) and gross school enrolment at primary schools is

135 The gross school enrolment ratio is defined as the number of children enrolled in a level (primary or secondary), regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the same level. The gross enrolment ratio is a standard indicator of the level of participation in education. The goal is to be as close to 100% as possible. In countries with gross enrolment ratios of less than 100%, there are not enough schools or slots for students and children may not be filling the slots that are available because they are kept out of school. In countries with gross enrolment ratios over 100%, there is a good deal of under- and/or over-aged enrolment, meaning that many students are above or below the official age for the grade; this may be the result either of having to repeat grades or of entering school late because of work and/or inability to afford school fees. The net school enrolment is defined as the enrolment of the official age group for a certain level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population from the same age group. If the value is below 100%, this does not necessarily mean that the remaining school-age population is not enrolled in any school; they could be enrolled in school at other grade levels.

136 Website: http://www.usaid.gov/educ_training/ged.html, consulted December 2004. This website holds the Global Education Database (GED), an interactive statistical database compiling educational data from UNESCO for over 200 member countries and USAID, with education statistics until 2001.

137 Illiteracy figures for the whole of Peru are higher. In 2002, 9% of the adult population and 3% of youth between 15 and 24 years old were reported to be illiterate (Global Education Database (GED), 2004).

Table 4.1 Gross and net enrolment in primary and secondary education, Peru (1985-2001)

		1985	1995	1998	2001
Gross enrolment primary education	Total	120	123	123	120
	Boys	123	125	123	120
	Girls	118	121	122	120
Gross enrolment secondary education	Total	63	70	82	89
	Boys	66	72	84	92
	Girls	60	67	79	86
Net enrolment secondary education	Total	49	53	62	66*
	Boys	-	54	63	67*
	Girls	-	52	62	65*

Source: Global Education Database (2004)¹³⁶

* Data for the year 2000

not significantly different for boys and girls either. In secondary education and in situations of (extreme) poverty though, figures for temporary non-attendance and having to repeat a grade are somewhat higher for girls than for boys (INEI/ Unicef, 2004).

The rather high levels of education among today's popular youth and their rise in recent decades become clear when we compare the educational levels of the girls in Los Pinos, with those of their parents, and especially with those of their mothers (see Table 4.2).

Problems in education

The increasing levels of school participation in recent years, although positive in itself, has unfortunately gone hand-in-hand with growing internal discrepancies in educational quality (Cortázar, 1997; Gindling, 2005; Oliart, 2001).¹³⁹ Most important in this respect is the divide between public and private education.¹⁴⁰ Just like the girls in Los Pinos, most children in Peru attend public schools,¹⁴¹ which in various studies have been reported to lag behind private schools in terms of both quality and resources allocated. In the end, as Salvatierra concludes, the 'quality divide' in education may lead to the creation of two urban classes, with on the

¹³⁸ In Peru, the 'ideal' educational trajectory of children begins with six years of elementary school (*escuela primaria*), followed by five years of high school (*escuela secundaria*). This means that, ideally, by the age of 17, a student has successfully completed 11 grades.

¹³⁹ In one of its latest reports on education worldwide, UNESCO concludes that, for Latin America, the biggest challenge with respect to education is not an increase in quantity but an improvement in quality (EFA Global Monitoring Team, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ Another aspect of discrepancies in education is the difference between rural and urban enrolment and performance. Whereas in the urban areas, boys and girls tend to stay at school respectively nine and eight and a half years, in the rural areas this is only five years for boys and not even four years for girls (Oliart, 2001). Also with respect to educational quality, differences can be discerned. However, as this research is about urban areas, I will not go further into these rural-urban differences. For the state of education in the rural areas and for the intra-regional differences, see INEI (2000b) and Tovar (2000).

¹⁴¹ With respect to secondary education, in all of Peru about 90% of youth attend public schools. In the urban areas, this figure is 82%. In the popular neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Lima, virtually all children attend public schools (Promudeh, 2001).

Table 4.2 Education levels in Los Pinos: the girls and their parents (number of years completed, until January 2004)¹³⁸

	Girl	Father	Mother
Angelica	11	3	0
Celeste	11	2	9
Lilia*	11	(2)	(9)
Carolina*	11	(2)	(9)
Erica	9	9	3
Elena*	11	9	2
Marta*	12	(9)	(2)
Marisol	12	13	3
Britney	11	-	6
Nancy	11	9	11
Victoria	11	9	5
Silvia	8	11	6
Carina	10	12	1
Julia	12	11	10
Mariela	11	11	8
Consuela	11	4	2
Yosara	11	11	6
Claudia	11	9	9
Joanna	11	4	3

* Celeste, Lilia and Carolina are sisters. The same goes for Elena and Marta

one hand those from private schools “who are prepared to lead, with broad technological and scientific knowledge” and on the other hand their “subordinates”, from public schools, “who have a deficient education and are ill-prepared for the challenges of the next century” (Salvatierra, 1999, cited in Portillo, 1999:1).

There has been no educational reform in Peru since the 1970s and public spending on education has diminished during the 1990s. It is now among the lowest in Latin America (Global Education Database, 2005).¹⁴² Teachers’ salaries and working conditions are low and educational materials are scarce or virtually absent in many schools (Montero, 1995). The educational situation in Peru is further affected by the poor nutritional levels of the many children living in poverty (Iguñiz and Dueñas, 1998:46). The low quality of education is reflected in the low number of hours children spend in public school as compared to private school and by the high repetition rates and school delay (Iguñiz and Dueñas, 1998:52; Saavedra and Chacaltana, 2000 and 2001). Authors also pointed out the gender bias that exists both among teachers and within the school system generally (Montero, 1995; Tovar, 1998).

The heavy financial burden that families must bear constitutes another problem in education. By law, public education in Peru is free and indeed most schools do not charge for enrolment per se. As a result of the previously mentioned lack of materials, however, children are asked to acquire and bring to school the materials needed for their instruction.

¹⁴² Website ‘Global Education Database’: http://www.usaid.gov/educ_training/ged.html, consulted December 2004.

Furthermore, families have to spend money on compulsory uniforms, on transport to school and on contributions for APAFA, the government association for the parents of students (INEI/ Unicef, 1997:42).¹⁴³ Although the latter is supposed to be voluntary, not paying often means that a child is excluded from all activities not directly included in the basic curriculum. Often, membership is a stated requirement for enrolment the following year. It was calculated that, in 1994, in addition to public spending, parents whose children were enrolled in the public system contributed an average of \$41 (US dollars) for primary education and \$92 for secondary education, per child. For Metropolitan Lima, the amount was \$63 for primary school and \$124 for secondary school (Iguíñiz and Dueñas, 1998:55). In all likelihood, these costs have gone up since then.

In Los Pinos, I repeatedly observed the effects of the financial burdens related to school. By the end of March, when the new school year started, many parents experienced many sleepless nights over the question of how they would be able to buy what their children needed for school. Especially in families in which several children attended school, the costs could be high. Sometimes, loans were obtained. More often, the solution was sought in buying the materials in phases, which resulted in many children not having all of their materials when classes began. In fact, most of them never ended up having everything they needed. Sometimes, children did not even attend school during the first weeks of the new school year. As parents did not have money yet to buy them uniforms or new shoes, the children just had to stay at home.

When asked for their opinion on the quality of education, most of the girls in my research group stated that they were rather satisfied with their respective schools. In general, the teachers explained things well and most of them were pleasant. At the same time, they also reported that teachers often shouted at the pupils and that they were sometimes rather impatient. Moreover, one of the girls told me that she had once paid her teacher for giving her a grade that would allow her to move on to the next class. None of the girls indicated that teachers had physically punished them. With respect to the relevance of what they had learned, a mixed picture emerged. On the one hand they all thought that everything they were learning (except maybe for physical education) would be useful in later life. On the other hand, many girls said that what they were learning was rather general and that they were missing out on more practical courses, such as cosmetology, sewing and classes that teach how to use the computer.¹⁴⁴ They were also aware of the fact that, overall, education in private schools was much better than it was in public schools. At the private schools, in the words of the girls, *there are more courses are they are taught better* and the students *are more advanced*. Marta was one of the few girls who are able to compare her experiences in a public

143 The implications of the obligation to wear a uniform are clear in the next two examples. One day, Angelica was preparing her little sister, Vilma, for school. She could not find, however, the white socks that go with the uniform. In the end, Vilma did not go to school. Angelica herself was wearing a skirt that was not entirely covering her knees. After a few warnings and the clear message to purchase another skirt, she was given a unsatisfactory mark for general behaviour.

144 The lack of practical courses was also mentioned by the educational specialist Raúl Haya de la Torre (personal conversation, 11 November 2000) and by Maria Ventura de Venegas, vice-principal of the secondary school attended by one of the girls, Túpac Amaru II in the district Villa Maria del Triunfo (personal conversation, 30 April 2001).

secondary school with those in a private *academia* (where she had studied for a few months in order to prepare for university). She stated:

Education at my former school is poor compared to the academia; in secondary school, teachers are not interested in whether you are getting a low or high grade; in [the academia] they are.

Another occasion that allowed me to ask someone to compare public and private schools was my interview with Silvia's mother, Eugenia. Her husband is a plumber and, in exchange for the work that he does at a private school, their children could go to that school at a highly reduced rate. At that time, Silvia had already dropped out of school, but her younger brother was transferred to the new school. Eugenia's observations of the new school were as follows:

I believe there is more discipline there; there is more order. Besides, it is a smaller school. Before, where he was, there was hardly any control; children left when they wanted and sometimes they did not even go in. Here things are really different. There are more teachers as well at this school and they are more involved with the children; they are there for the children. In addition, they just have one shift that goes from eight in the morning until three or four in the afternoon. So, they study more hours.

Public education in Peru suffers from high levels of school desertion. In urban areas, the dropout rate in secondary education is 11%; global drop-out rate (i.e. including dropout in primary and secondary education) in the urban areas is 16%¹⁴⁵ (CEPAL, 2002).¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, in urban areas, girls drop out of school less often than boys, complete the school cycle with fewer cases of repetition and more girls than boys between 15 and 19 graduate from secondary education without any lag (ibid.). School desertion is mostly found in secondary education, something that we have already seen in Table 4.1 (see also INEI/Unicef, 2004). A high percentage of these school dropouts have not mastered the basics of mathematics, language and other sciences, nor do they have access to the basic training that is indispensable to successfully facing the challenges of the modern labour market (Portillo, 1999).

According to CEPAL, dropping out of school may be the result of many different factors and circumstances, both inside and outside the educational system. With respect to the former, one factor may be that secondary school implies a much higher cost than primary school. Children may also become discouraged by having to repeat grades and falling behind academically, or by the obligations and discipline school requires. When it comes to 'out-of-school factors', what may first come to mind are several socio-economic factors, such as the start of productive activities or poor future prospects. For girls, the factors that have been reported as important are housework, early pregnancy and motherhood (CEPAL, 2002; INEI/Unicef, 1997:41).

Although school desertion is certainly not restricted to the poorer families, CEPAL shows that, for Latin America as a whole, adolescents from the poorest 25% of urban households (bottom quartile) have dropout rates which are on average two to three times those of young people from the 25% richest households (top quartile). As a general rule, the

¹⁴⁵ In the rural areas, global drop out rates are much higher: 45%; 75% of school desertion take place already during or right after primary school (CEPAL, 2002).

¹⁴⁶ All CEPAL figures are based on the population of 15-19 year-olds.

discrepancies are even higher in countries, like Peru, that have progressed further towards universal access to primary and secondary education, than they are in other countries. The inequalities between the top and bottom socio-economic strata are also greater in urban than in rural areas (CEPAL, 2002:111). For Peru, the global drop-out rate for the lowest quintile is 18% whereas for the highest quintile it is only 9%. Furthermore, of all the students with a serious scholastic lag,¹⁴⁷ 45% are concentrated in the lowest quintile (ibid.).

In the group of girls participating in my study, four left school before earning their diploma. Two girls, Silvia and Carina, left school, because, as their parents said, *se rebelaron* (they rebelled). For two other girls, Britney and Erica, pregnancy was the main reason. By law,¹⁴⁸ school principals and teachers are not allowed to expel pregnant girls from school. In practice though, pregnant girls are often strongly advised to stay away from school, as they are thought to set a bad example for others. The vice-principal at Angelica's school was actually very clear about it. She admitted that she knew about the legal restrictions. At the same time though, she had to take into account the opinions of the teachers and most of all of the parents of other children. Therefore, her policy was that pregnant girls were allowed to attend school until their pregnancy became visible. Usually, however, it never gets to that point. As I also saw in the case of the girls in my own group, pregnant girls often leave school on their own, as they feel too ashamed and they are afraid of the prejudices and comments of other students.

To complete the story of education in Peru, a few words about higher education are in order. Following completion of high school, there are different educational options. Each of these is characterized by varying degrees of integration and exclusion. The option many young people would prefer is university.¹⁴⁹ In Peru, university offers a broad variety of curricula, ranging from psychology, law or natural sciences to more practical subjects such as nursing, childcare, or journalism. Because of financial constraints, the only viable option for popular youth is a state university. However, as the number of applicants greatly exceeds the number of vacancies (in 1999 the ratio was more than ten to one) (INEI, 2000a), students have to be highly qualified to sit for the entrance exam and then must obtain a high score in order to actually be accepted into university. With the low quality of primary and secondary education in public schools, this turns out to be very difficult for most popular youth. Therefore, many young people who have university aspirations go first to an *academia*, a private institute designed specifically to prepare students for the entrance exams. These *academias* are rather expensive and for most girls it was very difficult to find the resources to study there. Marta and Marisol, two girls in my group, studied for a few months at an *academia*. Marisol's family could be considered one of the poorest of Los Pinos. However, her father, who left her mother when Marisol was still a little child, is a middle-class man. Today, he is working at La

147 A 'serious scholastic lag' means that students lag behind three years or more compared with the age-appropriate grade.

148 The Peruvian Child and Adolescent Code, adopted in 1992 and modified in 2000, states that pregnant adolescents and mothers shall not be prevented from commencing or continuing their education, nor shall they be subjected to any discrimination (Article 14) (<http://www.sexualidadjoven.cl/bienvenidos2.htm>, consulted November 2005).

149 In 2001, Peru's 74 universities (of which 42% are public and 58% private institutions) enrolled about 415,000 students (www.geographyiq.com/countries/pe/Peru_people_summary.htm, consulted November 2004).

Palma University. Therefore, his children, including Marisol, are admitted at a reduced cost both to La Palma and the *academia* that precedes it. Marta attended *academia* for a few weeks as well. Unfortunately, though, she had to stop going there, as there was no longer the money to pay for it.

For those not applying for, or not admitted to, the university, there are a whole range of institutes that offer short and more practical courses. The quality of these institutes, especially the cheaper ones, is reported to be variable and often rather poor (Saavedra and Chacaltana, 2001). During the time that Erica became pregnant and left school, she started attending a sewing course. Later Silvia, who had also left school, joined in. From what I heard and saw, the course was very practical and actually not too bad. Every girl in the class had the use of a sewing machine and they were very enthusiastic about what they learned. The enrolment fee for the course was 40 soles (about \$10) plus the materials and cloth, which the girls had to bring themselves. Other girls, however, told me stories about computer courses where no computers were available and about English courses where the teachers were themselves deficient in the language.

Finally, there is of course the possibility of entering the labour market. As we have already seen in Chapter 2, though, there are a number of problems in this regard. First of all, there is an absolute lack of jobs in the formal labour market, which thus lags behind the educational system in terms of general growth. Moreover, in the competition for jobs, youth from migrant neighbourhoods are often confronted with discrimination and stigmatisation based on their *pueblos jóvenes* background, their ethnic origin and the supposed low level of the education that they have received (Riofrío, 2003:7). Finally, youth from migrant neighbourhoods usually do not have the relevant connections to help them find a job (Acha, 1993; Cosamalón, 1993; Rodríguez, 1997).

Household-related responsibilities

As part of the *mostrando mi vida* workshops, the girls designed a timeline to represent their daily activities. It appeared that in all these timelines, household tasks occupied about two to four hours a day. The heavy load of household responsibilities was visible when I walked through the neighbourhood in the mornings. All girls who were not attending school at that moment were busy cooking or cleaning in their homes. One of the girls I could follow very closely, due to the fact that I spent a lot of time in her house, was Angelica. Angelica and her brothers and sisters were attending school in the afternoon. In the morning, when her mother Maria-Teresa was selling chicken at the market, Angelica was left with her younger siblings. As the oldest girl, she was expected to take care of them and of the household, which at that time of the day included cleaning, buying food and cooking. She also had to keep an eye on the homework of her younger siblings. If there was time, she could also do her own homework.

Family-related labour activities were not restricted to work within the house. A lot of girls were helping out their parents in their jobs. Angelica, who already had a lot of responsibilities at home, often took over for her mother selling chicken for a few hours. Carina and Elena, whose parents had a small grocery shop, were always expected to wait on customers. Victoria's family was involved in selling ice cream. Both her mother and her father and two of her sisters sold ice cream from their bicycles on a daily basis. Victoria also went out to sell ice cream fairly regularly. She did so either as a replacement for one of her family members, or just to add extra income to the household. Carina, who was attending school on a rather

irregular basis, provides a last example. She had already switched her school hours from day time to night time and she always seemed to be looking for a job. Sometimes she worked for a few days as an *empleada* (domestic servant) and she also sometimes worked at the market stand of a friend.

The extensive responsibilities of the girls, both within the household and outside of it, are typical of those of young people in the popular classes (Munar et al., 2004; Mansilla, 1991).¹⁵⁰ Although youth in the middle classes may be engaged in some household activities and in small paid jobs as well, for them, work does not occupy a central position in their lives. For youth in the *pueblos jóvenes*, work is so central to their lives that it can be considered a part of their identity. As Munar et al. state: “Even when one asks them whether they do it because they are obliged to, their answer is no and neither could they imagine themselves without working. The fact of having to contribute in one way or the other to the family economy is for them something natural” (Munar et al., 2004:31).

Munar et al. (2004) emphasise that, for most popular youth, involvement in work is experienced as quite rewarding. When working, young people meet other persons and they get to know other places. These social experiences influence the way they perceive themselves and contribute to the process of self-development. Secondly, working gives youth the opportunity to acquire economic and symbolic capital that are considered important in the social context in which they live (ibid.:32-33). When looking specifically at girls, however, the first point especially needs to be modified. As most of the girls’ work is taking place within the home, this does not involve many new people or places. In fact, most girls said they experienced their work as rather boring.

Being engaged in work activities is typical for both boys and girls in the popular classes. In accordance with the more general gender patterns, however, there are clear differences with respect to the type of work that is done and the expectations surrounding it. Girls are usually more involved in household-related tasks whereas boys engage in more paid labour activities outside the house. Based on a review of 200 family interviews, Mansilla (1996) concludes that most parents think that it is their daughters’ obligation to attend to their brothers and other male members of the family. A study by Quintana and Vásquez (1999), in which popular class adolescents themselves were approached as respondents, shows the same tendencies. Illustrative is the quote by one of the respondents, a 15-year-old girl named Patricia:

I am supposed to be the baby sitter, or more concretely, I have to take care of my little sister while my mother is at work and well, that is what I do, apart from tidying and cleaning the house and taking care of my other sisters until my mother comes home from work and then she takes over. Her husband does not do anything, he comes from work, goes to sleep, gets up and that’s it. According to him: “it is the woman in the house who is supposed to do everything” (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:103; quotation marks in original).

¹⁵⁰ Child labour and the presumed effects on children has been the subject of intense debate. For further reading on child labour, see, for example: Betcherman et al. (2004); ILO (2004a and 2004b); Liebel (2004); Nieuwenhuys (1994); Punch (2001 and 2003); more specifically on Peru: Alarcón (2000); Chacaltana (2000).

Miles (1994 and 2000), writing about Andes migrants in an Ecuadorian city, provides a somewhat more complex interpretation of the different household tasks for boys and girls in migrant popular neighbourhoods. According to her, one factor is birth order, with the oldest child getting more and earlier tasks and responsibilities assigned than younger siblings (Miles 1994:141-142). She then proceeds to explain that expectations and norms with respect to children's contributions to the household are shaped by at least three different dimensions. The first dimension is need or, as she calls it, functionality. Through the household activities of children, either boys or girls, other family members will gain the time and energy for other tasks, usually paid labour outside the home.¹⁵¹ The second dimension of children's work in migrant neighbourhoods is morality. Children simply ought to help their parents, just like they ought to assist and care for their younger brothers and sisters. Work is supposed to teach important values, such as solidarity and autonomy. Based on this dimension and as is the case for the first dimension of functionality, household tasks are distributed by necessity and not gender. Finally, and this is where the gendered division of tasks comes in, children's activities are legitimised as preparation for their later roles as adults. Based on this dimension, boys will be asked to do tasks different to those of girls, and these tasks are then also differently valued (Miles, 1994). The differences between boys' work and girls' work becomes clear in the way people talk about this work. In the narratives of parents reviewed by Mansilla (1996) girls only *ayudan* (help) their parents, either in the household or at the labour market. Boys, on the contrary, are carrying out real jobs and always are commended for it. More than girls, the latter are also allowed to keep part of the earnings for themselves.

The combination of the three dimensions leads to a situation where, in principle, both girls and boys may carry out any particular task. When both of them are around and available, though, domestic tasks within the home are usually given to girls. In this case, boys may also have some household-related tasks, but these are mainly activities that take place within the public sphere. Boys are, for example, often the preferred errand runners (e.g., fetching bread in the morning, delivering messages). Another consequence is that, although boys and girls can do the same tasks, they are only expected to be truly competent and willing to perform their gender-linked ones. Unwillingness with respect to gender-linked tasks is a source of real consternation within families and is seen as a major character flaw (Miles, 1994:141-143).

With respect to the morality attached to work, most of the values at stake are quite similar to those that were important in the regions of origin of the migrants.¹⁵² In the Andes, both boys and girls are supposed to contribute autonomously, beginning at an early age, to both the household and the community; work and industriousness are imperative cultural values (Ruiz Bravo, 2004:289). Already at the age of three or four, children have to carry water and herd the animals; at a later age both boys and girls are supposed to help with the agricultural work, while it is largely girls who are expected to help care for their younger siblings (Anderson, 1994; Runa and Jaque, 2003). The process of migration of values, however, has not always been linear and static. According to Miles (2000) parents in migrant neighbourhoods merely emphasise those norms and values that they fear are not sufficiently stressed in the urban

151 There is in fact a paradox here: adult women are able to work outside the house and empower themselves only when, within the home, their daughters take care of the household (see also Chapter 3).

152 Since most people in the *pueblos jóvenes* are originally from the Andes and most of the literature concerning this question focuses on the presumed similarities between the situation in the *Andes* and the situation in the *pueblos jóvenes*, it is this connection that will be the focus here.

context. Examples are the value of domestic work, the dignity of labour (specifically manual labour) and more general values like cooperation, solidarity and reciprocity. In relation to work, these last three values imply that all family members have their obligations towards other members of the family. Furthermore, in an attempt to counterbalance the stigmatisation and discrimination parents encounter in the urban setting, emphasis seems to be especially on those values that are considered positive aspects of Andean culture.

The various dimensions and consequences of task allocation set out by Miles can easily be identified in Los Pinos. There is no doubt that girls are held responsible for a very large number of household tasks. Girls are also expected to carry out these tasks well. In the following quote from a conversation with Elena's mother, she comments on the way Elena deals with household tasks:

Elena doesn't do anything in the house, she only focuses on her brother: "Why doesn't he do anything?", she says. However, he is a man and men don't cook, don't you think so? Later, he will go out to work, why should he learn how to cook? She is too much focused on him. But, you know, women should be in the kitchen they have to clean. My husband has never done anything either.

Sometimes, household tasks were also allocated to boys. In Angelica's family, for example, it was not uncommon to see her brother Andreas cooking lunch for his younger brothers and sisters. This only occurred, however, when Angelica was not at home. As this task was not gender-linked he usually got a lot of appreciation and encouragement from his mother and other adults.

The girls often complained about the load of activities they were expected to carry out. Often it cut into the time they needed to complete their homework and it also decreased the time they could spend with their friends. Frequently, there were conflicts between the girls and their mothers, especially when the latter thought the work had not been done well. On the other hand, it seems that, in the end, all girls indeed thought of their responsibilities as normal, as something that just goes along with their position as family members, girls and future women. As family members and especially when they were the oldest in the family (or the oldest one currently at home), they saw it as normal that they were taking up what had to be done (functional motivation). Girls who were engaged in paid labour activities outside the direct household sphere also seemed to like their jobs to some extent. It gave them a feeling of adulthood, they were taken seriously and sometimes it also gave them a bit of pocket money.

The feeling of responsibility and the experience of household activities as burdensome sometimes interacted in very complex ways, as the following example shows. During the year after Lilia had finished school, she stayed at home to take responsibility for the household. She told me that she found it very important to have lunch ready for her sister when she came home from school. Her main motivation was that when she herself had attended school, nobody had been there for her: when she came home after school, everything still had to be done. Since she still remembered how difficult this was for her, she now tried to make sure that the situation for her sister would be different.

The girls also saw their participation in household activities as essential for their future role as wives and mothers (gendered motivation). In one of the *talleres*, for example, three girls were talking about a friend of theirs, whose mother never asked her to cook. This girl,

so it was thought, was going to have serious problems later: how could she ever prepare meals for her husband? In personal interviews, the same kinds of remarks were made. When asked what she thought about the different expectations towards boys and girls and their contributions to the household, Carina answered:

Well, that is quite justifiable. That is what we are supposed to do anyway. Because, well, if not, when a woman gets married, when she has her husband, she would not know how to do it. And then, the husband leaves her or beats her.

With an ironic tone she added: *Well, I knew how to cook, but he still beats me. He is crazy!*

Leisure time: meeting with friends and watching television

During the last two decades a number of studies on youth culture have been published in Peru (Apoyo, 2000 and 2001; Hurtado, 1997; Macassi, 2001a; Munar et al., 2004; Protzel, 1989; Santos Anaya, 2000). Most of these studies insightfully draw distinctions among youth in different classes and contexts, concluding that the way in which youth experience their free time is dependent on class, gender and ethnic identification. Popular class youth have, for example, less access to spaces like shopping malls or cinemas and, if they do go out, they go to discotheques different from those frequented by their upper-class peers. In general, popular youth also have less leisure time than their peers in other classes (Santos Anaya, 2000:23-24).¹⁵³

After school is over and household tasks have been attended to, most girls in Los Pinos have some time for themselves. Especially in the summer, these were the times when they went out to meet their friends.¹⁵⁴ One of the first things that struck me in the conversations with the girls was the important place of friendship in their lives. Each time I asked the girls about the issues they wanted to deal with in the *talleres*, they mentioned friendship. It was something they explicitly associated with being adolescents and also something that bothered them quite a lot. The importance of friendship again became apparent in the first conversations I had with the girls after I had been gone for about half a year. Answering the question of what had bothered them most during the past few months, about half of the girls mentioned a recent quarrel or problem with a friend.

In one of the first *talleres* in the second fieldwork period, I asked the girls to write about friendship. Responding to the question 'what do your friends mean to you?', Carina wrote: *my friends mean a lot to me, because they support me and they help me to solve my problems*. For Joanna, her friends meant *happiness, understanding and a lot of solidarity*. For Elena, friendship implied that she had some people whom she could trust to tell what happened to her as well

¹⁵³ A free time activity that is growing fast in Peru is online chatting or the Internet in general. Access to the Internet in Peru, just like in other countries is to a large extent structured by class and to a lesser extent by gender. The fast increase of public internet, also in the poorer zones, will probably change this picture rather soon (Macassi, 2001a:134-135; see also Apoyo, 2000). During the time I did my fieldwork, the girls in Los Pinos never mentioned Internet as something they did in their free time. It was, however, something they said they wanted to do.

¹⁵⁴ I am only focusing on friends within the neighbourhood, as this has been the geographical focus of my fieldwork. Girls may also have friends at school, but it is quite rare that school friends visit each other after school, except when they have to do a joint project for school.

as her secrets: *they give me advice*. In all of the accounts of the girls regarding friendship, the elements of trust and of giving advice kept coming up. For the girls, the most important element of friendship is that a friend *te aconseja* (gives you advice). In a limited sense, 'giving advice' refers to the direct answer to a specific problem. However, I would say that what the girls refer to is broader, also suggesting that their friends inspire them to do good and that, both directly and indirectly, it is from and with friends that they learn about and negotiate norms and values.¹⁵⁵ Like Consuela said: *friendship to me means being on the right track*.

The girls' friendships were usually rather strong and did not change much over time. In fact, when I look back over the years during which I have had contact with Los Pinos, it seemed that the same bonds of friendship tended to endure over time. All the same, I was often surprised at the number of petty quarrels and the high degree of distrust the girls expressed when they spoke about their friends (see also Vega-Centeno, 1996:102).¹⁵⁶ Issues surrounding distrust and what the girls called 'betrayal' were in fact the problems that were most often mentioned as the greatest challenges with respect to friendship. Erica, for example, said:

It is sometimes difficult to maintain a friendship, because friends sometimes betray you; you trust them with something and then afterwards, they are telling it around.

One of the places where the girls meet their friends is in the central square of Los Pinos. It is a place where you easily meet friends and where something is always going on. In the afternoons, the square is usually used for football or volleyball and, particularly when 'certain boys' are participating, the girls like to watch. Another, more gender-specific place where girls meet their friends is in front of their own houses; friends were almost never actually invited inside of the house. When I walked through the neighbourhood around 5 p.m., it was common to find Nancy, Elena and the twins Lilia and Carolina in front of the twins' house. Also Erica, Silvia, Angelica and Marisol could often be found in front of either Erica's or Marisol's house.

The custom of meeting in front of houses and in the central square is directly related to the fact that the girls' *salidas* are encumbered by many limitations. One of these limits has to do with financial constraints. The girls do not have money to go shopping, go to the cinema, or to a gym. More important than the financial constraints are those imposed by parents, which in turn are related to gender-based norms and expectations (Santos Anaya, 1999). Often, parents only give permission to go out for a certain period of time, or tell their daughters to stay close to home. That way, they can easily be called in for any work that has to be done. Furthermore, in front of the house, parents can keep a close eye on what their daughter is doing and with whom. Some parents try to limit the *salidas* of their daughters by not permitting them to leave the house until they themselves have arrived home. The twins' parents, for example, called their daughters from time to time by phone to make sure that they had not left the house. Parents justify such a restriction in terms of either needing to make sure that the home is not broken into or having to provide care for younger brothers and

155 See also the girls' negotiations regarding the *amigo especial*, in Chapter 5.

156 Probably this kind of behaviour is typical for girls at this age. For further reading on the theme of friendship and peer relations among teenage girls, see: McLean Taylor et al. (1995); Ras and Lunenberg (1993); De Waal (1989); Wulff (1988).

sisters (who in fact may be out playing with friends). In reality, though, it is probably merely an attempt to control the girls and their social life. The difference in parental treatment of boys and girls in this respect is clear in the following excerpt from an interview with Elena:

My brother, Johnny, is always in the street, playing, he is playing football in the square, until 10 or 11 at night he is outside. And my mum says: "Well, he is a man. You are a woman; you should not be in the street. He is a man." My neighbour also says about her son: "He is a man and well, my daughter is not".

When together with (close) friends, the girls talk about a broad range of issues, as Elena and Silvia make clear:

Elena: For example, I tell my friends who I like and that is something that other people don't know.

Silvia: well, what I have done and when I have had problems with my parents.

Elena: Yes and other people, who are not good friends, they don't know that. Others, I don't trust so much. Because sometimes, it happens that it goes like: "You told me this and that". I tell something to someone and then they all say: "What?" So, I don't trust others anymore.

Subjects that came up fairly often were relationships with their parents, the things that happened to them at school (grades, teachers, classmates) and the latest gossip about the people in the neighbourhood. Also the dreams and plans for the future were a favourite subject of conversation. Something that was almost exclusively talked about with friends were issues related to love and sex (see also Vega-Centeno, 1996:91). As I will explore more extensively in Chapter 5, in the communication with parents and other adults, the theme of sexuality is surrounded by many taboos and prescriptions. Although to a certain extent these taboos are also present in the conversations among friends, communication is usually more open.

Both at the central square and in front of their own houses, it is uncommon to see mixed groups of teenagers; girls mainly talk to other girls and boys to other boys. Superficially, it seems that direct contact between boys and girls who are not either blood relatives or bound by ties of *padrinazgo*¹⁵⁷ is scarce. A girl meeting a boy alone is simply 'not done', unless he is in some way related, and both her friends and the rest of the neighbours are sure to say something about it. However, some way or other, a good deal of interaction between the two sexes manages to take place. Often, messages between boys and girls are indirect, non-verbal and somewhat hidden; quite often, contact is made through a third person. When a girl is interested in a boy, she will usually try to reach him through another girl who is related to this boy either by blood or through *padrinazgo*. The actual meeting between the boy and girl then takes place after dark and often at a place that is more secluded than the central square during daytime hours. Favourite places, where I often saw a couple talking, were just behind the neighbourhood market or at more concealed places on the outskirts of Los Pinos.

The picture that emerges with respect to interaction between boys and girls is thus rather mixed. On the one hand there is a rather restrictive culture, in which the risk of stigmas and

¹⁵⁷ *Padrinazgo*: godfathership, referring to the bond that exist between families not based on blood-relationship.

very clear norms limit the freedom of movement of girls and their interaction with boys. On the other hand, in practice there are many ways to either bend these controls or elude them altogether. It is likely that this mixed picture is related primarily to the fact that many parents are away from their houses and the neighbourhood for many hours a day, something which is only to some extent compensated for by the vigilance of neighbours or by regular calls home. Secondly, I would say that the girls also show some sense of resignation when it comes to gossip. They realise that there is no way that gossip can be avoided.

Apart from going out to chat with friends, most of the free time activities of the girls took place within the house.¹⁵⁸ Favourite activities were listening to music and watching television (see also Apoyo, 2001). Generally, listening to music meant listening to the radio; the girls generally did not have cassettes or CDs. This implies that girls choose to listen to a specific type of music (i.e., on a specific radio channel) and not to one specific group or song. Favourite types of music were *chicha*,¹⁵⁹ pop/rock (in Spanish), reggae, techno, trance and, increasingly, also Brazilian rhythms. Most of the girls explicitly reacted against the music of their parents (most notably the *huayno*¹⁶⁰ and *valse*¹⁶¹). However, in much of the music they liked, many influences from the more traditional music can be recognised. What is happening is that the music that was popular with the first generations of migrants now is updated, invigorated with tropical and African rhythms (e.g., reggae) as well as with European influences. The results are types of music that could be labelled most aptly ‘*chicha* techno’, ‘*chicha* hip hop’ or ‘*chicha* rap’ (Hurtado, 1995 and 1997). This process is interesting, because, as the author states, “the opposition between the traditional and the modern, identified as the authentic and the distorted, is not of concern to these new *pobladores*. Instead, both give them the opportunity to incorporate new music experiences” (Hurtado, 1997:101).

Watching television may well be the activity that takes up most of the girls’ time. According to their own estimates, the average number of hours per day that they spent watching television is four to six hours during the week and somewhat less on weekends. According to both Macassi (2001a) and Miles (2000), the high number of hours girls in *pueblos jóvenes* watch television is quite understandable. In a situation in which the street is seen as dangerous for girls and in which there are very few distractions at home, watching television is in fact one of the few things that girls are able to do. Furthermore, watching television is easily combined with most types of household work. Both of these activities take place inside the house and they are often solitary in nature. As such, television often functions as a way to both provide relief on long, busy days and to alleviate boredom.

The girls’ favourite television programs were films and *telenovelas* (soap operas), the latter often of Mexican, Brazilian or Peruvian origin. According to the girls, most *telenovelas* were

158 In the interviews and workshops on free time spending, most girls also mentioned playing volley as a free time activity. In practice though, only seldom I saw some girls playing volley. Maybe playing volleyball is something the girls would like to do, or what they like doing in the sports classes at school.

159 *Chicha*, the fermented maize beer, has given its name to this very popular brew of Andean tropical music – a fusion of urban *cumbia* (local versions of the original Colombian dance), traditional highland *huayno* and rock. *Chicha* also refers to the general culture prevalent in the *pueblos jóvenes*; see Chapter 2.

160 *Huayno*: music and dance originally from the *Sierra*, the typical folklore music with pan flutes and a *charango* (small guitar).

161 *Valse*: type of waltz, very loosely related to the Viennese waltz, but more vocal and in many aspects totally different from its European roots.

*nice and entertaining programs in which the actors do a very good job.*¹⁶² The general opinion on the soap operas was that they had a positive role in their lives. As Consuela explained to me: *they teach you what to do and what is good and bad.* The girls also told me that many things that occurred in the *telenovelas* were very similar to what took place in their own lives. Although they were aware that some things may be a bit far-fetched and things may happen rather fast, in general, the girls saw the soaps as realistic, as the following quotes from Claudia and Elena illustrate:

Claudia: The soaps are rather realistic, as the things that happen in the soaps also happen in real life; both in the lives of poor people and in those of rich people, all over the world.

Elena: Sometimes it seems that they are presenting your case, most of all when it is about adolescents. When, for example, Ximena [soap character] is acting, I feel as if I am her.

In the literature, views on the impact of television on the lives of youth (and on the public in general) are more critical (Grompone, 1999; Macassi, 2001a). And, indeed, I think that it cannot be denied that the rather romanticised and dramatised way in which life is portrayed in soaps plays an influential and not always positive role in shaping the self-images of the girls, as well as their hopes and dreams. In that sense, I agree with Miles that the programmes that girls like to watch are probably not adding much to their lives. She concludes: “I suspect that television’s impact ... is ultimately more troubling than reinforcing, creating desire and longing, but few models for action” (Miles, 2000:68; see also Mansilla, 1996). Similar kinds of critical views can be discerned on the part of the girls’ parents. They realise that what their daughters see on television is not always good for them. There is a contradiction, however: watching television means that girls stay at home and therefore it is something that parents also encourage.

Willis (1990) points out that the way viewers deal with programme content is as important as the content itself. Relevant factors are, for example, the interaction that takes place among viewers, the comments that viewers make and the conversations that take place with friends about the programmes. In other words, watching television is not as passive as is often thought and therefore, it can never in and of itself have a negative effect. In addition, we have to acknowledge that being involved in a consumer society is hardly something that can be avoided. It is as much a fact of life for youth in the *pueblos jóvenes* as it is for any other Peruvian. What this means for youth is that time and again they will be faced with the challenge of positioning themselves in relation to what they get from television and other mass media (Macassi, 2001b; see also United Nations, 2003). In this respect they have the choice to be more like followers or more like critical viewers, just as they always will have to

162 These are characterisations that are remarkably similar to what Miles found for her group of girls. Citing her: “Even the most racy and outrageous programs were universally described by the girls as ‘bonita’” (Miles, 2000:67).

163 Illustrative of the girls’ involvement with consumer society is their relation to *Larcomar*, one of the big shopping centres of Metropolitan Lima. Although, with one exception, the girls of Los Pinos had never been there, they all knew about it and longed for it. Without exception they were very excited when I invited them once to go there to see a movie. See also the study by Ariovich et al. (1996) about how different groups of youth make use of shopping centres in Argentina.

choose the extent to which they want to maintain their own identity. These challenges apply for all young people, but in the *pueblos jóvenes*, the problem is all the more poignant as almost everything they yearn for is out of their reach.¹⁶³

Popular Catholicism

This was one of the best days in my life, Consuela exclaimed after she was hugged by her mother at the end of the weekend *retiro* (retreat). The *retiro* was organised by the Church community Trinidad as one of the first steps in preparation for First Communion. The weekend had been very emotional. Through exercises, a film, discussions and other *dinámicas* (dynamic exercises), Consuela and other participants had worked on norms and values and Bible knowledge. A recurring theme during the weekend was communication and love between the participants and their parents. Consuela told me that, during the first day, they were all invited to write a letter to their parents, in which they expressed their love for them. On the second day, the parents were invited to the church to receive the letters (without the girls knowing). After an emotional speech by a church leader about love between parents and children and the importance of parents expressing this love more often to their children, the parents were asked to write a letter back. Furthermore they were encouraged to speak from the heart and to hug their child when the children exited the church following the *retiro*.

The *retiro* Consuela participated in was part of a longer period of preparation for the First Communion. Similar kinds of *retiros* were organised for the group that was preparing for Confirmation. Theoretically, children can do their First Communion at the age of 10 or 11. In that case, Confirmation can be done when children are about 15 years old. In the *pueblos jóvenes*, most children start participating in First Communion preparation when they are older. Therefore, separate groups are formed for the First Communion for youth. Sometimes separate groups for adults are organised as well.

Both for Confirmation and for First Communion, groups meet every week for about a year and a half, under the supervision of a catechist, to learn about God, the Bible and Catholic norms and values. This period is so long, one of the catechists explained to me, because of the background of the participants and their families: because there is a lot of ignorance among children in the *pueblos jóvenes*, I was told, they need more time to be prepared for First Communion.¹⁶⁴

From the girls in my research group, a majority had already participated or was currently participating in one of these groups when I was there. I was present at several of the preparatory meetings and also joined for the last part of the *retiro* described above. Usually, about 8 to 12 participants attended the meetings, although towards the end, the group became smaller. In all meetings, the values that kept coming up in discussion were sincerity, humility and faith. Also the *familia unida* (the united family) was often emphasised. This was particularly so during the *retiro*.

The meetings held as part of the preparation for First Communion and Confirmation were organised by the Italian Mission Community Villa Regia, which run a chapel about ten blocks away from Los Pinos. The main church from this Mission Community was located in Villa Maria del Triunfo, an adjacent district. It was there that the *retiro* was held. The Italian Mission Community was responsible for the weekly masses in the Chapel. In addition, they organised the catechism meetings for youth as well as the family catechism meetings. The

¹⁶⁴ Personal conversation with Catechist Pilar Chiara, Church community Trinidad, 23 May 2002.

Mission community also did some charitable work. However, most of this work took place directly around the main church building and the people in Los Pinos people barely seemed to benefit from it.

The enthusiasm with which Consuela and the other girls talked about the activities in Church seems to indicate that Catholicism constitutes an important element in the girls' lives. This is true to some extent. Just like most people in Peru the girls call themselves Catholics and they agree that the norms and values of the Vatican are very important ideals to live up to.¹⁶⁵ In daily life, however, Catholicism does not seem to play a very important guiding role in their lives. When I asked them about their lives and their concerns, none of the girls mentioned anything related to religion or religious faith. In the conversations about boyfriends, sexuality or pregnancy, it did not seem to play an important role either. In the motivations of the girls for participating in the preparatory meetings for First Communion and Confirmation, pragmatic motives were more important than religious ones. Only two girls said they participated because they wanted to learn about God, or that they hoped to learn how to be good in life. The other girls said that it was just fun to go and that they could make new friends. They also mentioned it as a way to escape from the boredom in their homes. The girls' parents viewed the catechism meetings as relatively safe so it was easy to get permission to go there, even when the meetings took place at night. The groups were mixed and this also provided the girls and boys with an opportunity to meet each other and interact relatively easily.

The relative looseness with which the norms and values are approached in daily life is typical for the way Catholicism is usually lived in Latin America. A common term in this respect is 'popular religion' or more specifically 'people's Catholicism', which is defined by Tennekes (1986:41) as "the little tradition within the total complex of the Catholic religion, a tradition carried along by the unreflective many who can be found mainly in the popular classes". The notion of 'the little tradition of the unreflective many' should be seen against the backdrop of the related notion of the 'great tradition of the reflective few' (cf. Redfield, 1956). The latter refers to 'doctrinal Catholicism', to the complex of religious images, arguments and rituals developed over the centuries based on a mainly written tradition. These traditions are systematised and thoroughly thought-out and they deal with fundamental questions related to the sense, origin and fate of mankind. In this 'Vatican way' of doing Catholicism, norms, values and guidelines are very important. Most people in Latin America experience Catholicism in a different way, as a help in solving everyday problems. This 'little tradition' is mainly based on an oral tradition and is concerned with concrete religious acts rather than with reflection. The focus lies in the meaning that people give to certain rules or ceremonies, almost independently of what a clergy developed as official discourse before them (Rostas and Droogers, 1993:5). Sometimes, there may also be animistic notions about spirits and supra-natural forces involved.¹⁶⁶

165 Around 80% of Peruvians adhere to the Roman Catholic religion (INEI national census 1993).

166 In Los Pinos I often heard stories about babies found under the bed or at the doorstep of a house, apparently in the process of being stolen by spirits. Mothers carefully watch their babies and do not leave them alone for a long time. The only thing that can protect babies from the spirits is baptising them and parents perceive baptising as something that should be done as soon as possible after birth. The link to baptism shows that these beliefs are inextricably linked to Catholicism.

The two complexes are highly interrelated and the boundary between them is thin (Droogers et al., 1991:19; Rostas and Droogers, 1993:4).¹⁶⁷ One example of how the two complexes work together is provided by the ways people react to the issue of divorce. On the one hand, people agree with the idea that marriage should be forever and that divorce is not good. At the same time, they also accept and approve of divorce as a logical and understandable reaction to a specific situation. There is in other words a difference between the norm (which is seen as indispensable) and practice, which has to be adapted to the real world.

The rather harmonious coexistence of both of these complexes becomes clear when looking at Eucharist in the masses held by the Italian Mission Community in the chapel near Los Pinos. Before Communion, a list with preconditions for participating in the Communion was read aloud. People were only allowed to participate if they had done their First Communion, if they had recently confessed and if they were married before Church. As a consequence, only a handful of people come to the fore to receive Host. When I asked people how they viewed this practice, they said that it was normal and acceptable: only totally 'clean' people should participate in such a holy activity. They did not take this rule however, as a reason to change their behaviour or to stop attending the masses. Participants in mass told me that being there and viewing the various ceremonies was just what they wanted.

Apart from the opposition between the clergy and the laity, the term 'popular' in popular religion also refers to a class and status distinction between the elite and the masses: "Power differences define the concept of popular" (Rostas and Droogers, 1993:5; see also Droogers et al., 1991:21). Sometimes this leads to forms of popular religion that function as an instrument of resistance for marginalised people (Droogers, 1993:23-24).¹⁶⁸ For the popular Catholicism present in Los Pinos (and as far as I know this is similar to other *pueblos jóvenes* in Metropolitan Lima), this use of popular religion is not strong. Maybe this is due to the influence of the rather conservative Italian Mission Community in Los Pinos, which apart from the already mentioned charitable work is not very involved in relief activities among marginal groups in society.

Evangelical churches are generally more active than Catholic churches in offering practical help for poverty. These churches, however, do not have many adherents in Los Pinos.¹⁶⁹ The few evangelical churches that are there sometimes organise activities for the children in the neighbourhood or visit people in their houses to invite them to their services. People are aware of the possibilities of practical support available to them through the evangelical churches. The main problem, however, is that when you join them, you are no longer allowed to go to parties or drink. This is something that scares many people off and as a result, not many people are willing to actually become converts. For the girls, the main difference between the two types of churches lay in the atmosphere during masses and

167 Maybe it is not even enough to distinguish between two types of Catholicism. Instead, Parker speaks of multiple models in Latin American Catholicism (Parker, 1996:119). For the purposes of this chapter, however, a distinction between 'people's Catholicism' and 'doctrinal Catholicism' seems sufficient.

168 This is for example the case with the CEB (Comunidades Eclesiais de Base – Ecclesial Base Communities) in Brazil (Droogers, 1993:23-24).

169 In Peru, evangelical churches are not as strong as in other Latin American countries, such as in Central America. According to the 1993 national census, only 6-8% of all Peruvians can be counted as Protestants, the majority of whom are evangelicals or Pentecostals (INEI national census, 1993).

meetings. They said that the Catholic Church and their masses *were more beautiful and that there were more saints involved*. Catholic singing during masses was perceived as *nicer* and Catholicism was said to be *more comprehensive*.

Life course events and transition to adulthood

For the girls in Los Pinos the two most important life course events during adolescence were the *quince años* (15th birthday) and the *promoción* (high school diploma ceremony).¹⁷⁰ These events are experienced as symbols in the growing up process and particularly the *quince años* is a moment in which the girls' gendered identity is emphasised.

Quince años

The *quince años*, one of the most important milestones in the lives of teenage girls all over in Latin America, constitutes the transition from being a child to being a *señorita* - a young woman; it is the moment when the girl is presented to society. It is one of the 'rites of passage' towards adulthood (Steenbeek, 1995:93). The years of childhood are definitively over and the girl now has to start behaving like a decent woman. A *quinceañera* (girl turning 15 years old) cannot and should not be defined yet as woman however. "She is neither a girl, nor a woman and both at the same time" (Steenbeek, 1995:93). When I asked parents in Los Pinos about the meaning of the *quince años* they emphasised it was the end of a life stage. Silvia's mother:

Well, it is like starting a new life, they leave behind their childhood and pass towards an age at which they are señorita, when you are 15 years old, you join the ranks of señoritas. [They have to] leave behind what they did before, for example, playing with dolls, or something like that, in short it is like a new stage that they start.

The *quince años* party is something girls dream about long before the actual birthday. Because of financial problems, however, these dreams do not always come true. In fact, many parents who cannot afford to provide for a good party prefer not to organise a party at all. Organising something small would bring more shame to the family than organising nothing at all. Consuela's mother told me:

Well, no, there was no money. I have no money, you know, it is difficult for me. Honestly, I would like to do it, but I don't have the possibilities. I did not have my quince años either.

Sometimes, parents decided not to organise the *quince años* party because of the fact there were too many conflicts between the parents and the girl. This was the case, for example, with Silvia, who in the year before she turned 15 went to school very irregularly and in the end had stopped going to school entirely. Silvia's mother said regarding the decision not to organise a *quince años* for her daughter:

Well, you know, most of all because of the problems we had with her last year, her father was a bit resentful and well, it is also because of money, economically we couldn't do much.

¹⁷⁰ In fact, there is yet another important life course event for some girls and that is the moment when they become pregnant. The theme of pregnancy and the implications that pregnancy has for the lives of teenage girls are extensively dealt with in Chapter 7.

Girls tend to be very sad when their *quince años* is not celebrated as they feel it should be. Among friends, the sadness about a non-celebrated *quince años* was a recurrent theme in conversations. In one case, it even brought about the initiative of some girls to do something extra for the 16th birthday of one of the girls. When they invited me to this birthday party, to which all invitees were supposed to bring some food and drinks, they emphasised that it was mainly meant as compensation for the *quince años* that was not celebrated the previous year.

One of the girls for whom the parents had organised a *quince años* party was Erica. In her case, conflicts between her and her parents (about her boyfriend) were threatening the celebration as well. However, as she said, *I behaved well for a number of weeks and in the end they decided to celebrate*. Presumably, an aunt has played a mediating role. Erica's *quince años* became a big party. In the week before the party, the living room where the party was to take place was painted. The stairs in her house from which she was supposed to descend when she was to be initially presented to the assembled gathering was decorated nicely. Under it, an arch was constructed, with flowers, garlands and a board celebrating the *quince años*. Furthermore, they hired a disc jockey, disco lamps and very importantly, a beautiful white *quince años* dress. This dress, which closely resembles a wedding dress, is symbolic for the pureness and blankness of the *señorita*. It is a very feminine dress, with ruches and a narrow fitting body.

At midnight, when all the invitees were there, Erica came down the stairs arm-in-arm with her father. After an opening waltz with him, she danced with all her male family members. Then, several speeches followed. First her father spoke, followed by her mother, Erica herself and the *madrinas* (godmothers). Photos were taken under the arch, where the *quince años* cake was also put. After the formal part Erica changed into somewhat more comfortable clothes. She now could mingle with her friends and dance on the more popular music the disc jockey put on.

In an interview, about a year later, Erica still recalled the *quince años* celebration as very exciting and emotional. She remembered that until the last moment, everybody had been running around to make sure everything was all right. The dresses for her and her mother had to be picked up, she had to go to a hairdresser, they had to cook and everything seemed to be late. She also remembered that while she was waiting to come down the stairs she was trembling with nerves and shame:

Ay, I felt... I just wanted to look at nobody, I was so nervous; I didn't know what to do. When I stood there and I saw all my friends, from school and all my other friends I wanted the floor to swallow me. Really, I felt so much shame, I didn't want to look at anyone, but I did. I looked there and there were my friends from the neighbourhood, I looked here and I saw friends from school, I looked there and there were.... pucha! But yes, it was beautiful, I had dreamed about my quince already for years. I just wanted the years to pass quickly; and now it was there!

The only blemish on the day was that her boyfriend, Wiliam, was not invited. In fact, it was because of the conflicts between Erica and her parents that revolved around him, that the celebration had almost been cancelled. Erica emphasised that she would have liked her boyfriend to be at the party. However, because of her parents, she did not dare invite him. A year later, Erica still remembers how things had gone between her and her boyfriend:

I gave him the invitation card, "this way you will have a souvenir", I told him. He said, "are you not going to invite me?" and I didn't know what to do, yes or no; If I told him that he was invited, he would go and then my mother might see him and she would tell him, "what are you doing here?" I didn't want my father to be ashamed about this. But if he would not come, if I would say he couldn't come, he would feel very bad.

Steenbeek (1995:95) describes the *quince años* as a celebration with many religious elements. In the communities in Mexico, where her research was carried out, a mass was part of the festivities. In Los Pinos, religious elements were less present, but still the white colour of the dress, standing for pureness and the idea of protection by male family members of the honour of the maturing girl were there. In this sense, the conflict between Erica and her parents about her relationship with William was rather symbolic. Celebrating a *quince años* party for a girl who publicly expresses she is not behaving like a decent *señorita* meant shame for the family. His presence at the party would have made things even worse.

Promoción

Another milestone in the life course of teenage girls is their *promoción* from high school. In a context in which education is so highly valued, parents regard the moment that girls receive their diploma as very important. It is, however, not as emotional and symbolic as the *quince años* and there are fewer gender dimensions to it.

Celebration of the *promoción* takes place within the school context. This implies that the celebration is organised by the students together with the teacher. The actual party may take place in the school or somewhere else. In the months before the *promoción*, money is collected to organise the party. Each class will also look for one or two *padrinos* (godparents), who are financially responsible for the cake and the *recuerdos* (souvenirs). These *recuerdos* usually consist of a small badge with figures of students with their prom hats, made of plaster. Each student and sometimes also the invitees receive a *recuerdo* after the party.

One of the *promoción* parties I have been present at was Angelica's. When I spoke to Angelica about two weeks before the actual party, she told me that she did not want to go. She said it was not so important and besides her mother would not have money for it. To her mother she actually said no *promoción* would be organised. When her mother found out that something was being organised, she somehow managed to get money for it. And, despite what Angelica had said before, she got really excited about it.

Just as in the *quince años* celebration, girls usually rent their dresses for the *promoción*. Styles can vary between gala dresses and cocktail dresses and there is no specific colour code. Angelica chose a beautiful red gala dress and on the day of her *promoción*, her hair was decorated with glitters. The party took place in a room upstairs from a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant. It started by the entrance of all students and their *parejas* (partners) through the stairs. Some students had their boyfriends or girlfriends as *pareja*, even when these did not attend the same school. Other students formed *parejas* among themselves.¹⁷¹ Angelica's *pareja* was Simón, her boyfriend and classmate. After the students had entered the room, the party was officially opened by the director, followed by speeches of the class

171 Angelica told me that the group had agreed that students who had not been able to collect money through the year, would be *parejas* to some who had participated in the collection. That way all students could participate and the only cost would be for the chicken.

representative, the *padrinos* of the *promoción* and a number of other important people. Then, all three verses of the national anthem were sung. This was followed by a waltz, to which all students were supposed to dance; first they danced with their *parejas* and then with their parents and friends.

After this more formal part, it was time for dinner. As the celebration took place in a room above the location of a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant, dinner consisted of a piece of chicken with French fries. Food was only provided to those who had paid for one or more portions in advance. In many cases, this meant that there was only one portion of food ordered for the student who was doing his or her *promoción*. Many of them took part of their portion to their parents afterwards. Some families also brought some food of their own. This was formally not allowed, but no one seemed to care all that much. After dinner, the room turned into a discotheque, with *cumbia*, techno and reggae as the main kinds of music that were played. At the end of the evening, the big *promoción* cake was cut. When leaving, people could take a piece with them.

The custom of appearing with one's *pareja* at the *promoción* and the fact that some students bring their boyfriend or girlfriend from outside school to the *promoción* indicate that the issue of boyfriends is less problematic than with the celebration of *quince años*. One of the reasons behind this difference is that girls at their *promoción* are at least two years older. More important is the different symbolic meaning of the event. The basic idea of the *quince años* was to present the girl to the community as a pure and clean *señorita*. It is a celebration that celebrates the beginning of a new life, a celebration that symbolises purity and decency. It is furthermore a celebration in which the family and family honour is very important. The *promoción* is a celebration of a completed period; it is the celebration of one important goal met. Emotionally, a boyfriend is more acceptable on such an occasion.

Childhood and adulthood: an emic view

The previous section described two events that constitute decisive moments in the life course of teenage girls. When girls turn 15, they are no longer seen as children and when they finish high school another life stage comes to an end. In different ways, both of these events imply the end of one phase and the beginning of a new one. The girls who celebrate these events, in short, are heading towards adulthood. How do the girls themselves view the transition from childhood to adulthood? What do they see as the main differences between childhood and adulthood and to what extent do the girls feel they are almost adults?

In one of the *talleres* with the girls, I asked them to freely associate to the terms *mundo joven* (world of youth) and *mundo adulto* (world of adults). From this session, I learned that, according to the girls, one of the most important differences between the two had to do with what they called a character change. They all felt that as adults they would have to be more responsible, more mature and they would be behaving less freely. The girls viewed the character change as necessary because adults have more responsibilities and concerns than youth. This also was the main reason why they were a bit wary of it.

When they looked at themselves, they did not think they were ready for adulthood yet. Take, for example, Elena and Silvia (in the first excerpt) and Carina (in the second excerpt):

Elena: When you are an adult, when you are married, then you will have problems with your children, you know, you have to wait on them, help them ... (Silvia:) cook for them.

JO: You don't like cooking?

Silvia: Well, I like it, but not too much

Elena: I do not like cooking. Well, I like making cakes, sweets, but real cooking? No.

Silvia: My mother also tries to teach me how to knit, but, no, I don't like it.

Elena: Cleaning is something I like, but washing, no.

Silvia: But these are all things we have to learn

JO: Do you feel already you are an adult, or does it take some more time?

Silvia and Elena (together): Yes, it will take more time still!

JO: What is it you are missing?

Silvia: In my case, I don't know how to say it, but I feel I am not responsible enough

JO: What do you mean, how do you see that?

Silvia: Well in some things, for example, for school, I have to do an assignment and then I say, no, I can do it tomorrow as well.

Elena: Yes, that you always start things at the last moment; that is how it is like.

Carina: I still feel like I am an adolescent.

JO: And when do you think you will be an adult?

Carina: In about two years.

JO: What do you think is the difference between adulthood and youth?

Carina: Well, I suppose, I am going to think a bit more. I suppose I will be more mature. Then I will no longer be the little fool I am now. Well, in comparison to how I was, I am already more mature now, but there is still a way to go.

Another important difference between adulthood and childhood that was repeatedly brought up by the girls is that when adult, you will have to live your life on your own. In addition, adulthood means that there is less time for fun. Carina was very clear about this, as the following interview excerpt shows:

JO: When you compare youth with adulthood, which are the advantages of both?

Carina: Youth, with adulthood? Well, an adult person... depends on himself, or in other words, he is more mature, he knows how to work. He knows how to work for his own sake, you know what I mean? And in your youth, you have your mother, you think your mother will help you and that she will give you everything. Your parents will support you. In contrast, when a person is an adult, you have to depend on yourself; you cannot rely on anyone else.

JO: And which are the advantages of being young, what is the good thing about your age?

Carina: Everything, everything adults cannot do.

JO: What do you mean?

Carina: Going out, for example. Well some adults do go out to a party, but not as much as we do. What else... we have more opportunities for studying and when you are adult, that is not possible anymore, it will be cut short by the children you have to take care of. And we still can. We can study; we can still make something of our lives. When adult, that is not possible anymore.

In this interview excerpt, Carina also points out another interesting element in the distinction between childhood and adulthood: the possibility to make something of one's life. This issue also came up in the *taller* about the *mundo joven* and the *mundo adulto*: the period of youth

was associated with dreams, hopes, plans and goals, whereas adulthood was associated with the end of dreams, with concerns and with disillusionment.

To summarise, the way in which the girls construct adulthood is rather negative. The girls feel that when adults, they will have more responsibilities and concerns and that they will have much less, or even no time, for fun. Maybe most threatening is the idea that when adults, there is no longer room for dreams and making plans. In this light, it is not surprising that all girls emphasise that they are still far away from adulthood. They may have taken their first step on the road towards it - after all, they are no longer the children they were before - but before entering adulthood, a long road fortunately still lies ahead.

Future expectations and concerns

¡Quiero salir adelante! (I want to get ahead!) If there was one theme in the workshops and interviews that gave rise to outspoken views among the girls, it was the future. Both in the first and the second fieldwork period, I spent various *talleres* on issues concerning the future. In all these meetings and in the interviews, the girls came up with the same ideal: *ser profesional*. Ideally, being a *profesional* refers to having a university degree or a degree of some institute of higher education. In practice, however, it was primarily used as a term for earning a diploma from a more practical and vocationally oriented institute, such as a cosmetology school or secretarial academy. It also referred to the kinds of job the girls foresaw for themselves, that is as formal employee in some company or state organisation. Let us look at excerpts from two interviews; the first excerpt below is from an interview with the twins Lilia and Carolina, the following one from an interview with Marisol.

Carolina: I would not like to have a life like my mum's.

JO: Why not?

Carolina: Well, because my mother and father are fighting quite often and because, well, my mum has not been able to study. She studied for a while, but then she met my father and left school.

Lilia: I would like to build a good home and well, my mother has a good home, but well... it is not what I would like. I would like to have a good job, so that my husband does not throw it in my face that he does everything for me and that he brings in everything for our family and the house. I prefer both persons having a good job. She [her mother] does not have a good job, she has not studied enough. And... well, I would just want to salir adelante, I would like to get the best.

JO: How do you look at your future?

Marisol: For now, I could not tell you, because... well honestly I haven't really taken the time to think about it

JO: But, how would you like it to be?

Marisol: Yes, I would like it to be... different. I would like to have a good job, as a doctor maybe.

JO: As a doctor?

Marisol: Yes, study medicine and then practise that profession... help my mother and my brothers. I would especially like to help my brother Pedro. Since... when I would marry, he would still be finishing secondary school or be at an institute and then I will have to help him. I want to help him and also my other brother Roman.

Several issues emerge in the above excerpts. First of all, in both of these interviews there is a strong urge to climb the ladder of success. Furthermore, we can see that an important motivation for progress seems to be the difficult socio-economic situation of their parents. In both of these interviews the girls state that their lives have to be different from those of their parents; they see them suffering all the time and they do not want such a life for themselves. Study is seen as the main vehicle to reach this goal. Lilia is very clear in this respect: her mother does not have a good job because her level of schooling is not high enough. The relationship between the girls' aim of *salir adelante* and their parents' life is even stronger than is readily apparent in these words. On multiple occasions, the girls expressed to me that they feel obliged to their parents to make progress in life: As one girl put it: *As they have always suffered for me, I have the moral obligation to make the most of it.*

According to the girls, being a *profesional* guarantees or at least makes possible a certain economic stability in the future. Especially in a situation of economic crisis, they stress, also women should contribute to the family income; both husband and wife will have to work outside the home. Furthermore, as a *profesional*, they feel they will always be able to 'fend for themselves'. In the case of unplanned pregnancies, men often do not take responsibility. And when married, it is not rare that a man has another woman (*amante*), possibly with children, who he takes care of as well. Overall experience teaches them: 'A man cannot be trusted, sooner or later he will leave you. You should be prepared to be on your own'. Being a *profesional* implies that you will always find a job and be able to take care of yourself and your children.

The girls' desire to *ser profesional* is not, in the first place, an individually motivated goal. In part, this may be due to the family's migrational background. Youth in migrant popular neighbourhoods are very aware that education and the dream of progress is exactly what their parents came for in the first place (Munar et al., 2004). Probably as a consequence of this migration narrative, in the girls' narrative about the future, there is an emphasis on the mobility of the whole family. It was almost always the case that the future goal of *ser profesional* was combined with the idea that by doing so they would be able to help their parents. Furthermore, the girls presented their future work as a means of helping their future husband (*es para poder ayudar a mi esposo pues*) and as a means to be able to take care of the children if a man were to leave them. In contrast to the middle classes, where the motivations for *ser profesional* and for working outside the house tend to be based more strongly on self-realisation and personal development, here the main aim is to contribute to the welfare of the family (compare the notions of the *madre moderna* and the *madre heroica* that were discussed in Chapter 3; Fuller, 1993; see also Kogan 1996; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995; Raguz, 1995; Ruiz Bravo, 1996).

When asked about the possibility of their life projects coming true, most girls in Los Pinos reacted remarkably positively. In one of the *talleres*, I asked them to label the dreams and plans for the future that they had written down in an earlier meeting. Under the heading 'not realistic', most girls put things like 'travel to other countries' and 'becoming a famous singer'. Finishing high school, becoming a *profesional* and getting a reasonable job, on the contrary, were seen as very attainable. In fact, the only obstacles that they could think of were things they themselves could control. One possible obstacle was that they may lose interest in their studies and that their attention would be distracted by other things. In the end however, if you really wanted it, the goal was within reach. Or, as Britney put it: *El que quiere, puede* (if one wants it, it can be done) (see also Vega-Centeno, 1996:106). The optimistic stories of the

girls were even more remarkable when they are compared with the girl's expectations and ideas about the country's future in general. When asked about the future in more collective terms, all girls recognised the current labour problems in the country and moreover, did not expect this to change any time soon. This more pessimistic general picture, however, was not reflected in how each girl viewed her own individual future.

The positive expectations for one's individual future and the gap with the more negative general expectations about the country and its economy are recognised in various studies about youth in Peru and the rest of Latin America.¹⁷² In an attempt to explain the positive expectations, most of these authors refer first of all to the growing levels of participation in education - which although the labour market has not reached the same level, certainly stimulated the belief in a good future. A second factor is the official discourse of autonomy and individual effort that is conveyed to them at school and elsewhere. As Portocarrero and Oliart (1986:77) state: "The message to young people is: 'study, work and triumph' and without thinking about it too much, they are internalising the message" (see also Ansión et al., 1998; Carrión, 1991). Also at home, as I will discuss more extensively in Chapter 6, the same kind of belief in education and *ser profesional* is transmitted.¹⁷³

Finally, the rather optimistic future expectations of the teenage girls may be explained by the more general changes in male-female relations, which I discussed in Chapter 3. Although in general the lower classes may not be the heralds of feminist revolution, it is undeniable that ideas concerning the rights and opportunities of women have found fertile ground within this segment of society (Cáceres, 1999b; Cáceres et al., 2002a; Fuller, 1993). For girls, this means that they, even more than boys, are staking their futures on work and education, not only because it is something that is possible today but also as a "point of departure for a more integral leap forward" (Tovar, 1995:75). The girls in Los Pinos emphasised the equality of sexes in their narratives and stated that both men and women should have the same education and labour opportunities. This discourse, which, just like the messages young girls hear at school, focuses mostly on individual capacities, probably gives the girls an additional reason to believe in their own capabilities.

In the *talleres* about the future I repeatedly asked the girls about how they thought they would put their expectations for the future into action. Most of the time, questions like this were met with silence. And indeed, I found very few of the girls' dreams translated into realistic plans and concrete action. If the girls came up with something, they usually expressed an absolute belief in their own perseverance: if they just want something bad enough, it will somehow become a reality. This somewhat passive and resigned attitude should not come as a surprise. On the one hand, it is probably typical for all girls of this age. In this specific context however, there are also other factors that may play a role. Just like the adults around them, living in a culture of poverty means that the girls' lives are to a large extent determined by day-to-day events. Illustrative were the intended searches for work, which despite seemingly concrete plans, were almost never carried out. Time and again, they broke down on more

172 See, for example: Brossel (1997); Encinas (1997); Portocarrero and Oliart (1986); Basili and Encinas (1999); for Ecuador also Miles (2000). NB Most of these studies mainly focus on education and work and not so much on future projects with respect to marriage and having children.

173 According to Golte and Adams, the belief in education is also related to the experience migrants has with *profesionales* in the places of origin, specifically when they come from areas relatively far away from urban areas (Golte and Adams, 1987:85).

immediate responsibilities, such as cooking lunch, helping out their parents with something in their work, or with taking care of a little brother, sister, niece or nephew. In more general terms, the high degree of insecurity and uncertainty in the *pueblos jóvenes*, resulting in an aversion to planning ahead, also probably played an important role (Grompone, 1991).¹⁷⁴

All this may lead us to the hypothesis that the girls' dreams for the future are functioning more as an escape than as a guidepost that gives concrete direction to their lives. This conclusion however, is too hasty. Although maybe not in a very concrete sense, it is something the girls keep in their heads and which will serve as general advisor for actions and decisions. Furthermore, I think that dreaming as an escape from confronting the hardships of daily life is not in and of itself something negative. Continuing to dream, even when one knows deep in his or her heart that the chances for success are remote is, I think, indispensable for the mental and spiritual health of every person.

Marriage and having children

The girls had many dreams with respect to their personal futures, and specifically with regard to starting a family. Ideas about this area of the future, however, were usually presented as secondary to *ser profesional*. It seems that, in the choices and preferences with respect to personal lives, the girls were more or less following their parents' lives. Therefore, the girls did not perceive these goals as something you have to put too much effort into; they are part of life. All girls mentioned as a matter of course that they wanted children, preferably two or three. With this number, they clearly depart from the - generally larger families in which they themselves were raised.¹⁷⁵ Having children is something the girls saw as natural for women and something they would love to do. At the same time, however - and this explains their preferring only two or three - children were seen as rather expensive. Nancy stated:

It is nice to have children; every woman would love to have children. Choosing not to have children would be because of the environment in which you have to raise the child; you have to be able to give the child education and a decent life. Therefore, in order to achieve this, first I have to study and work hard. That is why, on the one hand, I would like to have children and on the other hand no. First I need to have more security and then I can have a child. I would like to have two children, a boy and a girl, a pair.

The girls emphasised that, with respect to the way they wanted to raise their children, they were going to give their children and especially their daughters much more *confianza* (trust), than they themselves had been receiving from their parents. The girls wanted to be more like friends to their future children. As these preferences are directly related to the ways they view their parents' behaviour, I will come back to this issue in Chapters 6 and 7.

Getting married¹⁷⁶ - formally and in a white dress - is something all the girls dreamed of. In the *pueblos jóvenes*, however, neither civil nor religious wedding ceremonies are very common. In most cases, a man and woman just start living together and have children. Only when there is enough money does a formal marriage take place. In the girls' dreams, however, getting married occupied an important place:

174 The problem of short-term orientation was also mentioned by the Peruvian psychologist Sandro Macassi (personal conversation, 25 April 2001).

175 For figures and trends on family size and fertility rates, see Chapter 3.

Silvia: I think, everybody is dreaming of getting married, don't you think. In white, going to the church

JO: Why is that so attractive to you?

Silvia: I think, because it is an illusion, everyone has it. I would like to get married, for the church, in white. Ay that would be nice! I would like us to be together for the whole lifetime, until death, no? I prefer getting married in the church instead of living together, or instead of a civil wedding. I would love to swear an oath to God.

The girls had very clear ideas about the desired physical features and personality characteristics of their future husbands. This became especially clear when we played a game in which each of them had to rate different aspects of her future boyfriend or husband. With respect to physical features, there was a good deal of variety. Erica, for example, said that she would like her future husband to have clear brown eyes, dark hair and somewhat red lips. Claudia's future husband was hopefully going to be a tall man, muscular, with clear eyes and auburn hair. And Elena, for her part, was dreaming about a muscular white man with blue eyes, thin red lips and a pronounced nose. More unanimous were the girls' ideas about the character of their future husbands. First of all, they all wanted to have a hard-working man (*un hombre trabajador*), who would be able to financially support his family. Their future husbands were further supposed to help them in the household and with the children. This latter statement was probably partly a reaction to the rather limited role their own fathers had played in the home and in the care for the children. On the one hand, this statement could also be seen as striking a rather emancipatory note, as a desire for a relationship among equals in which all responsibilities might be equitably shared. On the other hand, there is no doubt among the girls that, in the end, women are and should be responsible for maintaining the household (see also Ilizarbe Pizarro, 1997b; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995; Raguz, 1995). The ideal situation is still that men work outside the house and that women are responsible for maintaining the home and the children. The reality is, however, different and women also have to go out and find work. It is only because of this reality that they felt that men should also help with some of the household tasks.¹⁷⁷

For the girls, it was important that their parents be happy with their future husbands. They all gave the dimension 'acceptance by your parents', the maximum score of ten. In the discussion that emerged about this issue, the girls said that if their parents did not approve of their future husband, they would feel very uncomfortable. For most girls it would be a reason to break off the relationship (see also Cáceres, 1999b:56). The girls also wanted their husbands to be *hombres comprensivos y sinceros*: men who treat them with respect, who do not beat them

176 Husband, or *marido*, refers to the male partner in a stable relationship, either marriage or consensual union. When the girls speak of *matrimonio* (marriage), they explicitly refer to marriage. For them, the main difference between marriage and consensual unions is the blessing of the church. When I asked about marriage, the girls thought I was either asking about the wedding day itself, on which they would be married *en blanco* (in a white dress), in the eyes of the church, or about life of marriage as opposed to cohabitation in a consensual union. See also Chapter 3 on the family in Peru.

177 Other authors also point to the wide disparity between speech and action, between what girls and women say they think and what their actions and deeper beliefs really are (Fuller, 1993; Quintana and Vásquez, 1999; Ponce and La Silvia, 1995).

and who are not too jealous. Being *un hombre sincero* also implies that a man is faithful to his wife. The girls explicitly rejected the double morality, in which men are allowed more sexual freedom than women and in which having an *amante* is seen as normal for men. In Chapter 3, we already saw that, in Peruvian society, ideas about fidelity and a double standard of sexual morals are undergoing change (Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993:172-176; Kogan, 1996). As in the case of many other changes and transitions in terms of sexuality and sexual norms, the situation in the popular classes seems to be more blurred than in the middle classes and, in general, change seems to evolve more slowly (Cáceres, 1999b; Fuller, 1993 and 1997). In this respect, it was telling that, among the girls in Los Pinos, the wish that their future husbands would be *sinceros* was combined with a more general conviction that men's sexual escapades are just part of the game. According to them, men are subject to certain 'animal-like' impulses, which they cannot control. And this, in a sense, makes infidelity not only inevitable, but even an essential component of masculinity.

Cáceres et al. (2002a) suggest that the reluctant acceptance of male infidelity in poor migrant neighbourhoods is partly related to the fact that, in these neighbourhoods, unions are formed on a more pragmatic basis than is the case among the middle classes. In the latter "love-based unions are the norm", whereas in the popular classes more pragmatic unions are formed (ibid.:188). To me, this division is a bit awkward and not very convincing. It is true that, when I asked the girls about their future husbands and married life, the girls barely mentioned love as a precondition. It is also true that, in a situation of poverty and marginalisation, a sense of responsibility and industriousness on the part of both partners in a marriage is crucial. To conclude that this means that unions or marriages in *pueblos jóvenes* are more pragmatic and less love-based than in the higher classes however, betrays a limited and highly romanticised view of marriage. Instead, I would argue that, in the *pueblos jóvenes*, men and women are bound to one other in more than a romantic-emotional sense: not only do they like each other for who they are, they are also dependent on one another for survival under conditions of long-term economic privation.

Final reflection

Over the years, authors writing about young people in the *pueblos jóvenes* have repeatedly questioned the existence of youth as a social and cultural category in these neighbourhoods. The central question is whether in a situation of poverty there is still space for a period of youth and for typical youth activities. According to Ennew (1986:63-64), for example, the very labels that are used for teenage girls in the popular classes emphasise their adult status. In the popular classes, girls, even when they are still very young, tend to be called *mujercita* (little woman) while, in the middle classes girls, even until university age, may be called *niña* or *niñita* (girl or little girl). These different terms, according to Ennew, point to the clearly different ways that girls and girlhood in each of these socio-economic classes function. In the popular classes, girls are already little women; they start work, take on responsibility, begin to have sexual relations and become mothers at an earlier age than their peers in the middle classes. Panfichi and Valcarcel (1999:13) come to a similar conclusion when they state: "Poverty and the situation in which the struggle for survival is first priority indeed limits any moratorium. The anxiety of a daily life full of shortages and limitations heavenly weakens the capacity to engage in any actions and strategies oriented to the preparation for tomorrow" (see also Lozano, 2003:12; Mansilla, 1996).

Many of the things that have come up in this chapter, as well as the quote at the beginning of this chapter, seem to support the idea of the girls as 'small adults'. A large part of daily life for girls in Los Pinos is filled with household tasks and paid work. In the scarce free time, their lack of money severely limits the real choices that they can exercise with regard to leisure or activities. Third, it is clear that all of the girls are very aware of the difficult economic situation their family is in. The girls, in short, do not have a carefree youth.

In the lives of the girls, however, there are also many elements that are usually thought of as typical for youth in general. The girls attend school and they are financially dependent on their parents. In addition, just like girls in higher classes, the girls are increasingly interested in the other sex and sexuality. Moreover, the girls themselves explicitly presented themselves as adolescents and not yet as adults. As adults, they said, they were going to have many more responsibilities than they currently had. They would be responsible for children and a family and their days would be so filled with work that there would hardly be any time for friends.

The experiences of the girls in Los Pinos and the way they perceived adolescence and adulthood call for a more heterogeneous approach to the concept of youth. The idea of social moratorium, which I introduced in Chapter 1 as a concept that conceives youth as residing in a sort of waiting room for adulthood in order to prepare for roles they will later assume, becomes increasingly obsolete (Bazán, 2000; Cortázar, 1997; Macassi, 2001a; Venturo, 2001). It is an approach that isolates youth from the rest of society, as if they are not yet involved in that society. In addition, it is too much based on western ideas of adolescence or childhood (Punch, 2003:277). What is needed instead is a concept that leaves room for different interpretations in different contexts. A concept furthermore, that leaves room for the co-existence of adult and child roles, between which subjects can switch during the day (Prout, 2005; Punch, 2003). I would therefore like to come full circle and conclude this chapter by again citing Venturo (2001), who states that the youth of girls like those in Los Pinos might better be labelled a period of 'social initiation', rather than 'social moratorium'. Whereas the former suggests an in-between stage, isolation and lack of involvement, the latter implies recognition of the reality of youth in the poor zones of Metropolitan Lima, youth who in many ways are already participating in the adult world even as they face challenges common to adolescents across the broader socio-economic spectrum.

Photo 5 Group of boys in Los Pinos



Chapter 5. What the girls do (not talk about): sex and sexuality ¹⁷⁸

A theme that hardly came up during the first months of *talleres* and interviews with the girls was sexuality. Later, though, after more trust had developed, both among the girls and between each of them and myself, quite a few questions and concerns surfaced regarding the issue. Even at that point, however, the girls remained reserved. The first indication of the importance of sexuality and boys in the girls' lives came from the *botella borracha* ('drunk bottle') games we usually played at the end of the *talleres*. This game involved the girls sitting in a circle on the floor. By spinning a bottle, each of the girls could ask whichever girl the bottle head pointed toward any question that she wanted. A lot of these questions referred to love and sex. A girl would ask another girl, for example, whether she was in love with some boy, or if she had or had not been with a certain boy. In another workshop, dealing specifically with sexuality, I gave the girls the opportunity to anonymously raise questions and concerns about issues related to sex. On small cards they wrote down all the questions they had. Questions referred, for example, to how a girl becomes pregnant and how she could prevent it, how it feels to have sex and 'how boys and men are'. Despite the seeming openness revealed by the questions, much of the girls' expression remained depersonalised, referring to other people's problems or to hypothetical situations rather than to themselves.

The girls always denied that they were sexually active.¹⁷⁹ I remember a conversation I had with Erica about her relationship with her boyfriend Wiliam, who was two years older than her. At the time of the conversation, Erica had been together with him just slightly more than two years and she seemed to be rather serious about him. I asked her whether they had ever talked about having sexual relations and if she already had sexual experience. Erica's reaction was categorically negative and almost indignant. *How could I possibly think that?* Her response to my suggestion that he had probably already asked her to take this step was equally firm: *No*. Besides, she added, if he were to pressure her on this issue, he apparently was not worthy of her love. Only two months later, I found out that Erica was pregnant.

The contradictory picture that emerges from the case of Erica and from the examples of the *talleres* is symbolic of the way girls in popular neighbourhoods like Los Pinos deal with sexuality. Although there is a lot of talking about boys and love and although the girls are hungry for knowledge, they categorically deny that sexuality already plays a role in their own lives. This attitude is directly related to the Catholic environment in which the girls are raised. In such an environment, sex is supposed to take place only within marriage. Thus, it

178 The title of this chapter is inspired by the title of a paper written by Van Eerdewijk (2004), about teenage girls and sexuality in Dakar, Senegal.

179 In accordance with many studies on youth and sexuality, 'being sexually active' here refers to having sexual intercourse and 'sexual initiation' refers to the first time a girl or boy has sexual intercourse. 'Sex' or 'sexual behaviour' refers more generally to the interaction with boys.

is not something that young people are supposed to engage in. In the previous chapter, I described Catholicism as not being an important factor in the way girls live their daily lives. Catholic values, however, are deeply ingrained in Peruvian society. The state itself, and thus also state schools, at the very least *implicitly* take Catholicism as a point of departure with respect to anything having to do with sex. The message that all these actors convey to youth with respect to sex is that they should not engage in it. The only elements in society that are a bit more open toward the subject are some of the NGOs. They usually do not have a strong moral message with respect to youth and sexuality but instead focus on providing value-neutral information. Because of time and money constraints, their activities are limited. In Los Pinos, I only heard of a single visit from such an organisation.

Until the middle of the 1990s, there was in Peru little academic and political attention given to the issues of youth and sexuality. Some studies have been conducted, but these were mostly quantitative and they constructed sexuality in medical or deviant terms. The studies were dominated by paternalistic approaches, starting from the morally based assumption that youth do not have (or *should* not have) sex and that, for girls, virginity is the ideal. As a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and more generally because of a growing consciousness of issues related to reproductive health and teenage pregnancy worldwide during the last 10 to 15 years, the sexual issues of youth have, more recently, received closer attention. Recent studies and policies increasingly approach youth as sexual beings, who may or may not have their first sexual relations during their teenage years. Today's approaches seem to be less condemning, taking a more open and egalitarian attitude towards sex and sexuality. Increasingly, studies also analyse youth sexual behaviour within a broader social and emotional framework (Cáceres, 1999b).¹⁸⁰

All this, however, does not mean that the general climate of opinion with respect to girls' sexuality has really become more open. There is a big gap between ideas and opinions expressed in academic and intellectual circles (which may indeed be more liberal) and the attitudes and behaviours prevalent within the larger society. There may be more awareness now of the existence of sexual activity among youth. Still however and especially when it comes to girls, the general idea is that sexuality should not be part of youth experience and that, consequently, it is something that has to be prevented and regulated. Sexuality is something that is still seen as indissolubly tied to marriage, family formation and reproduction (Chant and Craske, 2003:144; see also Ampuero, 1999:21). And, to get back to the title of this chapter, it is something that girls do not talk about openly.

In fact, I was only able to freely talk about sexuality with girls who had become pregnant. In this chapter, therefore, most of the empirical information on girls and sexuality is derived from conversations with these pregnant girls. When it comes to the other girls and their experiences and opinions about relationships, boys and sexuality I will make use of a number of fictitious stories the girls themselves related to me.

The chapter starts with a brief discussion of the use of fictitious stories in research. Then I will describe and analyse the ways that girls meet boys and how and why girls become sexually active. In the latter section I will also discuss the value placed on virginity. Then, I will address the use of contraceptives as well as the issue of abortion. The topic of pregnancy, which in chronological terms would fit here as well, is discussed separately in Chapter 7.

180 Some examples, which will be used also later in this chapter, are Arias and Aramburú (1999 and 2002), Cáceres (1999a), Quintana and Vásquez (1999) and Vega-Centeno (1994).

Fictitious stories as a research method

The use of fictitious stories in anthropological research is an example of what are often called 'projective techniques'. Just like 'sentence completion and 'photo interviewing', it is a technique that attempts to stimulate people to use their imagination by employing relatively unstructured stimuli in order to elicit information on certain aspects of their lives (t Hart, 1998). Over the years, projective techniques have been used quite extensively in both psychology¹⁸¹ and marketing research.¹⁸² Projective techniques have also been widely used in anthropological research (Banks, 2001; Ramos, 1999). In research with small children with limited abilities to express themselves verbally, drawing is quite often used (Stokrocki, 2000). Another example of the projective techniques in anthropological research is the use of photos (Collier and Collier, 1986; Pink, 2001). Researchers can either ask subjects to take photographs of specific things (and reflect upon what they have chosen),¹⁸³ or they can ask respondents to reflect on what they see in photos presented by the researcher.¹⁸⁴

Another source for anthropological work has been storytelling. Most often, however, research is done on existing stories (tales, myths), which are interpreted as a reflection of the culture or context within which the individual lives.¹⁸⁵ Examples of the use of fictitious stories (i.e. creative constructions made up by informants in the context of research) are scarce. One example can be found in the 'Banda' project, a doctoral dissertation (Gigengack, 1999) about street children in Mexico. In his work, the concept of stories refers to the 'tales' street children make up when they are talking about their own lives, whether to other street children, the general public or to the researcher. These tales were, according to Gigengack (ibid:105), "somewhat more solid than pure fantasy and somewhat thinner than the facts". The stories of these Mexican street children were, however (and this makes them different from the kinds of stories I am using in this chapter) tales that the boys in his research brought up as tales that at least partly reflected events in their own lives.

My use of stories is different and thus far I have not come across authors who have used a similar methodology. What I did was the following. On different occasions, I asked the girls to create fictitious stories about a girl, a typical Los Pinos girl, who might live either in their neighbourhood or in a similar one. In all cases, the girls were encouraged to be as realistic as possible. On one occasion I only provided a general theme the girls were to write about: I asked them to describe how girls and boys get to know each other and how they would become a couple. These are the stories used in the first section of this chapter. The second

181 In psychology, one of the most well known examples is the Rorschach or inkblot test, inviting respondents to project their personal realities onto ambiguous pictures shown by the researcher. Another well-known example from psychology is the Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T). This is a projective test consisting of a set of black-and-white pictures reproduced on cards, each depicting a potentially emotion-laden situation. The respondent is presented the cards one at a time and instructed to make up a story about the situation portrayed on each card (Engler, 2003:293-294).

182 Projective techniques in marketing studies, for example, aim at finding out how people think and feel about a certain brand.

183 I also made use of photos as a research method; see Chapter 4.

184 See, for example, Klaufus (2006, forthcoming) and Ramos (1999).

185 A classical study of this kind is Scheub (1975; reworked in Zenani, 1992). A more recent example of storytelling research is Brinkman (1996). Her study focuses on the way that gender norms are constructed and reconstructed in literary imaginations among the Kikuyu, Kenya's largest ethnic group.

time, I gave the girls a brief scenario that they were to provide an ending to. These stories will be included in Chapter 7 on teenage pregnancy. A third type of stories emerged more spontaneously when I brought in a number of finger dolls and the girls started to play out scenarios with them. Later, I sat down with the girls and had them write down the story they had played out. This story is also presented in this chapter.

Although the precise method of research employed here may be relatively new, I would say that the rationale for this method is the same as that for other projective techniques, such as sentence completion, photo interviewing, visualisation tasks etc.: that, in one way or other, and often more unconsciously than consciously, people project their feelings and experiences onto their creative products.¹⁸⁶ By creative means and by summoning people's imaginative faculties, the researcher may be able to elicit specific information that would not come out as easily in other ways. This information may consist of deeply submerged feelings or topics that respondents do not want to be too open about. People may express certain norms and values, but also frustrations, hopes and dreams. In analytical terms, the stories that are produced may be seen as spaces in which negotiations take place (e.g. over gender, class, romance or power).

In the group of girls, sexuality was in some sense a rather special subject. On the one hand a lot of taboos existed and girls were not very willing to tell me specific things about their own lives. On the other hand, it was a topic they were very eager to talk about in a more general sense. As long as it did not come too close, sex and sexuality were indeed very popular themes in our *talleres*. Writing the sexuality-related stories about fictitious girls was something they liked very much and they also seemed to be rather comfortable with doing it in pairs, and with other people reading it.

When using projective techniques as a research method in anthropological fieldwork, the interpretation of what respondents express is crucial and is also, almost inevitably, rather subjective. This means that, even more than in other methods such as interviewing, it is up to the researcher to make sense of the responses that are provided. Projective techniques, therefore, should preferably be used in combination with other techniques like - confining myself to anthropology - interviews or participant observation. For the interpretation of the fictitious stories written by the girls in the *talleres*, I would say that this necessary interpretative background is provided by a combination of participant observation, secondary literature about girls in a similar situation and interviews with those girls who, because they were pregnant, were more open about their sexual experiences. This implies that my interpretations of the stories are filtered through what I saw or learned during the whole course of my fieldwork.

In the interpretation of the stories in this chapter, both the stories as a whole and the different elements within them can be used for interpretation. Of particular importance is the fact that the first and the second part of the stories were written by two different duos; both of these duos started their own story, which at some point halfway was completed by the other duo. As we will see later in this chapter, it is instructive to examine the differences between the first and the second part of both of these stories.

¹⁸⁶ Maybe it is fitting to note here that, in anthropology, the main aim is not to find out about specific individuals, but about the feelings and behaviour of a group in a certain cultural context. This means that it is not important whether the story written by a girl reflects her own life or not. What is important is the extent to which these stories, taken together, provide a picture of the life of the 'typical' girl in cultural contexts like theirs.

‘True love’ and the *amigo especial*

Let us now turn to the first fictitious story, about Valentina and Tania. It is a story, completely created by the girls, that is based on a general theme (girl meets boy and they fall in love) that I provided to them. The first part of the story is written by Elena and Lilia, the second part by Silvia and Consuela.

Story 1. Valentina and El Zapatón

They met each other in the neighbourhood. Junior, or ‘El Zapatón’¹⁸⁷ is a bad guy who drinks almost every day; Valentina is a very quiet girl who is studying very hard. They met each other in a shop, when she bought bread for the night. Just that same moment he entered the shop to buy his booze *Ron Kankun*. They stared at each other, as El Zapatón was a handsome boy. She liked him from that night on, just as he liked her. The following day, when she left her house to go to her *academia*, they saw each other again at the corner of Valentina’s house. They stared at one other. And in the afternoon, when she came back from the *academia*, he was still at the corner, drinking with his friends. He started talking to her and asked: “What is your name?” She told him her name and also asked him for his name. He also told her his name.

They kept seeing each other for a while, every time when she came home from the *academia*. On one of these occasions, he asked Valentina to be with him, because he was in love with her. But she answered that he had to change, that he had to be more ‘quiet’. And, as he was really in love, he changed for her. The two were together for about a year and then she found out that he was not the true one for her. They broke up and now he goes on with the life he had before and only spends his time drinking.

(Story put together by Elena, Lilia, Silvia and Consuela)

Getting to know a boy and dating (*estar con él*, or ‘to be with him’ as the girls say), usually evolves in a number of stages. It all starts, of course, with the first meeting. This first moment usually takes place at school or in the neighbourhood where the girls live, as these are places where the girls tend to spend most of their time. The first magic moment may of course also take place elsewhere, for example, in a bus, or at the big vegetable market. However, these magic moments can only evolve into the subsequent phases if the boy actually makes the effort to visit her in the neighbourhood where she lives or where her school is located.

This brings us to the second phase, in which a boy and a girl get to know each other better. This is a phase we can also refer to as the phase in which a boy *courts* the girl. As we saw in Chapter 4, most girls’ friendships are sex-specific, so courting involves an active crossing of the normal gender lines. In this stage it is mainly the boy who is supposed to put in the effort. He may look for her during the school breaks or wait for her after school and carry her bag home for her. The girls’ role in this stage is much more subtle and consists mainly of giving the boy the opportunity to do what he ought to do. In the end, as the girls repeatedly stressed, a boy has to declare his love to a girl; the other way around is just not appropriate. As Lilia put it: *A girl who declares her love to a boy first is frowned upon. She gives herself away, she is an easy girl.* In the story of Valentina and El Zapatón, the latter is clearly expressing his interest by waiting for her when she goes out. By allowing him time to speak with her, she also shows that she is interested in him.

¹⁸⁷ *Zapatón* literally means big shoe or overshoe; here it is used as a nickname.

In the talleres and interviews, the subject of courting and *estar con un chico* (going out with a boy) was a recurrent issue. The girls often said they wanted to wait until later to have a boyfriend. With these statements they reproduced the general parental discourse, which positioned dating a boy as something diametrically opposed to education and a good future (see Chapter 6). At the same time, it appeared that quite a number of them had had a boyfriend and they had all been in love with a boy at least once. The girls were also very much focused on boys. During the evenings that the *talleres* took place, it was quite often the case that a number of boys gathered outside. They repeatedly opened the door and shouted things to the girls. When a girl actually was interested in one of the boys, she would go to the door time and again to shout something back, or to just look at him. There were also various requests by the girls for permission to go outside for a while. In a sometimes desperate attempt to live up to the confidence the girls' parents had placed in me, I refused to grant these requests.

There are a number of ways in which this apparently contradictory picture can be interpreted. First of all, I would like to stress that I do not think that the views on boyfriends and on going out with someone are just rhetoric to satisfy either their parents or me as a researcher. These views are expressions of what they sincerely believe. It is like an ideal, something you try to live up to. However, the fact that this is not always possible is also taken for granted. Just as we saw in the section on the role of Catholicism in the girls' lives (Chapter 4), ideals are not necessarily concrete guidelines for practical life. Another interpretation is provided by the idea that when the girls say they are willing to wait to have a boyfriend, they are referring most of all to the idea of a serious relationship. The fact that boys court them does not necessarily contradict this. What this means is that the girls see these boys as no more than *un pasatiempo* (a way of passing time), and not as potential partners in a serious relationship. In addition, several girls who were dating a boy stressed that in their particular case it would not interfere with school, as the boy in question was such a serious and good boy. Of course, these distinctions are more easily drawn in theory than honoured in practice. When a girl is deeply in love, it is difficult for her to stick to the idea that it is best to wait until later to have a boyfriend. Furthermore, for a girl who is truly in love, the boy in question always falls into the exceptional category of the serious boys, meaning a boy that she can have a relationship with without getting into trouble at school.

The idea of the 'serious boyfriend' and the 'true love' recurred time and again in the narratives of the girls. It was something the girls all hoped to find in the future. The girls strongly embraced the idea of 'true love'; when it occurs, you will know it and you will have to act accordingly. It also has the potential to change a boy's behaviour. In the story written by the girls above, Valentina had a number of doubts when she first met El Zapatón. He was drinking too much and so were his friends. They were good-for-nothing *maleados* and although many girls expressed to me that these kinds of boys hold some attraction for them, in the end they were not considered candidates to really get involved with.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, when El Zapatón asked Valentina to be with him, she specified that this would only be possible if he changed his behaviour. 'True love' is a powerful thing, as was reflected in El Zapatón's decision to change his ways for her sake.

The power of 'true love' is something all of the girls in Los Pinos passionately believed in. The girls also realised, however, that what seems like 'true love' in the end may turn out to

¹⁸⁸ See also the 'ideal partner', as described by the girls, in Chapter 4.

be an illusion. Maybe this is also why, in the end, the relationship between Valentina and El Zapatón did not last. In fact, the story written by Consuela, Elena, Lilia and Silvia is not very explicit about the reason why Valentina decided to break up. One possibility is of course that Valentina had fallen in love with another boy. Another possibility is that, during the year they were together, she realised that he was not the boy she wanted to stay with her entire life. Maybe he had started drinking again, or he was not paying enough attention to her.

In the next section, I will come back to this question and to the notion of 'true love'. First, however, I will present the second story, about Tania and her boyfriend Juan. Just like Valentina and El Zapatón in the previous story, the two meet each other in the neighbourhood and there seems to be an instant chemistry between them. The storyline is roughly similar to the first one, particularly in the beginning. However, this particular story shines some light on how girls deal with dilemmas regarding courting and going out with boys.

Story 2. Tania, Juan and Katty

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Tania; she was 16 years old. She met Juan, who was 15 years old. They met at a party, organised in the neighbourhood of Los Pinos. When Tania saw Juan, she fell in love with him and started to look for opportunities to talk with him. They became special friends. This friendship lasted for about a year. Juan told Tania that he was a bit of an 'easy guy' (*chico vacilonero*). But, later, Tania saw how he really was and she fell in love with him even more. But then, four years passed in which they did not see each other. Tania looked for him all over and finally found him. She asked him, why he had gone so far from her. He answered that he had fallen in love with her and that if she found out about his past, he thought that she would reject him. When she heard this, she hugged him and told him about all of her feelings for him and then they decided to be *enamorados* (a couple). Everything was going very well. He introduced her to his parents and she introduced him to her family. During weekdays he was working in the mornings and afternoons as a *cobrador* (bus fare collector) and they saw each other at night and on Sundays they went out (*apasear*).

Until, one afternoon, when he was working, he met this very nice girl with a beautiful body. They became friends. He said nothing to his girlfriend and he even invited her (the girl with the beautiful body, Katty) to go out. He kissed her and that same day they had sexual relations in a hotel. The girl, Katty, got pregnant. When she told him, he was very sad and he did not know how to say this to his girlfriend. But he did say to Katty (the one who got pregnant) that he had a girlfriend and she was very depressed. He told her she should have an abortion, because he loved and liked Tania, but she did not want to do that. Katty decided to go to Tania's house, to tell her she was pregnant from Juan, Tania's boyfriend. She did not believe her and just that moment, Juan arrived. He told her the whole truth and Tania decided to leave him. She told him that he had to take responsibility for his child, but he did not like Katty. So, he only put his signature for the baby when he was born. They did not live together, because he did not want that. Neither did Katty's mother, as she said Juan was a drug addict and always drunk, so she did not want him to be with her daughter. But he gave money for the baby and sometimes he visited the baby. But he did not have anything with Katty, because he did not like her so much. Sometimes he saw Tania and he still looked at her, because he still loved her. But she was already starting to forget him and in order to forget him completely, she decided to go to Ica. In the end, he decided to join Katty, so that his child would have a family and would become happy.

(Story created by Elena, Lilia, Silvia and Consuela)

In this story, it is again possible to recognise a number of stages. The start is more or less similar to that of the previous story. After Tania and Juan had met at a party and they expressed their mutual liking for each other there was a period of exploration and of getting to know each other. After this initial period, they became what the girls called *amigos especiales* ['close friends' - literally *special friends*]. This phase was not mentioned in the previous story and, in fact, when I began my fieldwork I would not have even recognised it as a separate and meaningful phase. With the exception of one article by De La Cuesta (2001) I have not come across this construct in the literature either. Given the insights into the girls' thinking that emerged from my field work, however, I am now convinced it is actually a rather important construct (Olthoff, 2003).

The first time I became aware of the category of the *amigo especial* was in a *taller* in which I asked the girls to represent their own social environments on a big sheet of paper. First they were to put themselves in the middle of the sheet. Then, they had to make an inventory of all people that were important to them in their daily lives. These people then had to be positioned around the centre, with different colours and distances to the centre that indicated the type of relationship and the emotional proximity the girl felt to each of the persons in question. Some of the girls participating in this *taller* were dating, or were at least in love with a boy who in some way or other responded to her interest. In the girls' representations of their social environment, however, the boyfriends did not show up. Instead, what they presented on their sheets of paper were one (or sometimes two) *amigos especiales* (special friends).

When the girls were asked about the 'special' or close friends, their reactions were rather ambiguous. On the one hand, it was clear that the label of the *amigo especial* was reserved for boys who were more to them than just a friend. However, they were not boys with whom they had a steady and public 'love relationship'. The division between an *amigo especial* and a genuine boyfriend was rather blurred though. Girls were not obliged to be faithful to an *amigo especial* and, in general, there was no sex involved. However, just like a boyfriend, the *amigo especial* was always male and, although in theory a girl may have more than one *amigo especial*, in practice this was neither very common nor expected. Moreover, as is the case in the story too, girls were usually in love with the one they called their *amigo especial*.

The creation of the category of the *amigo especial* has at least two functions. First of all, it can be seen as an outcome of negotiations with their parents. As I already touched upon earlier in this section (and as I will discuss more extensively in Chapter 6), the girls are supposed to concentrate on school and thus not to have a boyfriend. Having an *amigo especial* thus enables them to partially escape these expectations. It allows them to, on the one hand, tell their parents that they do not have a boyfriend while at the same time maintaining a special relationship with someone of the other sex. The construction of the *amigo especial* not only creates manoeuvring room in the interaction with parents; it can also be seen as a way to experience a release from certain doubts and tensions that a girl may experience within herself when interacting with boys. The construct of the *amigo especial* allows girls to have a special involvement with a boy without being in too serious a relationship. In this sense, having an *amigo especial* is perceived as the stage before the 'serious boyfriend', before the 'true love' that girls will find later (De La Cuesta, 2001:185). In this phase, girls give themselves some room to explore what they would like to do and how things work. In this phase they can also find out what the boy is really like.

It is now time to go back to the story of Tania and Juan. The two were special friends when we left them, and from the story it was clear Juan was very aware of the fact that, for

Tania, this stage was still an exploring phase, and that therefore he had to prove to her that he was a good boy. This awareness was so acute on his part that, when he began to feel that he wanted a more serious relationship with Tania, he decided that this was not possible. Juan instead decided to withdraw. After a few years, the love between Tania and Juan was still alive and their relationship seemed to have a real chance. Tania was older and felt that the 'true love' she had waited for was now within reach. The couple's relationship also became more public. The *enamorados* introduced each other to their respective families and he even got permission from her parents to take her out on Sundays. In short, the relationship was going well.

Then, however, something unexpected happened. Juan ends up in bed with another girl, a beautiful girl he had met that same day. With this turn in the story, the authoring girls introduced another interesting element: the difference between the 'fun' girl and the 'serious' girl. The characters and descriptions of Tania and Katty in fact represent two different types of girls, the *chica de su casa* and the *ruca*.¹⁸⁹ These labels are used by both boys and girls and refer to the difference between a girl suitable for marriage and a girl to have a good time with.¹⁹⁰ The *chica de su casa* is the serious and quiet *señorita* who respects herself and her parents. She is a serious student whose main concern is to provide a good future for the children she will have with the right man. She is the one all of the boys would like to be with in the end (Cáceres, 1999a:32-33; Nencel, 1996:67). In the meantime, though, boys have time for the *rucas* and *pacharacas*. They are the ones who, using the words of one of the male respondents in the study by Cáceres (1999a:35), are like prostitutes; they are freely available for the taking. They are said to have had sex more than once and they do not seem to be interested in a serious relationship. For most boys, having fun and sex with these kinds of girls is a rather appealing idea. It seems to be a way to obtain a needed sexual release without having to touch their serious, or 'holy', girlfriend (ibid.:30-37). A boy will usually feel more responsible about his relationship with his own girlfriend than with a *ruca*. When Katty turns out to be pregnant, Juan does not consider leaving Tania. She is the one he loves and although he will acknowledge the baby as his own, he plans to stay with Tania. It is only because Tania finds out about the baby and breaks up with Juan that, in the end, Katty and Juan end up together.

In practice, the line between the *ruca* and the *chica de su casa* is very thin and the difference between the two cannot simply be understood as the difference between girls who are sexually active and those who are not. For instance, a *chica de su casa* may also become sexually active - after careful consideration and exclusively with her boyfriend. In fact, the main question seems to be whether a woman displays the behaviour that is associated with the label applied to her (Nencel, 1996:66). This proper behaviour might not be spoken about openly, but is tacitly recognised by all the individuals involved. In addition, whether a woman's sexual experience is perceived as something to be taken advantage of is greatly dependent on the man's intentions. If he is interested in the woman as a partner, his approach to the situation

189 In different classes, neighbourhoods or cultural sub-groups, there are, in fact, different terms that are used to label girls. Examples are *jugadora*, *movida*, *polilla* and *pendeja* which are roughly equivalent to *ruca* and *conservadora* and *tranquila*, which are roughly the same as *chica de su casa* (Cáceres, 1999a:34).

190 For boys, similar labels exist. However, for them it is probably more appropriate to speak of different phases than of mutually exclusive categories. After a more exploring phase, in which boys may experiment with sex and different girls, they will usually move into a second phase, in which they start looking for an *enamorada* and, finally, for a marriage partner (Cáceres, 1999a:36-37; Fuller, 1997:141-150).

is different from what it would be if he were just out for a good time. Hence, rather than reflecting a woman's perceptions of her gender identity and her expectations, the labels given to women are more a reflection of male projections of their own sexual desires and thus are best seen as expressions of power (ibid.).

In the conversations I had with the girls in Los Pinos, the labels *ruca* and *chica de su casa*, or similar terms often came up. The terms were mainly used when the girls spoke about girls outside of their circle of friends. The girls' opinions about *rucas* were rather negative; they are seen as potential threats to their own relationships. They are girls who use their bodies to get what they want: the attention of boys. It is not accidental that the first time that beauty comes up in the story about Tania and Juan is when Katty is introduced. There is, on the contrary, no reference to Tania's beauty, just like there was no reference to Valentina's physical attractiveness in the first story.

For the girls, the label of *ruca* also functions as a shadow image of themselves. All girls are afraid that they might end up being called a *ruca*, by boys or by the neighbours in general. The girls also warn each other when they think an important line is possibly being crossed. When Silvia went to meet her boyfriend two days in a row instead of going to her sewing course, Marisol told her emphatically: *Silvia, you're going too far. Every woman has a limit, and you are crossing the line.* The same terminology was used by Celeste when she saw her sister Carolina kissing a boy just around the corner of their house. I was talking to Celeste, when she suddenly got up to go after her sister: *That's enough, she has gone too far.*

Generally, when I asked the girls what they thought of the different labels for girls and how they were applied, it seemed that they identified more with *chica de su casa* than with *ruca*. However, they were aware that living up to that image is very difficult. Besides, they realised that the true *chicas de su casa* are also a bit shy and unworldly (see also Cáceres, 1999a:34). In fact, when I asked them how the girls in Los Pinos were in general, they tended to use the term *chicas alegres* (cheerful and good-humoured girls). With this term they seemed to be reacting to the dichotomy created by boys: what they were saying was that girls who have a little spirit are not necessarily loose.

From an outsider's point of view, some of the girls in Los Pinos were actually seen as *rucas*. This definitively goes for Carina, who often escaped her parental home to go out and who would frequently, particularly during the last year of my stay, be away for a couple of days at a time. During these outings, Carina drank quite a lot, and she told me that when she drank she would sometimes have sex with boys she hardly knew. Carina is an extreme example of a *ruca* - she was a girl who broke many rules and who had sex with multiple partners. Silvia and Erica also seemed to be seen as *rucas* by some of the neighbours; they were both forward girls who were dating already, something which in itself is enough to be labelled a *ruca*. When they got pregnant, this label was in fact reinforced. In fact we might say that all girls who get pregnant in their teens come to be seen retrospectively as *rucas*.

What does it mean to a girl when she is called a *ruca*? Is it something that she can never shake off? And, to what extent do boys take these labels into account when considering a more stable relationship? When I brought up these kinds of questions in one of the group discussions with the girls in Los Pinos, it generated a good deal of comment. In the end, the girls agreed that if a boy is really in love with a girl who is known as an easy girl, he will probably forgive her. This would likely be the case, however, only if the girl does not yet have a baby because, in the latter case, acceptance would be much more difficult. In addition, by being in a more stable relationship the girl may in due course actually regain some of the

respect she had lost. However, the girls stressed, this is a very lengthy process. Besides, sooner or later, *se lo van a sacar en cara* (people will throw [her past] in her face). When a *ruca* gets pregnant, there are a number of options. It will either lead to a ‘shotgun marriage’, in which the boy and girl decide to stay together for the sake of the baby; a situation which none of the girls saw as ideal. Even less ideal though was the other option - single motherhood, a condition that they saw as something that would irrevocably tarnish their image and future.

Before I turn to the next section, I would like to come back to the fact that different parts of the stories were written by different pairs of girls. As I already said, the first part of the first story was written by Elena and Lilia, the second part by Silvia and Consuela. For the second story, the roles of two pairs of girls were reversed. In both of these stories, the first pair concluded their portion of the story on a rather positive note. Valentina’s relationship with El Zapatón is starting to blossom and Tania and Juan, despite some initial problems, decide to be a couple. Both of these stories, however, end rather negatively: in both cases, the relationship between the boy and the girl ends because of something that the boy does. Given the fact that the different parts were written by different girls, it is almost as if the second pair of girls was trying to warn the first pair not to be too romantic or optimistic. It is as if they wanted to provide a reality check. Both parts of the stories reflect two distinct ways that girls think of and speak about boys. On the one hand there is a romantic view and a hope for true love, on the other hand there is pessimism and the idea that, in the end, most boys are really up to no good.

Sexual initiation

Girls who are sexually active when they are 15 or 16 year-old don't think. They just give themselves away, without thinking of the consequences. This quote about sexual initiation, from Lilia, is typical of what I often heard among the girls in Los Pinos. Other girls, though, were somewhat more subtle. Erica, for example, said that, although it would be best to wait, it also depends on the boy involved: *If it is with your boyfriend, then it is more understandable and acceptable. It is not something you would do with just anybody.* Among the girls, there were lively and at times highly emotional discussions about the issue. Often, the views about the matter divided along the lines of girls who had boyfriends and those who did not. For all of the girls, however, it seemed to be an emotional subject and something that they often thought about.

The topic of sexual initiation among youth is, save for teenage pregnancy, the topic that is most frequently addressed in studies on youth and sexuality in Peru. There are often reports, with rather censorious undertones, that sexual initiation for both boys and girls becomes earlier and earlier with each passing year. The exact number or percentage of sexually active youth is difficult to establish. During my fieldwork in Los Pinos, there was actually no girl who admitted to me right away that she was already having sex with her boyfriend. “How could I even think that?” was the most common reaction. In other studies, the same problem may have occurred. Although most of these studies are more extensive and although they are carried out more anonymously, it is quite probable that, especially for girls, the numbers or percentages who are sexually active are even underestimated in these studies. Percentages for boys, on the other hand, may be somewhat exaggerated. With these warnings in mind, let us look at some data.

According to Quintana and Vásquez (1999:134) who did research among adolescents (15 to 19 year-olds) in a poor urban zone of Metropolitan Lima, 12% of the adolescent girls in their research were sexually active. For boys this percentage was 43%. Cáceres (1999a:62),

doing research among 16 and 17 year-olds, came up with roughly the same figures; Raguz (1999:75), however, found significantly higher figures. In the latter study (among 14 to 19 year-olds), 28% of the girls reported being sexually active; for the boys, the percentage was 63%. In both of these groups, about three quarters of the sexually active youth had first had sexual intercourse before their 17th birthday. The significantly higher figures mentioned by Raguz may be partly due to the inclusion of 19-year-olds. However, as I have already mentioned, the majority of the sexually active boys and girls had already had intercourse for the first time before turning 17. More important, therefore, seems to be the fact that Raguz included not only regular school students (studying in day classes), but also those studying at night, as well as those who had left school (school deserters). In both of these groups and especially in the latter, the incidence of reported sexual activity seems to be much higher.

With respect to the age at which boys and girls have their first sexual experience, both for boys and girls, the average age is reported to be around 15 or 16.¹⁹¹ Generally, girls have their first sexual relations from six months to one year later than boys (Cáceres, 1999a:81-82; Quintana and Vásquez, 1999). Table 5.1, taken from the study by Quintana and Vásquez, indicates the age of first sexual intercourse among sexually active youth in the poor areas of Metropolitan Lima.

The various studies show a remarkable difference between boys and girls with respect to the circumstances of sexual initiation. In the case of girls, more than 75% of the sexual initiations take place with their boyfriends; for boys, only 35% have their first sexual intercourse with their girlfriends. Boys' first sexual partners are most frequently a friend, an acquaintance, or a prostitute (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:139).¹⁹² For girls, most sexual initiations take place in their boyfriend's house, or, less frequently, in a hotel or park (Cáceres, 1999a:83). The majority of all sexual initiations are unplanned. A lot of girls felt some pressure from their boyfriend, most of the time of a non-violent nature (ibid.:85; see also Raguz, 1999:75).

In the group of girls participating in my study, several aspects of the various studies on sexual initiation can be recognised. As far as I know, 7 or 8 girls (of 19 total) were sexually active during the time of my fieldwork, with most of them initiated at the age of 15 or 16. In all cases, the first time was with their boyfriend at the time, and most of the time it occurred in their boyfriend's house. Six girls became pregnant. In fact, it was generally only when a girl became pregnant that I knew that she was sexually active. Of the sexually active girls, one girl was attending school on a very irregular basis and two were in night classes.

As the quotes at the beginning of this section indicated, there were different opinions among the girls with regard to the moment they thought sexual initiation was defensible or acceptable. This heterogeneity in opinions was to some extent related to age, with a positive correlation between age and a relatively progressive construction of norms. It is as if they increasingly became aware of the tensions involved in a life that had to be lived according to

191 Most data on the average age of sexual initiation are based only on adolescents and youth that are already sexually active. This is a common characteristic of sexuality studies.

192 The custom of a boy being sexually initiated by a prostitute is still followed to some extent. However, as various studies show, the percentage of such initiations is clearly going down, especially in Metropolitan Lima (Cáceres, 1999a; Fuller, 1997; Quintana and Vásquez, 1999). Moreover, almost all men who were initiated in this way report that it was a very unsatisfying experience (Nencel, 1996). Finally, as the boys in Los Pinos used to say: *con la enamorada sale mas barata* (you get it cheaper from a girlfriend).

Table 5.1. Age of first sexual intercourse in % of total group of sexually active youth between 15 and 19 years old (n=139)

	Women (n=34)	Men (n=105)	Total (n=139)
9 years old or less	8.8	2.0	3.6
10-12 years old	0	10.5	7.9
13	8.8	15.2	13.7
14	14.7	13.3	13.7
15	20.7	3.4	28.9
16	17.6	18.1	18.0
17	17.6	4.8	7.9
18	5.9	1.0	2.2
19	5.9	0.0	1.4
Did not respond	0.0	3.8	2.8

Source: Quintana and Vásquez (1999:135)

the prescribed norms. The second variable that influenced the discourses of girls is the type of relationships they currently had with boys. When girls had a boyfriend, they tended to be more optimistic about the possibilities of combining school with having a boyfriend.

Based on these observations, it seems possible to distinguish at least three different groups of girls. First there is a group of girls who do not yet have much experience with boys and sexuality. They seem to remain rather close to the parental discourse, but already start to stretch the boundaries of that discourse. They see possibilities for a combination of school and a boyfriend, although they view this as more appropriate for girls who are a bit older. They already explore the possibilities of the *amigo especial*. The second group is the group of girls who have actually embarked upon the path of interaction with the opposite sex. They have explored the *amigo especial* further, and may have or have had a boyfriend. For them, actual sexual activity is still out of the question. The third group of girls is the group that is farthest removed from the parental norms. These girls have a boyfriend, and usually are in a rather long-term relationship (at least in their own eyes); they are either considering sexual initiation or have already had sex. It is in this third group of girls that discourses around sexuality and education seem to be reinterpreted most. With such a description, it becomes very clear that practice and normative discourses cannot be seen as separate from one other. They are, I would say, dialectically related to each other: the discourses guide the girls' activities in daily practice, but at the same time, especially when the distance between practice and norms is great, the discourse itself becomes adapted to daily practice.

Of course, this distinction should be viewed with some caution. First, although for the sake of clarity I presented the girls here as divided into three groups, it is probably much more realistic to see them as occupying a position on a continuum which goes from 'no boyfriend, no sex', through the '*amigo especial*' and the 'boyfriend without sexual initiation' to the other end of 'having a boyfriend and sex'. Age tends to increase across this continuum, but this increase is not necessarily uniform. A second remark is related to methodology; the design of this study (i.e. a case study among 19 girls in one specific neighbourhood) may not be enough to validate such a categorisation, and indeed I would be the first to call for more extensive and large-scale research to lend these hypotheses stronger empirical support.

Coercion, love and the value of virginity

A number of considerations and influences play a part in the decision to become sexually active. In listening to the way people generally talk in Los Pinos, there seems to be agreement about the fact that a girl would only take the step toward sexual initiation when pressured by her boyfriend. Being pressured to have sex is also one of the biggest fears of the girls in the neighbourhood. It is something they always mentioned as one of the biggest risks in the interaction with boys and they often warned each other to be very reserved with boys when they were alone, particularly when these boys were older. The fears surrounding coerced sexual initiation became very clear in the finger dolls story that the girls made up in one of the *talleres*. In one of the manuals I had brought in, they read a case about Susana and Arturo who had been together for a few months. The case text said that one night, the two came home after a date and the girl wanted to invite the boy in for a soft drink. Her mother was not at home and in fact she had not given her daughter permission to invite friends into the house at night. The beginning of this story evoked a lot of emotions from the girls present, and they spontaneously decided to play out the story with the dolls. First they changed the names of the two main characters to Priscilla and Angelo, names they liked better. Then the story proceeded as follows:

Story 3. Finger dolls

First, Priscilla does not invite Angelo in. She grabs a drink inside and they drink together outside, in front of her house. Then Angelo suggests watching television inside. Priscilla agrees, and they go inside. He tries to hug her and kiss her; she struggles a bit, but also kisses him back. Then her mother comes home and nabs them. Angelo is thrown out of the house, and her mother tells him she never wants to see him again. A few days later, on Saturday evening there is a party where Priscilla wants to go with Angelo. To her mother she says it is the *quince años* party of a friend, and her mother gives her permission to go. When her mother calls the girl to wish her happy birthday, she finds out that Priscilla was probably lying to her.

At the party, Priscilla meets Angelo. He asks her to go with him to his house. He tells her his mother and sister are there; however, this turns out not to be true. In the kitchen, Angelo grabs something to drink and he puts something in her glass. When Priscilla wakes up the following morning in his bed, she does not know what has happened. She is naked, without clothes, and there are stains between her legs. She runs away. When she comes home, her mother is very angry. When Priscilla tells her mother what happened, she is no longer angry. They go and report the boy to the police.

(Story played out by Carolina, Celeste and Claudia)

In this story, just as in the previous stories, there is a general message that in the end boys cannot be trusted. Although they may seem to be very nice and trustworthy, at some point they are only after one thing, which is sex. It also is clear that they will go to great lengths to get it, either with a girl's consent or without it. The fear that a boy might slip something into a girl's drink is often expressed; it is something parents also warn their daughters about. The fact that the girl in this story is forced to have sex after being drugged clearly places that girl in the role of victim. She thus cannot be blamed for what happens. The story can also be read, however, as suggesting the opposite. The girl may be a victim when she is in his house; the fact that she is there, and the fact that she trusted him in the first place is something that could be seen as her own responsibility: she should have known better.

The mother in the story is portrayed as strict but fair. She does not want her daughter to be with the boy and she is very explicit about it. Interestingly, the mother's concerns about her daughter appear to be justified: the boy indeed is not worth her daughter's love. The story therefore is not only an expression of some of the girls' greatest fears, but also a call to take parental concerns seriously. It is as if they were issuing a warning to themselves. Finally, just as in the previous stories, we see a combination of hope and disillusionment, of romance and harsh reality. Again, the story starts with a girl having her head in the clouds and ends with her crashing on the cold, hard earth below.

Most girls are not forced into their first sexual intercourse, at least not in the sense conveyed in the presentation with finger dolls. Instead, I would say, there is a constellation of factors that lead a girl to make such a decision. First of all, there is the 'normal' sexual curiosity and excitement that many adolescent girls have. Girls also see it as an emotionally powerful way of sealing a bond between partners. Angelica, for example, told me more than once that she wanted to have sex with her boyfriend because she thought that doing so would bound them to one another forever. She emphasised that she was only planning to do it once, and that the act was only meant to seal their bond. She also told me that she had already suggested the idea to her boyfriend, but that he thought that it would be better to wait.

Following De La Cuesta (2001), I would say that, for girls, initiation ultimately comes down to the notions of romantic love and trust.¹⁹³ Girls, as De La Cuesta argues, thoroughly evaluate the relationship with their boyfriend before making the decision to become sexually active. They only take this step when the relationship is experienced as one involving 'true love' and when the boy is considered to be a responsible and good boyfriend right now and a potentially good husband in the future.¹⁹⁴ Based on her study in Colombia, De La Cuesta stresses that in a relationship a girl considers to be one involving 'true love', her behaviour is guided by gendered values that outsiders might consider conservative:

... in their relationship with a serious boyfriend [girls] follow earnestly established rules for feminine behaviour, and the young woman's opinions reflect these rules as applied to the romantic context. For instance, for them it is a natural wish to have a home, to get married and to devote themselves to their children; it is also understandable that a boyfriend wishes one day, as a man, to have a child (De la Cuesta, 2001:187).

Girls use these gender rules as a resource for the everyday interactions with their boyfriends. Thus, concludes De La Cuesta, a young woman lets herself be loved and guided by her serious boyfriend both in her everyday life and in her sexual relations. In such a context: engaging in sexual relations is an essential part of being a girlfriend and initiating sex constitutes a turning point in the relationship; it is like the opening of a new phase in the young people's love trajectory. Sexual relations do not accomplish a reproductive aim, but a romantic one. The risk of reproduction however, is somehow taken for granted (ibid.:188).

193 In this chapter I only focus on sexual initiation within a love relationship. As I previously stated, for girls this is by far the most frequent manner of sex initiation. Except for Carina, the girls in my research group in Los Pinos all had their first sexual relationship with their then boyfriend.

194 This idea is compatible with the observation (stated earlier in the text) that, in contrast to boys, girls' first sexual relations tend to take place with their boyfriends and, although unplanned, they are usually not unwanted.

Sexual initiation involves a period of doubts and insecurity and a period in which all the things girls have learned and internalised about men, relations and life in general come up. Take the experience of Erica, who after she got pregnant told me about the first time she had sex with her boyfriend:

Erica: I wanted it, but I did it with fear; I did it, but with doubts, with doubts but most of all with fear.

JO: Doubts? Doubts about what?

Erica: Doubts, doubts about everything, doubts that it would be as they always had said, they always said that men were like that, that he only wants that from you, that he throws you away after that and I don't know what. Doubts that he was going to leave me, maybe after a month, he would say 'bye' to me. Doubts whether he really loves me, maybe he is only playing around with my feelings. And fear, fear that I would get pregnant, fear for my mother, fear she may find out, fear that everybody finds out; all these kinds of things. So, I told him: "When we have a fight you will say: 'you know what, this is it, good-bye, I already have what I wanted'". He told me that it would not be like that: "Not all of us are the same". "No, I don't believe you", I turned crazy, I started crying for everything. I said: "I have let down my mom, my dad"; everything, just everything came to my mind; everything: my friends, my uncles and aunts, my brothers and sisters, well, just everything came to my mind. I don't know, but because of this, the first day was horrible, because I was crying and I made an enormous drama.

As becomes clear in Erica's interview, the boy's role in the whole process of doubting is rather important. He will try to convince the girl of his best intentions and also has to show that he can be trusted with regard to both sexual issues and life in general. He has to show, in other words, that he is not 'like most men'. A girl has to feel she can trustingly put her life in his hands; that she can be sure that he will take responsibility for whatever may happen.

In the first two fictitious stories I discussed in the previous sections, no explicit reference is made to sexual activities. However, keeping in mind the general way the girls deal with sexual initiation, it is plausible that, in the story about Valentina and El Zapatón, the exact moment of breaking up could have been the moment that he asked her to have sex with him. At such a moment, Valentina would have been forced to reconsider her relationship with her boyfriend in order to decide whether it was something she wanted to continue. In the second story about Tania and Juan, there is no talk about sexual relations in the relation between the two. On the one hand, given the fact that Tania is already 20 years old and that the relationship seems to be accepted and 'certified' by her parents, it is possible that sexual relations are taking place. On the other hand, the fact that Juan ends up in bed with the other girl may also indicate that he has not been having sexual relations with Tania. This interpretation would particularly reflect the fear of many girls that if they do not have sex with their boyfriends, sooner or later they will find other girls who are more willing to do so.

The value of virginity was important to the girls in Los Pinos. It was something that girls cherished; losing one's virginity was certainly a big step. However, instead of being linked with formal marriage¹⁹⁵, as promoted by the Catholic Church, the value of virginity was, for the girls, linked with the same notion of 'true love'. A girl's virginity is like a treasure that is

195 Compare the tendency of couples in *pueblos jóvenes* to live in consensual unions, instead of marriages.

People 'just start living together' and sexual intercourse is a first symbolic step.

symbolically presented to the one special boy. The girls agreed that it is no longer necessary to postpone sexual initiation until marriage. As we have seen, there are some differences within the group of girls. We need to remember that the value of virginity is seemingly questioned most by the girls who are already sexually active or who are going steady with their boyfriends. For them, it feels unjust that their sexual activities or longings would be valued differently than those of the boys. Besides, as both Erica and Silvia told me: *you are not going to hold your breath either*. Among the girls who were not yet sexually active, virginity was still seen as something desirable. Even in this group, though, the strong societal norms were increasingly questioned and, in the end, they all agreed that virginity was something that girls should decide upon for themselves (these observations are compatible to those of Arias and Aramburú, 1999:92).

The changing values attached to virginity are not only found among girls and women. As various authors show, among boys and young men, the ideal of virginity for girls is slowly losing strength. This is particularly so - and this connects directly to the girls' way of looking at virginity - when it is clear that this sexual initiation has taken place in the context of an actual or past love relationship (Ampuero, 1999:52-53; Cáceres et al., 2002a; Nencel, 1996; Yon, 1998). It is, however, as Cáceres et al. clearly show, a pragmatic choice more than anything else; as many women are not virgins anymore, boys realise that it will be quite difficult to find one; however, virginity still remains the ideal. When girls are still virgins when they sleep with you, there will be less risk of infidelity, or of the boy being humiliated because of inadequate performance, since she will not have had experience with other boys or men. Still, for many boys, a girl's virginity is related to the possibility that they have to control women's sexuality (Cáceres et al., 2002a:85-87).

This somewhat mixed picture was confirmed on one of the rare occasions that I spoke with boys about these subjects. After having conducted a number of sessions with the girls on sexuality and gender, I decided to organise one session with boys from the neighbourhood. Seven boys between the ages of 14 and 18 showed up. In that session, I asked them whether they considered it important whether or not a girl was still a virgin. Five of the seven boys present stated that for them it was still the ideal. *That way you know with what kind of girl you are dealing with, that way you know her image*, one boy said. Another boy added: *it is good to know the girl has never been with another boy. It is good if she has saved herself*. They all agreed that the ideal of virginity was no longer attainable though, and in practice they said they would not be so strict: *If you really are in love, it is not that important anymore; then you can forgive her*. Besides, as one of the boys vividly added, pointing at his crotch, *this thing doesn't have eyes*.

Between boys and girls, there is also a lot of talking and nagging about virginity. In one of the *talleres*, Angelica told me that at her school, groups of boys sometimes comment on the way girls walk. When they walk with their legs too far apart, then it is said that they are definitely not virgins anymore. That these kinds of 'games' touch on persistent myths and fears was clear when, after Angelica had finished speaking, other girls asked me a bit anxiously if this were actually true. They furthermore inquired as to whether I thought there was a way they could make a similar determination about boys.

Use of contraceptives

The girls in Los Pinos who were sexually active generally did not use contraceptives and those who did use them often did so in an incorrect and inconsistent way. As a result, quite a few

girls got pregnant early. Teenage pregnancy will be discussed extensively in Chapter 7; here I will only focus on the use of contraceptives. First, I will briefly discuss the use of contraceptive methods by adults in Peru; then I will focus more specifically on youth.

Family planning is rather common in Peru, as long as it concerns married adult women. Government policy is to provide all Peruvian women with a free family planning programme. Contraceptives can be obtained for free or at nominal cost. During a visit to the local health centre just down the road from Los Pinos, the doctor in charge proudly told me that over 95% of the adult women in the area who were in their reproductive years participated in the family planning program. Statistical data and my own observations in Los Pinos reveal a somewhat more complex state of affairs. Statistics show that, of all Peruvian women who are currently 'in union' (i.e., either married or living with a male partner), only 71% use a contraceptive method, with just 47% using a so-called modern method (INEI, 2005). In Metropolitan Lima, figures for the use of modern contraceptives are higher. Despite this fact, about 15% of women there who are currently in union use traditional methods of birth control (Ferrando, 2002:13-14).¹⁹⁶ Among the traditional methods, the rhythm method¹⁹⁷ is the one most preferred and is, in fact, the only one accepted by the Catholic Church. Among the modern methods, those preferred were injectables, the intrauterine device (IUD)¹⁹⁸ and female sterilisation (ibid.).

In Los Pinos, the idea of family planning is generally accepted. In personal conversations with women (for example with the mothers of the girls participating in my research), the subject of contraceptive use was not very difficult to broach, as long as it concerned their own sexuality or, more generally, the use of contraceptives by *adult* women. They all knew something about the different contraceptives and they were convinced of the need for family planning. The majority of women told me that they had at one time used or were still using some modern contraceptive, usually an IUD, injectables or the pill. These contraceptives, however, were not used very consistently and many women seemed to be frequently changing methods. A woman starts, for example, using the pill for a few weeks or months, forgets to take it a few times, or gets dissatisfied with the side effects. This woman may then turn to using another modern contraceptive, or she may resort to more traditional and less reliable contraceptive methods such as the rhythm method. Condom use is not widespread at all since it is linked, by both men and women, to sex with prostitutes. In addition, men say that they experience reduced sensation when using a condom. Overall, although I have not thoroughly studied the issue, it seems that, even though most women are convinced of the importance of family planning and even though they all have experience with one or more types of modern contraceptive, very few women consistently use contraceptives. The rather high number of unplanned or even unwanted pregnancies I heard about is evidence of this fact.

196 I am referring here to figures for women currently 'in union', as defined above. The picture becomes more complex and disturbing when one includes all women of reproductive age, since many of them do not live under the same roof as their partners, but are nevertheless sexually active and at risk of becoming pregnant. Of all women of reproductive age, only 44% use a contraceptive method and just 32% use a modern method (Ferrando, 2002:13).

197 The rhythm method is based on the woman's cycle of fertile and non-fertile days. On fertile days, women are not supposed to have sexual intercourse.

198 An IUD is a T-shaped plastic device about three and a half cm. long that is placed into the uterus in order to prevent conception.

When it comes to contraceptive use by sexually active youth, the picture becomes even more disturbing, as my observations in the beginning of this section have already shown. In recent years, several studies focused on the use of contraceptives by young people in Peru (see, for example, Arias and Aramburú, 1999; Magnani et al., 2001; Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995; Quintana and Vásquez, 1999). It seems that, overall, only a small proportion of sexually active youth consistently uses a modern and trustworthy contraceptive. In the previously cited research by Quintana and Vásquez (1999:154), 48% of the sexually active female adolescents between 15 and 17 years old never use any contraceptives and 26% use them only sometimes. For girls between the ages of 18 and 19, figures are 27% and 45% respectively. When only considering the last sexual relationship people have had, just 23% of the girls and 50% of the boys reported having used some sort of contraceptive method. These figures are very troubling indeed in light of the fact that some of the contraceptive methods that are actually used (by the 'more responsible' youth) are highly untrustworthy. According to the research by Quintana and Vásquez it appears that, in the group of sexually active adolescents who reported having used a contraceptive method, about 25% of the girls relied on the 'rhythm method' and on 'coitus interruptus' (i.e., the boy withdrawing his penis prior to ejaculation), methods that can both be labelled as traditional methods (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:158-164). These were in fact the very methods used by Erica and the other girls in Los Pinos who became pregnant.

Both at school and in booklets the girls in Los Pinos were able to get hold of, the 'rhythm method' and the 'coitus interruptus' methods were generally presented as normal and functional methods. The rhythm method, based on the woman's cycle of fertile and non-fertile days, is thought to be relatively easy, with no need for any kind of medical assistance; a lot of girls do indeed use this method. Even when used correctly and with caution, the rhythm method has a failure percentage of about 25%. This percentage becomes higher in the case of teenage girls, who often have highly irregular menstruation cycles and when there are distorted ideas about what constitutes fertile and non-fertile days. Another frequently used method is the practice of a boy ejaculating outside the girl's vagina (*coitus interruptus*). Often, this latter method of 'protection' is combined with some elements of the rhythm method. On the days considered non-fertile, no additional protection is employed when engaging in sexual relations and on days considered fertile 'he protects her' from getting pregnant by withdrawing prior to ejaculation. The conviction that this is a reliable means of preventing pregnancy is so strong that I more than once heard stories that when a girl gets pregnant the boy denies that it is his, with the words 'I protected you; you must have been with someone else'.

The question arises as to why, among girls or youth in general, the rates of contraceptive use are so low. In answering this question, we should distinguish between practical reasons on the one hand, and more overarching ones on the other. These two different types of reasons are interrelated. One of the main practical problems is the lack of complete and correct knowledge of sexuality in general and of contraceptives in particular (see, for example, Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995; Vega-Centeno, 1994). In the following quote, 18-year-old Britney, mother of a two-year-old girl, recalls what she knew at the time she started to have sex with her boyfriend:

Britney: When they [my older sister and my mother] talked about it, they always sent me out of the room; they would never let me stay... So, I didn't know anything about it. I didn't even

know what... a penis looked like. Nothing, I didn't know how things were, not even from a photo; now I sometimes tell this to my friends, and their reaction is astonished, you crazy girl, how come you didn't know anything. But really, I really didn't know. I was so innocent.

JO: And what about getting pregnant? Did you know you could get pregnant?

Britney: No, well, I knew you could get pregnant if you had sexual relations, but I didn't know exactly how. I didn't know how.

Most girls indeed knew something about contraceptives. This knowledge, however, was almost always incomplete and surrounded by taboos. This was, for example, the case with respect to the rhythm method, which was quite often used by the girls to prevent pregnancy. As I explained, the rhythm method is based on the idea that a woman has fertile and infertile days, which can be calculated on the basis of her menstruation cycle. However, when I asked the girls which days they thought a woman was actually fertile or infertile, none of them knew. With respect to the pill and the hormonal injectables, the girls agreed that they result in weight gain, make you infertile and cause cancer. As revealing as the remarks and answers from the *talleres* were the views of those girls who actually became pregnant. Carina, who got pregnant when she was 17 years old, for example, told me that after she had had sex with her boyfriend for two months without getting pregnant, she thought she would actually not get pregnant at all; she was, in fact, almost worried that she would be infertile.

The lack of knowledge about both contraceptives and sexuality in general is directly related to the fact that sources for accurate information are scarce and, in a more general way, with the fact that communication about youth sexuality (both within and outside the family) is surrounded by taboos, stereotypes and, especially for girls, by control. When it comes to sexuality issues, girls often have no one to turn to with questions and doubts. As I explained before, the overall starting point still seems to be that adolescent girls, although fertile and physically capable of carrying a child, are not yet mature and responsible enough to have sex. As a result the emphasis is more on control than on information and more on repression than on guiding them to take responsibility and make informed decisions.

One possible source for information on sexual issues is the family, specifically the girls' parents. In many cases, however, as the quotes from Britney already indicated, this source does not provide sufficient answers. On the one hand, it seems that today's parents are more open to their children than earlier generations (Ponce and La Rosa Huertas, 1995:101). In a study by Vega-Centeno, girls indeed mentioned their mothers as one of the main sources for information on sexuality, especially on the issue of menstruation (Vega-Centeno, 1994:92). Open communication and exchange of information about other sex-related issues is still much more difficult though. As Quintana and Vásquez (1999:25) conclude in their study: "The mere mention of something that is related to sexuality is often met with rejection on the part of the parents". Furthermore, it seems that, if the theme of sexuality is addressed, it is often done in very general and vague terms, with, for girls, messages whose content is high on prescription and short on information (Cáceres, 1999a:38).¹⁹⁹ In Los Pinos, parents explained to me that providing more sexual education to their daughters would be as if they were

199 Within the family, a girl may also talk about sex-related issues with an older brother or sister both of whom, according to Cáceres (1999a) have advantages over both parents and peers. They have more experience than peers and they are more at ease than parents when it comes to talking about these kinds of issues.

promoting sexual activity, something they did not want to do. Besides, they felt unprepared, lacking both the knowledge and the courage to talk about it.

A second possible source of information on sexual issues is school. For the past ten years, sexual education has become increasingly attended to within the school curriculum. In several studies, school or teachers indeed are mentioned as one of the most important sources for information on sexuality (see, for example, Vega-Centeno, 1994). In seeming contrast, there are also reports that many adolescents and especially girls have not received any or only very little sexual education at school (see, for example, Arias and Aramburú, 1999). With respect to the content of the sexual education, it seems that the way sexual education is approached by the teachers is usually very value-laden and has strong moral links with Catholic beliefs. According to Cáceres et al. (2002b), one of the key barriers to good sexual and reproductive healthcare for youth in Peru is the domination of the Catholic Church and in particular the resurgence of conservative attitudes within the church, along with Church activism on specific issues related to sexual behaviour. According to the authors, the Church played a prominent role in key debates including the National Sex Education Programme and in health issues such as abortion, sexual diversity and non-natural contraception. Overall, the starting point is that children and adolescents should not engage in sex at all. Moreover, as Vega-Centeno states, often the teachers are supposed to transmit information that they themselves do not even possess. And thus, “it is no surprise that information is [...] limited to certain anatomic data and to the sporadic distribution of leaflets” (Vega-Centeno, 1994:94).

Another problem is that the type of sexual education that is provided is often perceived as irrelevant to and distant from the lived reality of the adolescents themselves. Quite often, sexual education takes the form of classes about *family planning*, something that youth associate more with married adults than with themselves. Expressions like ‘I was not really interested when they taught us at school’ in the study by Arias and Aramburú (1999:70) are revealing in this respect (see also Cáceres, 1999a). Moreover, the broad field of sexuality is usually reduced in such instruction to a number of technical and biological matters. Students may, for example, be taught about different contraceptive methods, but do not learn how to conduct themselves sexually in a responsible manner or, even more practically, how to discuss the use of contraceptives with boyfriends or girlfriends.

When I brought up the issue of sexual education at school with some of the girls in Los Pinos, Consuela stated:

They only tell you that there are methods, but not how they are used, when and how. They most of all talk about condoms. They also mention pills and injections, but they don't really explain things.

The hesitation teachers and parents feel when it comes to actually explaining things clearly is probably related to the already mentioned religious influence and family planning orientation: children ought to know about the contraceptives, but they are really only supposed to use them when they are mature adults and when they are engaged in a serious relationship. Until that moment, the implicit and explicit message to young people is that it is best to abstain.

A third possible source of information on sexuality is the media, mainly television. Apart from the presence of sexuality in films,²⁰⁰ soaps and talk shows, there are regularly aired public service announcements about responsible sexual behaviour. In general, it seems that in recent years, the degree of openness and directness in the media has grown. However

the underlying tone of these messages is still rather conservative. Condoms, for example, are mentioned as useful for preventing the risks of STDs and pregnancies; notwithstanding, the main message is that this is only a worst-case option. Illustrative in this respect is the radio program on sexuality and relationships *Era Tabu* ('It was taboo'), presented by the Peruvian psychologist Fernando Maestre. In the programme, which addresses issues for both adults and adolescents, a lot of time is given over to listeners' questions and, as the title suggests, there seems to be hardly any sexual issue that is off limits. In 2002 there was also a series of books bearing the same title, including volumes on adolescents, children, the family and other issues (Maestre, 2002). In the program and the books, parents are explicitly urged to talk about sex with their children. Despite this, though, the underlying tone is still rather conservative and Catholic-oriented; the basic idea remains that youth sexuality is something that needs to be controlled. The psychologist lays an enormous emphasis on the role of the family; when youth are sexually active at an age of 15 or 16, this is always attributed to an unstable and non-communicative family situation. It is remarkable, furthermore, that in the series volume on adolescents, contraceptives are not even discussed (*ibid.*).

Within the context of taboos and control described thus far, it will not come as a surprise that most of the studies conclude that peers (and especially peers of the same sex) are in fact the most important sources for information and advice about sexuality. As I have already stated in Chapter 4, sexuality was indeed a very popular topic of conversation among the girls in Los Pinos. The most important issues that came up were those related to affectivity and the consequences of sexual activities for their sexual health. Sexual experiences were sometimes shared as well, but only in very small, intimate groups of friends. According to Quintana and Vásquez, this is in sharp contrast with a typical group of boys where, in a climate of showing off, vulgarity and the repression of sentiments, "sincerity is conspicuous by its absence" (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:32-33).

It is important to realise that peers, although easily accessible and sharing roughly the same experiences and values, often do not provide correct information or the most appropriate advice. It is also among groups of peers that rumours and myths are reproduced (Arias and Aramburú, 1999; Cáceres, 1999a). It is with good reason that, in Peru, the role of peers in sexuality is referred to as help from *su mejor amiga menos informada* (one's best but least-informed friend). Erica recalls what she did when she thought she might be pregnant:

I was very frightened and I asked my friends, I asked Angelica: "... do you know, ehbb...do you think a woman could become pregnant when a man comes a little bit when he is inside you?" She already seemed to suspect something, because she said to me: "Why are you asking me this?" "I am just asking", I told her. "Well, take care", she said. "Well what do you think?" I repeated. "I don't know", she said, "honestly I don't know, but it could be, I think. Because one sperm... well..." So, I knew enough.

Apart from the problems related to knowledge and information, another general factor that explains the low rate of contraceptive use are the indifferent attitudes towards both HIV/AIDS²⁰¹ and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In the narratives of the girls in Los

200 According to Vega-Centeno, it is remarkable how many adolescents (especially boys) mention pornographic films as one of the main sources for sexual information: "The films show the different positions, how to have better sex; that is what you can use them for" (1994:95).

Pinos, just like in those of other young people reproduced in various studies, the subject of HIV/AIDS or STDs rarely came up. When directly asked about it, the girls in my study stated that they were aware of the risks of getting HIV/AIDS or an STD. They also knew more or less how to prevent them. However, they also stated that, for them personally, it was not such a big risk. HIV/AIDS and STDs are still surrounded by myths and false beliefs. The diseases are associated with a lack of hygiene, with prostitutes, with drug dealers and with homosexuals. Illustrative is a sexual education film I saw at Angelica's school. In this film, a nice and naïve young girl (the typical *chica de su casa*) gets infected with an STD after getting involved with a boy who turns out to be a drug dealer. The students in the classroom liked the film and felt pity for the girl, but at the same time they felt reassured, because the boys they knew were completely different (see also Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:188-189).

The inclusion of the risks of STDs or HIV/AIDS into decisions regarding contraceptive use are further complicated because, as Jiménez Ugarte (1996) concludes, it is mainly the intention of the man and not the actual sexual history of the partners that influences these decisions. When, for example, a boy has sex with a girl for just one night (un *vacilón*), then this girl and the sexual relationship is considered risky. If a boy has sex with his girlfriend, someone he is in love with (even when it is their first time), the relationship is considered risk-free. The different labels that are explicitly and implicitly used by boys and girls in this respect also mean that when a boy would suggest using a condom for sexual intercourse with his girlfriend, this would be seen as offensive by many girls. She would feel as if he thought of her as 'easy', as if he thought that she were also sleeping with other boys. As one of the girls in the study by La Rosa Huertas (1997:112) states: "That is something you would only do with *rucas*, with *vaciloneras* ('fun girls') and with prostitutes and not with us, because when we have sex we do it out of real love" (see also Saravia et al., 1999).

A third set of general factors that explain the low rate of contraceptive use by adolescent girls is related to the access to these contraceptives. Near Los Pinos, there is a small health centre, where girls could conceivably go for family planning advice and methods. Going there however, would inevitably lead to many questions and gossiping on the part of neighbours. Another problem, as various studies have shown, is that medical attention provided in these public health centres tends to be rather paternalistic. This means that often girls have to defend their decisions and requests and that only those girls who are assertive will be provided with contraception (Alva and Vargas, 2001).

Another more practical problem with respect to using the pill and injections is the girl's fear that her parents or other family members might find out she is doing so (Cardich and Carrasco, 1993). Strips of pills might be found in the house and injectables usually prevent menstruation.²⁰² The latter is problematic because part of the controlling attitude by girls'

201 By 2000, it is estimated that between 50,000 and 70,000 adults and about 4,500 children under the age of 15 years old were living with HIV/AIDS (general prevalence of 0.3 percent); Of this group, about 1/4 are women. Through 1999, 4,600 people had died of AIDS. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Peru remains primarily concentrated among vulnerable populations (i.e. men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers). It is important to note that HIV/AIDS incidence is gradually increasing among women and heterosexual men (USAID, 2002).

202 Not menstruating is mainly a problem with the injectables that are effective for three months; there are also one-month injections, but these are more expensive.

parents in Los Pinos concerning pregnancy has to do with control of the girl's menstruation. Mothers especially tend to regularly monitor their daughters' menstruation.

The practical problems discussed thus far are important factors that help explain why teenage girls who are sexually active do not often use contraceptives. Perhaps there is another reason that surpasses in importance all of the others mentioned thus far. This is the fact that, in many cases, it is not the girl but the boy who makes the decision regarding contraceptive use. As Ampuero puts it: "Girls are often incapable of negotiating about the use of a condom, out of fear of being accused of infidelity or being exposed to violence" (Ampuero, 1999:27). In this respect, the remark of Yosara (18 years old) that her pregnancy may not have been as unplanned for her boyfriend as it was for her, is revealing. It seems to me that, especially when a girl is already 17 or 18 years old and/or when her boyfriend is a few years older, a boy may use a pregnancy in order to force a girl to live with him and stay with him. It can function, in other words, as a possible means of controlling the girls' sexuality and fertility.

Finally, it is important to note that many of the issues referred to above in fact touch upon a more general overarching explanation for the low rate of contraceptive use: the repressive and condemning culture regarding youth sexuality in general, and girls' sexuality in particular. This context makes it very difficult for youth to go to a health clinic or pharmacy to ask for contraceptives. This context is also an important factor in the pervasive lack of knowledge about sexual behaviour and the risks that it entails. Finally, it also limits the possibilities of girls engaging in open and egalitarian conversation about the issue with their boyfriends.

Abortion

In the last section of this chapter, it is necessary to address the issue of abortion. In fact, this may be the topic that is the least spoken about. As far as I know, abortion did not occur among the girls participating in this study. However, other research concludes that it is quite commonly practised in Peru, even among youth. In Peru, induced abortion is prohibited, except when the mother's life is in danger or when pregnancy or delivery would cause serious or permanent injury.²⁰³ Abortion is thus for the most part illegal, and bringing it up means confronting a lot of societal taboos (Arias and Aramburú, 1999; Cáceres, 1999a:56). As a result, abortion figures are rather difficult to come by. In general, though, it seems that Peru is among the Latin American countries where induced abortion takes place most frequently (Mannarelli and Yon, 1997). Using a complex calculation measure based on the percentage of induced abortions ending in hospitalisation, Ferrando concludes that the annual rate of induced abortion per 100 women between 15 and 49 years old is 5%. Calculated in relation to the number of live-born babies, figures say that, for every 100 live-born babies, about 50 abortions take place. This means, that about one third of all pregnancies ends in induced abortion (Ferrando, 2002:27; see also Macassi and Casaverde, 2003; Mannarelli and Yon, 1997).

For young people, especially those in the lower classes, abortion seems to take place quite often as well. In an extensive survey by Vega-Centeno (1994) among more than 16,000 adolescents between 11 and 19 years old, girls were asked whether they knew of abortions

203 Articles 114 to 120 of the Criminal Code state that any woman who either carries out an abortion on herself or who gives consent for another person to perform it on her will receive up to two years' imprisonment. It should be noted that Peruvian law also prohibits abortion in the case of pregnancies resulting from rape (Quintanilla, 1997).

having been carried out among their circle of friends. Just over 20% said they knew of one or more such cases. In the lower classes this figure was 28% (Vega-Centeno, 1994:140; see also Cáceres, 1999a; La Rosa Huertas, 1997). Another indication that abortion is taking place quite regularly among young people is found in a study by Yon (1996) among lower and middle class women. Her research shows that, for the lower classes, 40% of women in the age group between 20 and 25 had had one or more abortions during their lives (Yon, 1996).²⁰⁴

In the past, many abortions were carried out using traditional means and under poor hygienic conditions, easily leading to what is usually called a septic abortion,²⁰⁵ along with high rates of maternal death. During the last 10 to 15 years, however, this situation has improved somewhat, at least in Metropolitan Lima (Ferrando, 2002:20; Mannarelli and Yon, 1997:122).²⁰⁶ In the *pueblos jóvenes* as well, it seems that the majority of the abortions are now carried out, although still illegally, by persons with at least some medical training and under reasonably hygienic conditions. In newspapers and in the streets, there are many advertisements for pregnancy treatment (euphemistically termed 'treatment for menstruation delays'). Still, as a consequence of the illegality and because of the cost, many women do not get sufficient post-abortion follow-up, either medically or otherwise. For the second half of the 1990s it was estimated that, of the 100 induced abortions carried out, about 47 led to serious complications; 20 of which had to be treated at a hospital (Mannarelli and Yon, 1997:118).

In my fieldwork it was very difficult to broach the topic of abortion. Both among the girls and within the neighbourhood in general, questions about abortion were always met with indignation and rejection. At the same time, there were always rumours about who had or had not had an abortion. In addition, as I noticed personally on two occasions, when there was a need for abortion, it appeared that many people knew exactly where to go. As far as I know, no abortion has taken place among the adolescent girls participating in this study. It seems, however, that when girls who became pregnant found out about their pregnancy, the subject of abortion did come to their minds. From what I heard from the girls, the boy in question also sometimes brought it up as a possibility. In the end, none of the girls chose to go ahead with it. The reasons for this were expressed as follows: it was already too late for abortion anyway, they were frightened by the high costs, or they felt it was morally wrong. Most important, however, seemed to be the fact that their partners were expressing support for their pregnancies. Their boyfriends promised the girls that, if they had the babies, they would help provide for them.

Final reflection

At the beginning of the chapter, I stated that youth sexuality and more particularly girls' sexuality is commonly approached as a taboo and as something 'not right'. The experiences, fears and dreams of the girls in this chapter clearly follow from that context. Most of what I

204 This is significantly higher than for middle-class women, for whom the percentage in the same age group was 18% (Yon, 1996).

205 'Septic abortion' refers to infections and other medical complications that may occur after a miscarriage or induced abortion. As such, the incidence of septic abortion is an indicator of both the hygienic conditions under which the abortion was performed and of the medical expertise of those who performed it.

206 It seems that there has been a decrease in the frequency and severity of abortion complications largely due to the use of prostaglandin, which became popular in 1998.

describe in this chapter (not only sexual initiation and abortion, but even getting to know a boy and dating him) in fact occurs in secret and without parental knowledge. If parents found out their daughter were seeing a boy, they would most likely get angry and they would try to place restrictions on her. When girls are a bit older, say 17 or 18, they may have somewhat more freedom to meet boys. However, even then, the general atmosphere is one that views what they are doing as inappropriate and both parents and other people in the neighbourhood comment on everything the girls do in this regard. This was very clear in the case of Marisol, one of the oldest girls in the group. Marisol had already had a boyfriend for more than two years, and her mother had found out about him a few months previously. After a lot of fights and discussion, Marisol got permission to meet the boy a few times a week, but only at the little bench directly in front of the house. Her mother always watched carefully, and Marisol was repeatedly called into the house to carry out household chores.

In order to meet boys, or to get to places where they could meet them, girls are creative. In his study on teenage girls in a poor popular neighbourhood, Santos describes a number of reactions of girls to the high degree of parental control to which they are subject (Santos Anaya, 1999:479). These reactions include, for example, the use of silence and expressions of respect either as a way to prevent conflicts or to get permission to do something. Another way to react to the high degree of control is through either clandestine *salidas* or *salidas* with double agendas. Santos also mentions a number of reactions within what he calls the girls' internal worlds. In response to parental control, girls withdraw into themselves, with resulting feelings of loneliness, sadness or frustration, or they get into conversations within themselves about the usefulness of further negotiating. Apart from these strategies, which I also saw among the girls in Los Pinos, I would also say that the creation of the category of the *amigo especial*, which I discussed in this chapter, could be seen as a strategy to deal with the high levels of control the girls are subject to. As we saw, this *amigo especial* is not only a way for the girls to find out whether a boy may be a potential 'serious boyfriend', it is also a way to hide the fact that there is actually one special boy in their lives. The recognition of the *amigo especial* as a meaningful category for the girls gives insight into the creative way in which girls deal with the norms and values present in society.

This chapter can in fact also be read as a call - to use the words of a title of an article by De La Cuesta (2001:180) - to 'take love seriously'. Particularly when it comes to sexual initiation, it is easy to think of the girls as either passive victims or 'bad girls'. Girls who are not yet sexually active also tend to portray sexual initiation in such terms. When we listen, however, to the girls who have actually started having sex with their boyfriends, it appears that, for them, sexual initiation is directly related to 'true love'.

In this chapter, we saw on various occasions how girls among themselves, implicitly and explicitly, urged each other to behave according to certain norms. They warned each other when they were about to cross the line from being a 'good girl' to being a 'bad girl'. They also gave each other moral messages through the stories they made up. The question is to what extent the normative messages and limits the girls express for themselves and for their peers are reflections of those that their parents had imparted to them. In the next chapter, the main parental messages will be analysed. In the concluding chapter, I will come back to the analysis of both the similarities between the parental messages and the girls' interpretations, and of the tensions arising from this dynamic.

Photo 6 Students gathering for weekly ceremony at high school 'Túpac Amaru II'



Chapter 6. *Cuidate* and *ser profesional*: parental messages to their daughters

Just before I left Peru at the end of my last fieldwork period in June 2002, one of the girl's mothers caught her daughter with a strip of contraceptive pills in her drawer. The mother was extremely upset and felt as if her whole world had come crashing down on her. Below is an excerpt of what she told me, in tears, the day following her discovery:

Yesterday I had the worst nightmare of my life. I feel terribly hurt, devastated, regretful, and very, very bad. I have sacrificed everything for her. I have always suffered to be able to give her something. She was always my favourite. I liked her the most. She is my heart, my life. I never thought something like this would happen. How could she have done such a thing? Now, everything is over, things will be different now.... She is no longer the girl I raised, she is no longer the girl I loved ... now she is just some woman, not a señorita anymore; she lost her virginity, who will want her? I wanted her to study, so that she would be something. So that she would be a professional. But now, what will she be, what will become of her? Worse than me! How has she been able to make such a mess of her life? I raised her as a señorita sanita (a good, 'clean' girl). I always said to her: "Cuidate! Kisses and hugs, nothing else." But she did not make him respect her. Now things are going to be different!

In this quote, a number of things are evident. Apart from the seemingly illogical conclusion that using a contraceptive pill has turned her daughter into a complete failure, (something I will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter) this is first of all a very emotional immediate reaction. During the whole conversation, she was extremely upset and said she felt as if her daughter's future was lost forever. Just as with pregnancy (see Chapter 7 on pregnancy) it could be expected that, after some time, some of the emotions and vehemence of her feelings will give way to resignation and acceptance. The basic feeling that her daughter has failed, however, will probably remain. The example furthermore indicates what the mother sees as a good future for her daughter, that is: advanced study, and a professional career. By encouraging her to do these things, the mother will help ensure that her daughter experiences more fulfillment in life than she herself has. This maternal hope for a better future can be summed up in two complementary and overlapping admonitions that I heard reiterated time and again, by this mother and by many other mothers in Los Pinos: *cuidate* ('be careful', meaning especially that they guard against bad influences of any kind, and above all, against the twin evils of compromising their school performance in any way or becoming prematurely pregnant) and *ser profesional* ('to be a professional', meaning in practice to do well in school and concomitantly, to avoid influences that could conceivably interfere with school performance). Each of these messages can be seen as dealing with what was seen by parents as two issues in their daughter's lives that were inextricably linked: school performance and sexual continence.

It is against the backdrop of these widely shared parental ambitions that the mother's reaction above can begin to be understood: In spite of all of her efforts, in spite of all of her years of sacrifice to make a better future possible for her, her daughter had betrayed her by showing that she had not internalised the lessons that her mother had spent years trying to inculcate in her. Thus, her mother is now unable to see her daughter as anything but a failure. In this chapter, I will discuss how parents raise their daughters in the *pueblos jóvenes* of Metropolitan Lima. This chapter is an elaboration on the material introduced in Chapter 3, where family culture and parenting styles were discussed in more general terms. I concluded there that parenting styles in the migrant popular neighbourhoods could be characterised as markedly authoritarian: there is a generally high level of demand and parental expectations are communicated to girls in a manner that is clear and direct. In this chapter, I will present the main socialising messages that parents transmit to their daughters. I will first discuss the parental messages with respect to education, before turning to those related to sexuality. I will then remark on the linkages between the parental messages in these two areas. Attention will be paid both to the socialising messages themselves and to the way parents try to get them across to their daughters. With respect to the latter, we will see that parents do indeed have a rather controlling attitude towards their daughters. Some parents, however, are also trying to develop alternative approaches.

Ser profesional

When I asked parents how they viewed the future of their daughters, one of the most frequent responses I heard had to do with the importance of education. The highest dream parents have for their daughters is that they finish high school, get some sort of degree or professional qualification and then get a decent job. In sum, they cherish the hope that their daughters become *profesional*. Ideally, as we already saw in Chapter 4, being a *profesional* refers to having a university degree or a degree from some institute of higher education. In practice, however, it is merely used as a term for getting a diploma of a more practical nature from a vocational training program, such as a certificate in cosmetology or in secretarial studies. It also refers to the kind of job that parents would like their daughters to have, that is as an *empleada* (i.e., as a formal employee for some private-sector company or state institution). Consuela's mother referred to her hope for her daughter in the following terms:

I would like my daughter to ... study, to finish high school and then academia²⁰⁷. I would like her to prepare herself, so that she can study something, so that she can work and earn her own money. Only then, will I be reassured. When she earns her own money, she won't have to wait for her husband to bring money home. That is my dream: that she will get work, that she will be able to fend for herself, that she will earn her own money.

The focus on education as a vehicle for social mobility is evident throughout Peru (see, for example, De la Cadena, 2000). It is related to the more general discourse on education and social mobility in Peruvian society and in Latin America as a whole (Ansión et al., 1998; Cisneros and Llona, 1997; Munar et al., 2004; for Ecuador, see Miles, 2000). In Chapter 4, we saw that, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, the Peruvian government invested heavily in improving the overall coverage of formal public education. Peru now has one of the highest

207 *Academia*: institute where students can prepare for the university entrance exam.

school participation rates among comparable countries and, at least in the cities, sending your children to school is seen as the norm.

In migrant popular neighbourhoods, there is perhaps an even stronger emphasis among parents on the idea of social mobility through educational effort. This is due first of all to the motivations that parents had when they migrated to the city. The very reason why people chose to migrate was the hope that, through education, they themselves, or at least their children, would be able to climb the social ladder. As Miles states: “Parents expected that through education, hard work, perseverance and respect for the dominant values, their children would one day move towards a middle class lifestyle” (Miles, 2000:56). Today, most migrants in the city feel that they have not realised their dreams; they are suffering and struggling in small micro-enterprises and barely earn enough to minimally sustain their families (Panfichi, 1993). Many parents in the *pueblos jóvenes* still feel insecure and ill at ease in the midst of modern urban life. They feel victimised by processes of discrimination and marginalisation, a situation they ascribe to their ethnic origin as *provincianos* and most of all to their low level of education. It is therefore no surprise that the message to their children is that they have to make sure they get an education and achieve more than their parents did (Anderson, 2000; Brossel, 1997). Marisol’s mother Andrea expressed this hope as follows:

I would like my daughter to become something better me, not like me, not suffering like me, not working like me in houses or in micro-enterprises. I would like my daughter to be somebody, a professional, not like me for example, just a simple obrera [manual labourer]. Sometimes you work in a house - you work 13, 14 hours for a miserable wage, and she, if she were a señorita profesional, she would have her work hours, she will be paid by the hour and she would earn three times as much as I do, you see, that’s what I would like my daughter to be.

It is here useful to draw upon the invaluable contributions of Mendoza García (1995), who clearly traces the messages constructed by parents in migrant neighbourhoods to the background of the parents. Mendoza García employs the concept of ‘generational mandate’, which she defines as a set of expectations communicated by parents to their children to be utilized as “tool for fulfilment in life” (1995:42). According to Mendoza García, in the popular neighbourhoods, the dominant generational mandate comprises four messages: ‘Follow my example’, ‘Work hard’, ‘Don’t become like me’ and finally ‘Don’t do anything I wouldn’t approve of’. Each of these four messages emphasises a quality that youth should aspire to, with parents emphasising them at different times and with respect to different facets of life experience. Together, these four admonitions comprise those lessons that parents think their children most need to learn and internalise in order to be able to succeed. The generational mandate reflects the complex reality of life in popular neighbourhoods as well as the parents’ own youthful experiences and rural background. The seemingly contradictory nature of the messages is due to the fact that the mandates reflect both the successes and failures of the parents. Parents thus exhort their children to emulate them in some ways, but to differ from them in others (ibid.:53).

The first message, ‘Follow my example’, is the one that most clearly derives from parents’ migrational background. The rural areas where the parents were born and raised were predominantly characterised by what Mead (1970:4-8) called a ‘post-figurative culture’, in which different generations live close together, sharing the same activities and living places. Children are raised with the idea that their lives will be roughly the same as those

of their parents and grandparents, and thus it is a milieu which naturally gives rise to the parental admonition to 'follow my example'. In the urban context of more rapid change, the implication of the mandate changes somewhat. In the city, 'follow my example' seems to refer primarily to the virtues of perseverance, industriousness and ingenuity which parents as rural-to-urban migrants have displayed. What children are urged to follow within the context of the *pueblos jóvenes* is therefore more of an attitude than a concrete life pattern. According to Mendoza García, the message is also a call to the children to continue the work of the 'project' that their parents began by making the decision to abandon the lands of their forbears and undertake a journey into the unknown realm of the modern metropolis (Mendoza García, 1995:51).

The second message, 'Work hard', highlights one of the aforementioned values - that of industriousness - even more. In the context of the popular neighbourhoods, the value of industriousness is mainly defined within the context of education and work; these are the areas in which children have to contribute whatever they can. The third message, 'Don't become like me' follows naturally from the second one: children have to do their best in order to avoid ending up in the same situation as their parents. They are encouraged to do their best in order to surpass the achievements of their parents. This message also derives from one of the fundamental intergenerational dynamics of the *pueblos jóvenes*: that socialisation patterns and relationships are increasingly co-figurative as opposed to post-figurative. In these neighbourhoods, it is more frequently the case for youth that peers rather than the older generation serve as role models. It is peers who share the same life experiences, and who are able to provide guidance with respect to survival, in circumstances of often dire material deprivation, in both the *pueblos jóvenes* that they call home and in the larger metropolis beyond the confines of their neighbourhoods (ibid.:52-53).

The fourth and last message, 'Don't do anything I wouldn't approve of' is different from the other messages because of its negative character. In other words, this admonition is meant to discourage, rather than encourage, certain kinds of behaviour. It is also the message that is most post-figurative in nature, given that it implies that it is parents who are defining good and bad behaviour *for* their children (ibid.:54). For girls, this message is communicated primarily within the realm of sexuality, a dynamic that I will return to later in this chapter.

There are other elements in the emphasis on education that can be traced to the parents' rural background. One of these is the idea of reciprocity, which refers specifically to an implicit contract between parents and their children: the children's successes at school and in their later professional life are seen as a way to 'pay back' the investment that parents have made in them. Reciprocity is a value that originates in the Andes; in the new context, however, it takes a somewhat different form (Adams and Valdivia, 1991; Degregori et al., 1986). In the *pueblos jóvenes*, the term no longer refers to the idea of repaying one favour with a similar one, nor does it relate to the idea of children as a form of social security. Instead, reciprocity is seen as the obligation of children to study hard and get the most out of their education because parents have made so many sacrifices to put them through school. In the interviews and conversations with parents in Los Pinos, the value of reciprocity was particularly clear when parents referred to the possibility that their daughter(s) might get pregnant and thus have to leave school. The language they used to refer to this possibility always contained an explicit reference to the idea of a 'poor return' on the emotional and material investment they had made. Typical reactions were: 'if that happens, I would feel as if she had let me down', or

'then everything will have been for naught'. This disillusionment can also be recognised in the case of the discovered contraceptive pills presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Apart from reasons related to migration, the parental emphasis on education in *pueblos jóvenes* is also motivated by gender-specific considerations. A central idea in the parental narratives is that in all circumstances girls have to be able to *defenderse*, or 'fend for themselves'. This notion has a number of different implications. First of all, and this is stressed as much by fathers as by mothers, women will be expected to contribute to the family income, especially during times of especially acute economic difficulty. Both husband and wife will have to engage in paid labour and 'being *profesional*' is thus imperative for girls as well as boys. The notion also has strong links to the ideal of independence. Many (adult) women have experiences of having being abandoned by men, emotionally, financially or physically. In the case of unplanned pregnancies, for example, men often do not take responsibility. And when married, it is not rare that a man has an ongoing relationship with another woman (an *amante*), possibly with children, who he also provides for. Overall, experiences seem to have taught them the following lesson: 'A man cannot be trusted. Sooner or later he will leave you. Therefore you should never become overly dependent on a man.'

The idea of fending for oneself is also used more metaphorically, in the context of conjugal power relations and conflicts.²⁰⁸ Many of the girls' mothers feel it is their lack of education that puts them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their husbands: *siempre te lo sacan en cara* (they always throw it in your face) and it is hoped that education for their daughters will help put them on more of an equal footing with their eventual spouses. Fathers recognise the potential of education in this respect as well, and in fact there seems to be little difference between fathers and mothers when it comes to the construct of fending for oneself.

The complex meaning of fending for oneself (economically and psychologically) is reflected in the following two quotes from interviews with Julia's parents.

Marco-Antonio (Julia's father): My dream for her is that she study something, have a career and that, when some day she gets married - who knows if she'll have a good or bad husband, a husband who has a job - it depends on her, it depends on her who she ends up with. I know that one day she will marry, but then she will have studied something, so that she can fend for herself. If, some day, things go wrong, she can have some kind of work. She will have studied something. That is why I want her to study a career. Well, that is my dream, that she study something. In order to have a good life, both the husband and wife have to work.

Marcia (Julia's mother): She will have to prepare herself for something. Even if its only some small thing, just whatever, but she has to learn something. That way she will be able to fend for herself. She might happen to meet a boy who earns good money, and then what about her? What will she be? Nothing but a mother! Nothing but a housewife! And he'll throw it in her face: "You, ... you are nothing, I am something". And that is what I tell her. I tell her, 'First of all, study!'

208 Remember the fact, noted in Chapter 3, that research by Nieves Rico (1999) found a link between working activities and salaries of women on the one hand and the prevalence of violence on the other hand. According to her, violence occurs more often when women do not have income of their own. The *level* of a woman's income is also important: higher salaries are linked to less probability of being a victim of violence.

According to both Panfichi (1993) and Macassi,²⁰⁹ in recent years, young people in *pueblos jóvenes* are increasingly pursuing careers as micro-entrepreneurs. They state that this kind of career is also increasingly encouraged by parental messages. In Los Pinos, however, this life project was absent in the narratives of parents. This may primarily be a reflection of the fact that in this neighbourhood there are very few positive examples of entrepreneurship. In Los Pinos and other *pueblos jóvenes*, there are many micro-enterprises; however, in general, these are not seen as successful. On the contrary, they are instead associated with survival strategies, with low incomes and with living from hand to mouth. In the eyes of community members, these initiatives are thus not to be followed. In other zones of Metropolitan Lima like the northern cone (San Martín de Porres and Comas) and the southern cone (San Juan de Lurigancho), but also in the adjacent Villa El Salvador, a more vibrant climate of micro-entrepreneurship exists. In these areas, young people can see for themselves that working in a *microempresa* is not necessarily the same as ‘just scraping by’; they realise that they can also acquire prestige and a relative degree of material prosperity by working in their own small business.

A second possible reason for the explicit preference for *ser profesional* over being a micro-entrepreneur is emotional in nature: even in a best-case scenario wherein it does not involve merely scraping by, being a micro-entrepreneur is something that has become part of the lives of poor people out of necessity and is thus not seen as an ideal to strive for (Panfichi, 1993). Thirdly, also the official state discourse, which over the years has persistently focused on the formal economy and on white-collar jobs as the preferred road to development and progress, may play a role (Miles, 2000). The implicit message from the state is that all jobs outside the formal sector represent second-best choices and should thus only be seen as temporary stopgaps. Only recently has this discourse changed somewhat and the state now recognises that micro-enterprises can be successful and productive in their own right.

Dilemmas and tensions

The faith that migrants in the city have in education as a means of social betterment is not entirely realistic, given the reality of the generally poor education provided in the *pueblos jóvenes*. As we already saw in Chapter 4, the quality of public education is low and problems arise when children from these schools seek entry to higher education.²¹⁰ Parents in Los Pinos, however, did not seem to worry too much about this problem. On a general level they acknowledged the low quality of public schools and the restricted access to higher education. They were also aware of the limited possibilities in the labour market. However, this did not translate into more personal implications and did not lead to a modification of the message.²¹¹

209 Personal conversation with Peruvian social psychologist Sandro Macassi, 25 April 2001.

210 For a more extensive discussion of the problems in public education, see Chapter 4.

211 This is all the more remarkable when compared to accounts of a number of other groups in Latin America which I became aware of at the ‘Childhoods 2005’ conference, held in Oslo, Norway in June 2005. Clare Waddington, carrying out research among indigenous groups in Ecuador, for example, reported that these people prefer taking their children to the market to teach them the necessary skills on the job, rather than sending them to school. Another study done by a Canadian researcher concluded that, among a group of parents and youth in San Salvador, Brazil, education was not seen as a necessary component of childhood and adolescence. Parents did not see many possibilities for social mobility as a result of education and they thus thought that work would better prepare their children better for life.

On the contrary, it only seemed to make the emphasis on education stronger. As Ansi3n et al. conclude in their study on the opinions of Peruvian parents with respect to education: “Despite everything, belief in education as a vehicle for advancement remains unabated in all sectors of society” (Ansi3n et al., 1998:245).

A second tension with respect to the parental message regarding education is that it is not the only things to which the girls are expected to dedicate their time and energies. Next to studying hard, teenage girls in *pueblos j3venes* like Los Pinos are also supposed to make a substantial contribution to the household, to the care of younger siblings and sometimes also to their parents’ work. As we have already seen, girls usually devote a few hours a day to these kinds of responsibilities. These household responsibilities usually do not lead to school absenteeism (although sometimes, in exceptional situations of illness of family members, they may miss school for a few days). However, it often has an impact on the time that is available for homework and on the concentration and energy children have available for school (GIN, 1997 and 2001a; ILO, 2004a and 2003b). Because of household duties, the girls are very aware of the financial and relationship problems in the families. The stress arising from this awareness can also have an impact on concentration and school achievements. Angelica, for example was often very worried about the financial problems in her family and said that the resulting stress had adversely affected her school performance.

Tensions also result from the fact that there are very few role models available for the girls within their immediate environment. In Los Pinos, as in other *pueblos j3venes*, there are very few adults, let alone women, who have completed any kind of educational or vocational training beyond high school, and who have a good job. The message of *ser profesional* therefore tends to be imparted, paradoxically, by means of negative role models. As noted previously, this parental message can be summarised in: ‘because we don’t have it, you should. Do not become like us’ (Mendoza Garc3a, 1995:53). For some girls, messages constructed on the basis of these kinds of negative role models may indeed lead to strivings to achieve. More often, though, the lack of positive role models among the adults in their immediate surroundings makes it all the more difficult to break out of poverty.

The final tension with respect to the belief in education is one that is probably the most abstract. Not only is there a lack of concrete role models (women who have succeeded in being *profesional* and getting a good job), but the more general socio-cultural context of the *pueblos j3venes* is also not very supportive. As we have seen previously, life in the *pueblos j3venes* contains many elements of a culture of poverty, in which people tend to prioritise short-term needs over longer-term goals.²¹² Because of a general feeling of passivity and resignation, people may not be able to take advantage of opportunities, if there are any. As a result, poverty tends to carry over from one generation to the next. This is, in essence, the consequence of the culture of poverty as described by Lewis (1965). In such a culture of poverty, as Ypeij noted in her study on neighbourhood networks of micro-entrepreneurs in Metropolitan Lima, there seems to be a kind of levelling mechanism between neighbours (Ypeij, 1995:90-92). If some individuals in a neighbourhood network are more successful than others, these individuals are expected to contribute to the well-being of other people within the same network. Individual success, Ypeij argues, is usually brought about with the help of this network and, when successful, this help should be paid back. Paradoxically, then, the modest success that is achieved by the relatively few tends to bind them all the more closely

212 For a more extensive discussion about the culture of poverty: see Chapter 2.

to their *pueblo joven*, rather than serve as a springboard for their liberation from it. In sum, the *pueblos jóvenes* culture is one in which working hard in order to achieve economic rewards in the distant future is neither common nor easily achieved.

Amid this desolate landscape, however, there are a few seeds of hope. First of all, with respect to the socio-cultural virtues that influence the girls' mindset and orientation toward the future, we should not underestimate the fact that what children see in their family is that, despite everything, their parents never give up. In fact, when I asked the girls what they admired most about their parents, they all mentioned their perseverance. Secondly, in Los Pinos there were some examples of young women who at the age of 20 or 25 were not married yet. They were studying or working and it is possible that they could become role models for their peers. For example, Marisol's 21-year-old niece Ashly combined a study of accounting with administrative work at an NGO. Jeanine, Angelica's 23 year-old sister, worked at a library shop, and occasionally took courses in business administration. At an age when most of her friends had already married and had babies, she was still with her mother, living in a separate part of the house. Part of the income she earned went to her mother's household; the rest she kept for her own personal expenses.

***Cuidate* and sexuality**

In addition to the omnipresent focus on education, symbolised by the message of *ser profesional*, there is yet another recurrent admonition in the parental socialising narratives. This can be summed up in the one word Spanish imperative *cuidate* (be careful). *Cuidate* has various meanings. It is, for example, used between friends when parting (i.e., "take care."), or as a general warning to 'watch out'. In the field of sexuality, the verb *cuidarse* can also refer to the prevention of pregnancy through the use of contraceptives. This, however, is not what parents in Los Pinos mean when they urge their daughters to 'be careful'. On the contrary, the message of *cuidarse* for these girls has more to do with sexual abstinence than with having sexual relations, either safe or unsafe. It is a call for decent sexual behaviour, or sexual continence, with *virginity* and *respect* being the main constructs. Let us see how Alejandra, Consuela's mother, explained it to me:

Alejandra: I think, more than anything, to make sure she respects herself and her body, takes care of herself...because, if she makes mistakes, her life and youth will be over and nothing will be the same, will it?

JO: Taking care of herself and her body, how do you mean that?

Alejandra: I mean, that nobody should get close to her, that if she has a boyfriend, that he keeps his distance. Later, the day will come when she will have a serious boyfriend and then it will be a different story, That's what I think. Isn't this the way it is?

The message of *cuidate*, in short, is a call for sexual abstinence and for keeping a distance from boys. A 'good girl', to use the words of one of the fathers, should be 'decent and responsible', in this way paying respect to her parents and the rest of the family. The good girl protects her virginity and makes men respect this commitment. This point of view is held so strongly that a girl who has actually had sexual relations with a boy is said to have 'given in' to the boy's sexual desire and that she, being a girl, should have been more responsible. As a popular saying in Los Pinos puts it, 'a man cannot control himself; a woman can'.

In the 'good girl' message as outlined above, the image that is constructed of men, and of 'how they are', plays an important role. It is especially because men behave in a certain way, that girls should protect themselves and should be protected by others. This negative image of men seems particularly present in the popular classes among whom, Cáceres concludes, sexual initiation tends to be more frequently depicted as a particularly unhappy event that will inevitably end in abandonment of the girl by the boy for, when he has gotten what he was after, he will lose interest (Cáceres, 1999a:37). In my own study I was often surprised by the explicit and categorical condemnations that both parents, but especially mothers, expressed about men.

Many parents did not permit their daughters to be involved with boys. They told their daughters to stay away from boys, that having a boyfriend is something that had to be postponed until later. Below is an illustrative quote from the interview with Consuela's mother Alejandra:

I would not want it yet, she is still a little girl, don't you think? When she turns 20, then maybe she can have a boyfriend. Well, that is how I think about it. And I tell her: only after you turn 20 years old, then you may come to me with stories about boyfriends. For now, I don't want to hear anything about it.

The dream and the nightmare: education and sexuality as two sides of the same coin

In Chapter 4 we saw that Catholicism is the main religion in Peru. Most people call themselves Catholics and about half of all Peruvians attend Church regularly. Catholic norms and values, although not always taken literally, play an important role in the lives of people, including the inhabitants of Los Pinos. Surprisingly however, when parents discussed the value of virginity for their daughters, they made no explicit link to Catholicism. If there was a reference to religious or cultural values, it was of secondary importance. Instead, what seemed to be much more important was the concrete risk of pregnancy, based on the idea that a girl who became pregnant would lose the chance for a better future. *Ser profesional* and *cuidate* in sexuality were thus seen as two sides of the same coin. Girls are supposed to behave responsibly both in their studies and with regard to sexual behavior, and thus show self-respect and, even more important, respect for their parents and family (Olthoff, 2004a and 2005).

The link that parents make between sexuality and education may be expressed in the following equation: 'sexual initiation = pregnancy = socio-economic failure'. In other words, when a girl loses her virginity this is seen as a one-way ticket, via pregnancy, to emotional and physical misery and economic poverty. Julia's mother envisioned the nightmare scenario of her daughter getting pregnant in the following way:

You know, what future would she have? If she wanted to study, she wouldn't be able to. If she wanted to work, she wouldn't be able to do that either. They wouldn't be able to do anything, because they would be tied down by the baby.

It is important to recognise that what is at stake in the equation 'sexual initiation = pregnancy = socio-economic failure' in no way represents a biological or universal truth. It is, instead, a natural order of events as perceived by the *pueblos jóvenes* inhabitants. This clearly goes for the first part of the equation (the link between sexual initiation and pregnancy): since relatively

few young people use contraceptive methods, many girls who become sexually active get pregnant within a few months. It also reflects what the parents remember of their own youthful experience. Especially for women who grew up in the Sierra, having a boyfriend meant a commitment to eventually marry the boy.²¹³ The idea that young people could have a series of sex/love relationships without any further consequences (pregnancy or marriage) is something relatively new for them. It is related to the increased availability of contraceptives and, more generally, to the extension of the social moratorium (see Chapter 3).

In the narratives of the parents, losing one's virginity and getting pregnant are frequently referred to as *errores* (mistakes). The second *error*, pregnancy, is seen as a natural consequence of the first and it almost seems as if they are indeed one and the same *error*. At the same time there is also a sort of hierarchy: getting pregnant seems to be a bigger *error* for girls than losing their virginity. How this works became clear when I asked parents how bad it would be for girls to lose their virginity, not get pregnant and get another boyfriend after a while. All of the parents agreed that, although losing your virginity before settling down with a man was not the ideal (also here people used the term *error*) it would not necessarily have dire consequences. Many parents also thought that, as long as a girl did not become pregnant, men and boys were no longer overly concerned about virginity in any case.

The other equivalence presented above is that between *pregnancy* and *failure*. Just like the link between being sexually active and getting pregnant, this equation is highly influenced by the parents' own youth experience and by what they see around them in their everyday lives. To start with the latter, there is no doubt about the fact that virtually every girl who gets pregnant leaves school, at least for one or two years.²¹⁴ Although many of these girls plan to return to school after the baby is born, this seems to rarely actually happen. Many of these girls thus have insufficient education, without a *titulo profesional* and with an extra economic and emotional burden, the baby, to take care of. In the next chapter, some concrete examples of girls getting pregnant will be presented.

With respect to the parents' memories of their own youth, especially mothers repeatedly told me about their first pregnancy as something problematic. It is remembered as the moment at which everything changed and as the start of a very difficult life in socio-economic terms. Take, for example, Consuela's mother, Alejandra, who explicitly frames the message of sexual continence to her daughter in terms of her own life history:

I tell her, for you it seems normal to have friends now, to meet up with boys in the neighbourhood, but for me it was not like that. I met my husband and I fell for him, and that was that. Love at first sight, right? And then come the consequences, señorita – in my case consequences came, didn't they? Therefore, I tell her: being friends is okay, but at a distance, because when they are a couple, then there are hugs and kisses. So, better at a distance.

The equation between sexual activity and failure is a highly emotional construct, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter. What happened was that one of the girls was caught

213 Personal conversation with Jeanine Anderson, 18 June 2002. Anderson is an American anthropologist who has taught for decades at the Universidad Católica in Lima, and who has worked extensively with children and youth in both rural and urban areas.

214 As I stated in Chapter 4, it is legally prohibited to dismiss girls from school when they become pregnant. In practice though, many girls are 'strongly advised' to stay at home until they give birth.

by her mother with a strip of contraceptive pills in her drawer. The mother's reaction was one of total despair and she felt as if her world had come crashing down on her. What was particularly striking in that case was that the discovery of the pills was only evidence of the first term in the equation, that of loss of virginity. Looked at from a different perspective, the pills themselves might have reassured the mother that the far graver *error* of pregnancy would not occur. The mother's reaction, however, did not recognise this distinction. In her mind, it was indeed one and the same *error*.

The 'good girl' message in practice

In the attempts to control their daughters' sexuality, prevent pregnancy and ensure a successful future, parents use a number of different 'methods'. These methods are usually a combination of strongly held and frequently repeated precepts, negative mandates and actual physical control of the girls' lives. It is with respect to sexuality, as I already noted in Chapter 3, that the parental attitudes are particularly intrusive (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999). According to De Waal (1989:52), who wrote about teenage girls in the Netherlands, parental control of girls' sexuality can generally be exercised through confinement, through protection or through normative restriction. Confinement refers to a restriction of the girl's social or physical space. Protection means that girls who move in spaces that are thought of as unsafe are chaperoned or otherwise kept an eye on. Both confinement and protection take place with respect to space, time, activities and social contacts. Girls are prohibited or discouraged from being at certain places, or from being out on the street at certain times. Concomitantly with the specific confinement, there is also a more indirect method aiming at an internalisation of certain norms and values. This is what De Waal called the method of normative restriction: the girl is supposed to develop a social character wherein there is congruence between what she wants and what is expected of her. When normative restriction is successful, then the strategies of confinement and protection will eventually become unnecessary, because the girl is then considered to have 'grown up'.

In the context of Los Pinos, the three kinds of controlling methods are easily recognised. To start with the normative restriction, parents continuously told their daughters to be careful, to be responsible and not to 'throw themselves away'. Apart from the more general *cuidate*, messages included: *de la cintura arriba* or *del cuello arriba* (from the waist, respectively, neck up) and *solo besos y abrazos* (just kisses and hugs). The following excerpt from the interview with Julia's mother Marcia is a typical example:

I tell her, "Well, a boyfriend, first of all you have to know him well, you have to see how he is. And if he asks you for something, something more, that man does not like you", I tell her. "He is asking for something else! A man that really likes you, has to respect you. Only kisses and hugs, nothing else. On your body, only up from here [pointing to her neck], but nothing below". That is what I tell her, so that she will not end up doing foolish things.

As became clear already from the quote from Consuela's mother in the previous section, mothers also drew upon their own life stories, with an emphasis on the *errores* they had made, in an attempt to prevent their daughters from making the same mistakes. Parents also frequently referred to the examples of other girls in the neighbourhood or in the family who were already pregnant. Both of these are examples of normative restriction. Take Nancy's father Fernando:

We always talk to her. I tell her, "that couple, that girl who already has a baby, or with her belly: she doesn't have a future. It would be much better for you to wait. There is a time for everything and, for you, it is not yet time".

When we compare the sexual socialisation of adolescents in the popular neighbourhoods with that of adolescents in the middle and higher classes, a number of differences come to the fore. According to Cáceres, who carried out a study among different groups of adolescents and young adults in Metropolitan Lima, the messages to popular class girls are usually more graphic and direct than those given to their peers in other classes. However, they are still not as direct and explicit as those given to boys (Cáceres, 1999a:38). He also suggests that parental control of girls and the threats of severe punishment in the case of pregnancy are significantly higher in the popular classes (Cáceres, 1999a:38). Also with respect to the *content* of messages from parents to children, differences can be discerned between the popular classes and the middle classes. In general, in the former, ideas about youth and sexuality are more conservative than in the latter (Cáceres, 2002a; Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993; Kogan, 1996).

Remarkable in a study by Quintana and Vásquez is also the difference in the choice of words used in the messages conveyed to boys and girls. Girls mainly receive 'precepts' associated with the mandate of passivity and the repression of sexuality. Boys do not receive 'precepts', but 'prohibitions' based on a rejection of femininity and anything that is associated with women: *el hombre no debe ser débil* (a man should not be weak), *el hombre no debe expresar afectos* (a man should not express his feelings) and *el hombre no debe ser maricón* (a man should not act like a faggot) (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:89-97).

The message of *cuidate* is not only verbal, but also involves confinement of the activities and life spaces of the girls (Nieves Rico, 1999; Santos Anaya, 1999; Vega-Centeno, 1996 and 1993). Although some girls got more freedom than others, all parents tried to control and watch their daughters' lives to some extent. They usually urged their daughter to come straight home from school, walked by 'just by chance' when she was talking with friends and did not let her go out alone to visit a friend, especially not at night. An often-used pretext to confine girls to the immediate vicinity of the house was that the house should not be left alone when the parents were away. Although there was a real risk that their homes could be burglarised, it was telling that it was always the girls and not their brothers who were asked to stay at home.

More than once parents told me that they followed their daughter to be sure that she went wherever she said she would be going. An example from the interview with Julia's mother, Marcia:

Marcia: When she goes out alone, I often go after her.

JO: You keep an eye on her?

Marcia: Yes. Even when she goes to church. Sometimes, I go there to pick her up.

JO: To see if she isn't somewhere else instead?

Marcia: Yes, because if I wouldn't....

If parents found out or even suspected that their daughter was seeing a boy (often based on rumours in the neighbourhood), the control exercised over the girl in question would often become stricter. In such cases, she would only be allowed to leave the house if she were accompanied by her little brother or sister and she would be questioned extensively about her

whereabouts after returning home. Some girls also told me that their mothers checked on the regularity of their menstruation to be sure they were not pregnant.

Regulating the time that can be spent with girlfriends was also a strategy some parents used. They saw the time spent with friends as time their daughter could better spend on school or on household tasks. Moreover, to quote Julia's mother: *The only thing they talk about is boys and you never know what those so-called friends put in your daughter's head.* Generally, parents were afraid that friends would lead their daughter astray and therefore, parents thought, 'it was better to be safe than sorry'. One of the mothers who was particularly outspoken about this issue was Andrea, Marisol's mother:

You know, there are adolescents whose parents let them go to parties, to the discotheque, to the beach, to the swimming pool, to the park or just to the square to play volleyball with their friends, those kinds of things. And so, at these places they [her own children] may meet up with friends whose mothers don't educate them well, whose mothers don't tell them what to do and then go off and do their own thing, and there is no one to watch over the home.

Opening up

In the concluding section of Chapter 3, I stated that, overall, the parenting styles in *pueblos jóvenes* could be characterized as authoritarian, particularly with respect to teenage girls. This is something that the material presented in the present chapter tends to corroborate. I noted in Chapter 3 my impression that parents increasingly felt doubts as to whether this parenting styles would really have the desired effect. They were increasingly aware of the fact that the new urban environment might require changes in the way they interacted with their teenage daughters. Albeit haltingly, parents were starting to look for alternatives.

In general terms, several parents stated that the reason that so many children (in other families) were headed on the wrong path was a lack of communication between parents themselves and between them and their children. Take Erica's father, Sebastian, who in the following quote expresses his views of the problems of contemporary youth:

Probably it has to do with the ... environment, with how they live. Because, well, in some families, there is no communication, there is no understanding between husband and wife. Many people just start living together and don't know each other very well. They don't know yet how the other person lives, or what his or her character is. And this really makes a difference. Because, it is reflected in the way they treat the children; that is how I see it. So, we can't put the blame on youth alone; that's not the way it is.

A bit later in the same interview, he added:

I think that, in the case of girls, mothers especially have a huge responsibility. They have to be like friends to their daughters. I also told my wife to do so. But she says she is a bit scared of talking about these things [sexuality issues] with her daughter. I think, already at a very early age, parents should talk to their children; daughters should know about everything, don't you think, where babies come from and how to protect yourself. Sebastian's wife Gisela: Yes, I agree. But that should not only be done to girls, but also to boys. Today, both of them are responsible. What is lacking is communication and trust between the three: between father, mother and child.

In the interviews, all parents stressed that they saw communication with their daughters as very important. They said they wanted to know what was going on in their daughter's life and especially mothers stressed that they wanted to be like friends to their daughters. They increasingly realised that just forbidding something was not the solution and that instead more communication and openness was needed. In practice, communication between parents and daughters was not easy though and parents seemed to struggle hard with their idea that they had to open up. As Santos Anaya (1999:468) states in his research on teenage girls and their parents in an inner-city popular neighbourhood of Metropolitan Lima: "Both of these sides (parents and daughters) want to some extent to become closer to one another, to tell each other their concerns, doubts, fears and insecurities. However, prejudices, distrust, and shame keep them apart [emotionally] even when they are physically so close together."

The difficulties in opening up were particularly true when it came to issues related to sex. Let us listen, for example, to Consuela's mother, Alejandra, who told me in an interview about her attempts to open up a bit with her daughter.

Lately, ... well I try to become more open and liberal with her. She is the one who comes with it, actually, she tells me, "mum, you should not be afraid to talk to me about things, there is nothing wrong with talking". So, recently ... I have been trying to loosen up a bit. She tells me, "mum, you are afraid to talk about things, but at school they do teach us about how to take care, about how to use a condom and those things". "But", I tell her, "When I was young, it was not like that!"

Britney's mother, Soledad, looking back on how she provided sexual education to her, serves as another example of the shame and uneasiness of parents when it comes to discussing sexuality-related issues with their daughters. I asked her whether she ever talked with her daughter about birth control, after she finally found out her daughter had a boyfriend. Soledad's reaction was:

Yes, I did. I told her, "Mamita, when this man wants something from you, maybe because you are young ... well, maybe ... how can I tell you... let me tell you this as a woman, I am speaking right now as a friend and not as your mother, when a man starts kissing you and starts to caress you, when he starts to touch places that you as a woman feel uncomfortable about... Maybe you think you want to do things as well, because for you it is the first time... But if at any moment you want to talk about these kinds of things: just tell me, ask me about it. But, caramba, you have to remember that when a man is good, he will respect you; he can kiss you, he can hug you, but that is it. When a man has bad intentions, if he only wants sex, if he only seeks pleasure, well, then he is not really interested in you. But if a man really wants you, if he really loves you, if he is really thinking about building a family with you, well, then things are different. But in that case, everything has its time. But beware, because most [boys] only want it in order to satisfy their lust, they just want to do it and afterwards they don't even care about the girl."

As this last example already indicates, some parents actually accepted that their daughter had a boyfriend. From what I saw in Los Pinos, this decision was usually taken after a long period of problems; finally parents decided that it would be best to accept it. Accepting that your daughter has a boyfriend was not, however, unconditional. The boy in question would, for example, be allowed to come to the house and talk with her there. And if she were allowed

to go out with him, this would be only during the day and for a short while. It is furthermore remarkable, that in all cases in which parents accepted that their daughters had a boyfriend, they would never use the term. Instead they said their daughter was allowed to spend time with this 'particular friend' or 'this boy'. It was as if calling him a boyfriend would make things (look) too serious. In the following quote, Silvia's mother, Eugenia, describes how she thought of the idea of the 'controlled boyfriend' in practical terms:

He comes, they are talking for a while and then he goes. And well, I am watching. Sometimes, people think it is wrong [to let her have a boyfriend]. But I tell her: "I know what you are doing, I am watching you. And, well, I believe you will not betray the trust I give you by doing it this way". And now the situation has calmed down, I think.

JO: What do you mean by 'betraying your trust'? What is it exactly, she should not do?

Eugenia: well, most of all, not crossing the line, I mean with respect to being a couple. Kisses and hugs are okay, but nothing more.

JO: Nothing else?

Eugenia: No, nothing else. Because, I tell her: "It is for your own sake. You are just starting, you are still a child and I don't think you are already at the age of... you know." And then she always says, "No mommy", she tells me, "Nothing will happen".

The fact that parents sometimes accepted that their daughters had a boyfriend did not mean that they also took for granted that their daughters were sexually active. Just the opposite, it seems. Not even these parents brought up the issue of contraceptives with their daughters. The reasons these parents gave were manifold. They said, for example, that talking about contraceptives was not necessary, as their daughters already had received sexual education at school. More often, they said that talking about contraceptives would be contradictory to the main message of sexual abstinence. Issues like AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) were not totally unknown, but for the parents they were so far away that they were never brought up. Parents also indicated to me that they felt unprepared and at a disadvantage in relation to their children who 'know much more than I do'. This was particularly relevant for parents who had not had much education, like Consuela's mother:

One of the problems is that I don't know how to say things [about sexual issues], how to advise her, because I have not enough schooling to be able to explain things to her. I can tell her what I know and what I think, but that is just a little. If I had studied, then at least I would have known. But I haven't.

Perhaps the most important reason for not bringing up the issue of contraceptives despite the acceptance of a boyfriend is shame. *What would my daughter think about my sexual behaviour*, Marisol's (single) mother rhetorically asked me, *if I would bring up the issue of contraceptives?* In an interview I held with Erica's parents, Sebastian and Gisela just after their daughter got pregnant, the issue of shame came up as well. Based on a feeling of shame and the naive hope that their daughter was not yet sexually active, they never talked about contraceptives even when they knew and hesitantly accepted that Erica had a boyfriend.

JO: What do you see as the main causes of so many teenage pregnancies?

Gisela: I think it is because of the lack of communication between parents and daughters. Because, when you know she has a boyfriend, you have to be open and honest with her. But, in general there is not much confidence.

Sebastian: Mothers should talk to their daughters: "You know what", kid, "if you are having sexual relations with him, that is okay, but you know what you have to do. You have to protect yourself. There are so many risks today." So I think it is necessary for young people to protect themselves.

JO: But how come nobody does this?

Sebastian: No, well, nobody does this. And in my case, it also happened to me, I should have done it as well, knowing that my daughter had ..., I should have supported her.

JO: Did you know she was having sexual relations?

Sebastian: No, I didn't know, or... I could not believe it. I could not accept the idea that she might have sex. I could not open up; I was ashamed. I could not open my heart to her, I was too ashamed to talk with her. But I went about it wrong. I should have taken her [to the doctor] and I should have talked to her, asked her whether she was already ... you know ... and if she was... [I should have told her:] "let's go and get you protected, so that you don't get pregnant".

Finally, another problem parents encounter when they try to be more open with their daughters is a rather defensive attitude on the part of their daughters. Afraid of problems, they will usually deny that they have a boyfriend and even if they say they do, they will never admit that they are sexually active with him. Andrea, Marisol's mother, said:

I don't know, it is difficult with her. She is... How can I explain it to you, she is a bit difficult when it comes to talking. "Ay mami", she says when I start talking to her, "you are talking nonsense", that is what she calls it, 'nonsense'. "I am not doing those kinds of things, just stop it. Why are you talking nonsense?"

Confianza

In the excerpt of the interview with Silvia's mother, in the previous section, there is a clear reference to the notion of *confianza* (trust). It is particularly around the issue of trust that many of the incipient changes in parents-daughters interaction arise. As I explained in Chapter 3, the notion of trust can refer both to the trust parents have in their children and to the degree to which children share their feelings and concerns with parents. In more general terms, it refers to the relationship and degree of communication that exists between children and their parents. Negotiations around trust exist in all Peruvian families and play a role for both boys and girls. However, for girls and more specifically for girls living in a context like the *pueblos jóvenes* the negotiations around trust have some special characteristics.

An interesting study discussing the notion of trust in the interaction between parents and daughters was conducted by Coenen (2001). Because she is writing about Turkish migrants in Dutch society, at first glance her research seems to be about themes and contexts far removed from those of the present study. However, in both of these cases, the research subjects are migrants who raise their children in a society that is in many ways strange and hostile to them. Just like the rural-to-urban migrants in Metropolitan Lima, the Turkish migrants in the Netherlands are usually found in the lowest socio-economic strata, face discrimination, and encounter many obstacles to upward social mobility. A remarkable similarity is also the emphasis on education as a means to socio-economic advancement.²¹⁵ Just as for the

provincial migrants in Peru, Turkish immigrants in The Netherlands explicitly present education as a way for their children to become something better than their parents.²¹⁶

With respect to trust, Coenen's observations are remarkably similar to my own in Los Pinos. The way girls' sexuality is viewed among Turkish Muslim migrants in The Netherlands is not so different from the way it is approached among the popular classes of Catholic Peru. Coenen describes what trust looks like for boys and girls in Turkish families, and states that whereas for the Turkish boys, trust was somewhat diffuse and difficult to get a handle on, for the girls the expectations were very clear. For them, trust is most of all about "living up to codes with respect to relationships and the interaction between the sexes" (Coenen, 2001:149). Coenen points out that building trust is especially challenging in a cultural environment that is unfamiliar to the parents (ibid.:146-150). Both in the Netherlands and in Peru part of the challenge is related to the fact that a rather conservative discourse on sexuality co-exists with a rather modern discourse with respect to education. It is exactly this contradiction, according to Coenen, that is used by Turkish girls to negotiate their autonomy. They have to convince their parents that a certain degree of freedom is necessary in order to achieve the educational success that their parents so very much want for them.

According to Coenen, Turkish parents in The Netherlands are aware that their daughters require a certain degree of freedom of movement if they are to be successful in school. They have to go to school, where they interact with boys and where they will come into contact with norms and beliefs that are very different from those that their parents (and the girls themselves) see as appropriate. As the parents realise, they themselves cannot always be around in this 'hostile' outside world; trust is needed to let the girls go out on their own. This trust is therefore always fraught with tension. As Coenen (2001:147) put it:

Trust is an attitude of confidently releasing your children into an environment that is unknown to yourself and that is suspected to hold other codes - including some that are not your own - without the knowledge that the control over your children is in the hands of like-minded others in that unknown environment. In the end, this confidence is based on a feeling of being (almost) sure that in such an environment the child will not let him or herself be influenced to such an extent that the boundaries of appropriate behaviour are crossed.

In the *pueblos jóvenes* of Metropolitan Lima, similar dilemmas are found. Here we also see that, on the one hand, parents want to give their daughters the freedom and opportunities necessary for success in their new environment. At the same time however, they are rather hesitant, as they are afraid that this new environment will influence their daughters in a negative way. Parents are afraid that involvement and participation of their children in the outside world would lead to abandonment of the family values and norms they are trying to transmit. They are also afraid that, in this outside world, where they do not have any direct control, their daughters might get involved in things they would not approve of, with the ultimate consequence of pregnancy. Hence, for parents there is a palpable tension between the need to give their daughters the freedom they need to be successful and fears about the consequences of that freedom.

215 'Don't become as we are' (or in Dutch: Word niet zoals wij) is in fact the title of Coenen's study.

216 Similar findings for migrants in Dutch society are found in studies by Nijsten (1998); Pels (1998).

A glance into the future

In the previous section we saw that Erica's parents felt that they should have been more open with their daughter about sexuality. They also told me that they planned to do things differently with their youngest daughter (then nine years old). As Erica's mother said:

I don't want to make the same mistake with her. She is still little, but in a few more years, I will start talking to her. And already today, I tell her, "If you have friends, just bring them home."

This intention to do things differently is both laudable and promising. It is remarkable, though, that it was only after their daughter became pregnant that they began to consider change. Why, for example, did such a change not occur as a result of seeing other examples of girls in the neighbourhood who got pregnant? In fact, this is a question that comes up for parents in the neighbourhood in general: Why do they continue to transmit the message of abstinence even though they see that other girls in the neighbourhood get pregnant after having received similar messages? This is a question that is very difficult to answer.

In this chapter and in Chapter 3, I discussed a number of reasons that give insight into the inclination of parents to adopt authoritarian parenting styles and to rely on control. One reason that emerged in Chapter 3 was that an authoritarian parenting style is one that parents were used to in their own youth. Furthermore I pointed out the large socio-cultural distance between the generations and the fact that many parents feel rather insecure and fearful in the city. In this chapter, I more specifically addressed the reasons as to why parents were not bringing up the subject of sexuality more openly. The two main factors discussed were parental shame and the way girls sometimes reacted when parents would try.

The last and perhaps strongest factor, which I have until now only mentioned in passing, is the context of Roman Catholicism in which all of this takes place. Earlier, I argued that, for most parents, the primary parental motivation for stressing sexual continence is not religion but education. At the same time, though, it must be noted that the religious rationale is not altogether absent. Catholicism still functions as a psychosocial framework within which the parental messages are transmitted and received. The Catholic norms and values that are important in this respect do not only reside in the institution of the Church itself; they permeate all of Peruvian society. They are reflected in the way sexual education is structured within the high schools, and in the ways in which the state approaches the subject. Thus, although the shift from a religious motivation to an educationally oriented one is important, it is less a revolution than a gradual evolution. Messages still stress the same elements and there are no crucial shifts in the content of messages. A shift towards, for example, accepting that youth are sexually active and thus that there is a need for sexual education that involves information on the use of contraceptives, would be much more far-reaching and revolutionary. Change along these lines is for the moment not foreseeable.

Overall, although I can discern many good intentions and promising new developments, I am not entirely convinced that, in the near future, things are really going to change. In general, and despite intentions such as those expressed by Erica's mother about taking a different approach with their youngest daughter it seems that more parents react to such a circumstance in a diametrically opposite manner. This is to say that, having experienced 'failure' with one child seems most frequently to lead to a retrenchment of authoritarian attitudes on the part of parents. It is as if the parents feel that, since the message did not work with one girl, it must be projected all the more forcefully to the next one. Although seemingly

illogical, it is something that should be understood against the background of what has been presented above.

Final reflection

In this chapter I discussed the interaction between girls and their parents in the *pueblos jóvenes*. I focused on two messages within the generational mandate. The first message is that of *ser profesional*, which emphasises the importance of education and of getting a diploma at some higher educational institute. The second parental message is *cuidate*, which mainly entails norms and values with respect to sexuality. According to the mandate, girls are supposed to behave like *señoritas* and to make sure they will do nothing that will lead to getting pregnant. Both of these messages are, as we have seen, highly interrelated and parents present them as two sides of the same coin.

Both the *cuidate* message and the message of *ser profesional* are elements of a broader 'good girl message', that indicates how a girl should behave. Some aspects of the 'good girl' message are still rather conservative and constraining and as such it seems that not much has changed over the years. This particularly goes for the sexuality message. At the same time, we can also discern some new and more progressive elements. Most important in this respect are the heavy emphasis on education and getting a diploma, on the one hand, and the new motivation for conservative sexual values on the other. These values are no longer primarily based on family honour, or on Catholic morality, but are instead to be understood in light of the ideal of education. Another new and promising development is the fact that parents are beginning to cautiously open up with their daughters when it comes to discussing issues related to sex.

The parental intentions and incipient attempts to gain more trust with their daughters, the increased importance of education, and the changing arguments for decent sexual behaviour are all clear indications of the dynamic situation in the *pueblos jóvenes*. These are also changes that impact on both the empowerment of girls and their future possibilities. In the near- and long-term future, these changes may lead to more freedom for girls and more opportunities to develop their own lives in a responsible way. At the same time, these changes and promises should not be overestimated. Opportunities for today's girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* are still very limited

First, as we have seen in this chapter and previously, there are many practical limitations in terms of putting the education ideal into practice. To recall just two problems, there is the low quality of public schools and the fact that girls have many other obligations at home. Secondly, it is important to realise that a growing degree of trust between parents and their daughters is not the same as a liberalisation of the content of the sexuality discourse. A higher degree of trust still leaves the basic norms and values untouched and merely reduces the direct control that parents exercise to enforce them. Furthermore, on a deeper level, it cannot be denied that the prescriptive messages to girls are still based on the idea of women as mothers and wives. These old ideas are not really questioned and the (modern) educational message merely seems to reinforce the (conservative) sexual one. The question is whether a further modernisation of the 'good girl' message will also involve an updating of the sexuality discourse that is portrayed as such an inherent precondition for success. Such a development, as we saw just before, will not be easy to achieve. A good many obstacles will have to be overcome, both by the girls and their parents, in order for this to happen.

Photo 7 Teenage mother with her one-year old baby



Chapter 7. ‘Coming home with a present’: pregnancy and motherhood among teenage girls

The month of February was drawing to a close when Silvia told me that Erica urgently wanted to talk to me. I was glad to hear this, since Erica had left her parents’ house four days before and, although there were some rumours, nobody seemed to know exactly where she was. This was the third time Erica had run away from home and her parents were worried about her. According to Silvia, Erica was at her boyfriend’s place, so this was where we went, about one kilometre uphill from Los Pinos. We found her outside the ramshackle house, in the shadow of a little tree. Although she seemed a bit apprehensive as to what my reaction would be, she appeared happy to see me and it did not take her long to tell me the news: ‘I am pregnant’.

The possibility of pregnancy was ever-present among the group of girls in Los Pinos. Not only was it always present in the girls’ minds as something that posed a threat to their future but, for some of them, it became a reality of their own experience. When I began my fieldwork one girl, Britney, already had a baby. In the three years that followed, five more girls got pregnant.²¹⁷ Three girls (including Britney) got pregnant when they were only 15 years old; the others were 16, 17 and 18 years old respectively. Except for one, they all became pregnant from their boyfriends.²¹⁸

As we have already seen, teenage pregnancy in the *pueblos jóvenes* is thought to run counter to the goal of *ser profesional*. In the interviews about the future, the girls always said they wanted to wait to have children until they were at least 20 or 25 years old. Their parents, for whom a pregnant teenage daughter would mean the shattering of their hopes for a better future for her, supported this idea strongly. Getting pregnant in such a context thus necessarily raises a number of questions. The first of these questions relates to the backgrounds of teenage pregnancy: Why do girls who are determined to be a *profesional* and who want to postpone having children, get pregnant when they are only 15, 16 or 17 years old? The second question is related to the consequences of the pregnancies: How do the girls and their parents experience pregnancy and motherhood within a context that is so overtly negative toward it? These two questions will comprise the dual focus of this chapter.

²¹⁷ Erica got pregnant in the middle of my second fieldwork period and I could observe from up close how her pregnancy evolved. I held an extensive interview with her when she was about three months pregnant and also had a lot of informal conversations with her. During that same period, Yosara also got pregnant. She left her parent’s place and went to Villa El Salvador to join her *marido*; I visited her twice. Angelica got pregnant just after my last ‘official’ fieldwork period. Half a year later when I came back for a few weeks, I conducted a lengthy interview with her. Carina and Silvia also got pregnant just after the second extensive fieldwork period. Because I did not often speak with them during their pregnancies, their experiences do not figure prominently in this chapter.

²¹⁸ Carina got pregnant from a casual sex partner. She is an exception, as all the other girls got pregnant from boyfriends with whom they had been in a relatively stable and long-term relationship.

There is a voluminous literature on teenage pregnancy. However, most of it is rather one-sided, portraying the pregnant girls either as victims (of rape, of their boyfriends or, more generally, of poverty) or as rebellious and immature. And, equally misleading, men and boys are usually portrayed as the villains. Most studies pay little attention to the complex situations in which teenage pregnancy occurs. In addition, there is not much attention focused on the experiences of the girls themselves.

In the literature, the focus is first of all on the medical and physical consequences of teenage pregnancy, for both mother and child. It appears that a baby born to an adolescent mother (especially when she is under 16) is more likely to die within one month of birth than a baby born to an adult mother. For the mothers, the risk of pregnancy-related death is twice as high for adolescent mothers as it is for mothers between 20 and 24 years old (Salaverry and Rivero, 2002; Sandoval, 2000). Ampuero (1999:23) and Villareal (1998) emphasise that it is usually not teenage pregnancy as such that constitutes risks for the girls' health. Instead, the consequences are highly connected to contextual factors such as poverty, malnutrition, lack of hygienic services, interruption of studies and the eventual expulsion of girls from their homes.

Another focus in the literature is on the adverse psychological consequences of teenage pregnancy. At an age of 15 or 16, girls are usually fertile and thus able to bear a child physically. However, their emotional development is still not complete (Ampuero, 1999:23-24). Pregnancy at this age hinders the process of the girls becoming emotionally mature and negatively influences the development of a healthy mother-child relationship with their babies (La Rosa Huertas, 1997:33-34).

The third focus in the literature is on economic consequences. Taking care of a baby is an additional financial burden for families that are already poor. Too often, the girl's boyfriend does not assume financial responsibility for the child and the girl and her parents are left having to do so (Araya, et al., 1996:28). Teenage motherhood has financial consequences in the longer term as well: women who have experienced a teenage pregnancy are more likely to remain in poverty later in life (Save the Children, 2004). One factor contributing to this phenomenon is that teen mothers tend to have more children and shorter birth intervals, resulting in both poorer health status and a more severe level of poverty for her family (Sing and Wulf, 1991). Furthermore, women who get pregnant before turning 19 have completed significantly fewer years of schooling than women who become mothers at a later age (INEI/Unicef, 2004).²¹⁹ Research further suggests that teenage motherhood in combination with poverty also has repercussions for later generations. Children of teenage mothers are more likely to also struggle economically and perpetuate the pattern of children having children (Save the Children, 2004:15).

In this chapter, the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy and the period of pregnancy itself will be the subjects of analysis. I will explicitly start from the emic perspectives of the girls in the neighbourhood who got pregnant. I will also draw on two fictitious stories²²⁰ that the girls created at my request, for these stories tell us something about how girls who are not yet pregnant view pregnancy.

219 This is also after adjusting for socio-economic background and other relevant factors.

220 For the stories used in this chapter, I asked the girls to proceed on the basis of an initial scenario that I provided, at the same time cautioning them to keep the story as realistic as possible. For a methodological discussion about the use of fictitious stories as a research method, see Chapter 5.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Apart from the first section, which covers some statistical figures on teenage pregnancy in Peru and Metropolitan Lima, the chapter discusses teenage pregnancy chronologically by following the different phases that girls go through. I will begin with an analysis of the factors that are conducive to teenage pregnancy. This section answers the first of the above questions, concerning the factors that explain why girls get pregnant despite the seemingly contradictory discourse within their milieu. Afterward, there will be an exploration of what occurs during the first weeks of the girls' pregnancies, when they have to tell their boyfriends and parents about it. There will then be a description of the remaining duration of the pregnancy. Finally, we will hear the girls speak of their own experiences as mothers. The chapter will conclude with speculative remarks concerning the future of these teenage mothers.

Teenage pregnancy: facts and figures

In media and policy circles in Peru, teenage pregnancy typically gives rise to a lot of concern. It is usually presented as one of the main public health problems among urban youth, and in fact in all of Peruvian society.²²¹ Among the girls and their parents in Los Pinos, the risk of teenage pregnancy was one of the greatest concerns. At first sight, these concerns do not appear to be warranted by the evidence. Statistics show that in Metropolitan Lima, about 8% of girls and young women have been pregnant at least once before their 20th birthday (Macassi and Casaverde, 2003:47; see table 7.1). This figure is considerably lower than those reported for the *selva* and *sierra* (ibid.)²²² The figures for teenage pregnancy are also not extremely high in comparison to the percentages in other countries in the region (such as Bolivia or Ecuador) (Falconier and Guzmán, 2000:5). Moreover, it seems that most of the pregnancies are taking place in late adolescence, i.e. when girls are 17, 18 or 19 years old (Macassi and Casaverde, 2003:47).²²³

221 There have been some interesting discussions concerning the constructed nature and value-loadedness of the term 'teenage pregnancy'. As Bucholtz (2002) rightly points out, the problematisation of teenage pregnancy is not common among all societies and is thus culturally and socially constructed. In the *selva* areas of Peru, for example, perceptions about teenage pregnancy are less negative than in the coastal area, although perceptions are also changing there (Salaverry and Rivero, 2002). According to Burbank and Chisholm (1998; cited in Bucholtz, 2002), it is not adolescent pregnancy itself but the community's response to it that creates a social problem. Similarly, Furstenberg (2003:25), writing about teenage pregnancy in the United States, states: "The singularity of the issue has more to do with how our political culture has responded to the ancillary problems of poverty, sexuality, gender relations and the like, than with the threat posed by teenagers having babies before they want to or their families want them or before society thinks is good for their welfare and that of their offspring".

222 The high percentage of teenage pregnancy in the *selva* is related to the more restricted access to reproductive healthcare, but should also be seen as stemming from the fact that, culturally, teenage pregnancy is much more accepted in the *selva*. At the moment a girl has her first menstruation, she is considered a woman, and thus ready for child-bearing

223 See also: Promudeh website: www.promudeh.gob.pe/poblacion/fecundi.htm, consulted July 2002. Promudeh (Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano) was previously known as the Ministry of Women and Human Development. Since July 2002, this ministry has been known as MIMDES (*Ministerio de la Mujer y de Desarrollo Social* or Ministry of Women and Social Development).

Table 7.1 Teenage pregnancy in Peru, by age groups and region (2000) (as % of total female adolescents, 15-19 years old)

	Girls 15-19 years-old who are already mothers;	Girls 15-19 years-old who are pregnant with first child;	Total (i.e, girls 15-19 who have been pregnant at least once);
Age			
15	1.0	1.5	2.5
16	4.7	2.0	6.7
17	9.6	2.2	11.8
18	18.2	3.2	21.4
19	22.3	3.0	25.3
Region:			
Metropolitan Lima	5.7	2.4	8.1
Coast	7.5	1.8	9.3
Sierra	13.5	2.0	15.5
Selva	21.5	4.1	25.7

Source: Macassi and Casaverde (2003:46-47)

What the statistics do not show, however, is that there are significant differences between different sectors of society within Metropolitan Lima. Although I have not found any concrete figures, authors agree that figures for teenage pregnancy in *pueblos jóvenes* (or more generally within lower socio-economic strata and/or among youth with lower levels of education) are significantly higher than the average figures for Metropolitan Lima (Ampuero, 1999:22; Salaverry and Rivero, 2002; Vega-Centeno, 1994:138-139).²²⁴ Secondly, in comparison with data for 1992 and 1996, it seems that, for all age groups, the incidence of teenage pregnancy has slightly increased. The most significant rise has been in Metropolitan Lima (Promudeh, 2001; UNAids/ WHO, 2000).²²⁵ A final issue that puts the above figures in perspective is that, when focusing only on the group of adolescents that is sexually active, the figures for teenage pregnancy rise to significantly higher levels. In a representative study among 600 adolescents 16-17 years-old in Metropolitan Lima for example, it appeared that,

224 Similar conclusions are drawn for Chile by Araya Castelli et al. (1996) and for Mexico by Stern (2004).

225 The following figures give an indication of the growing percentage of teenagers between 15-19 years old who were either already mothers or pregnant with their first child, in 1992 and 1996. For girls age 15, the percentages rose from 2.2 to 2.6; for 16 year-olds, the increase was from 5.2 to 7.8; for 17 year-olds, there was an increase from 9.4 to 11.6; for 18 year-olds, there was an increase from 17.5 to 17.9; for 19 year-olds, the increase was from 24.7 to 29.8 (UNAIDS/ WHO, 2000).

226 In this chapter, I focus on pregnancies that occur after sexual relations with boyfriends and not on pregnancies that occur after rape or forced sex or after sex with occasional sex partners. This choice is based on the fact that five of the six girls became pregnant from their boyfriends. In public speech and in the Peruvian media, it is often suggested that a large proportion of teenage pregnancies are caused by rape or sexual imposition by the girl's father or another male family member. This suggestion is not supported by my observations in Los Pinos, or by other studies (Quintana and Vásquez, 1999:170) Only within the age group 12-14 did rape or sexual imposition account for the majority of pregnancies (Heise et al., 1994, based on a study carried out in the *Hospital de Maternidad* in Lima).

of the girls who were sexually active, 28% had already experienced an unwanted pregnancy (Cáceres, 1999a:108).

Getting pregnant

Questions as to the causes of teenage pregnancy can be approached from a number of angles.²²⁶ Starting from the idea that girls get pregnant because they have unprotected sex, one question that naturally arises is why girls do not use contraceptives. In Chapter 5, where I talked about sexuality in general, this question was discussed quite extensively. We saw that, overall, contraceptive use by teenage girls is low. Apart from the fact that many sexual encounters take place unplanned, I concluded that this low usage is mainly related to a lack of accurate information, indifferent attitudes concerning the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and the existence of many cultural and other barriers when it comes to purchasing contraceptives. Underlying gender relations were also seen as playing an important role.

In the interviews with the pregnant girls and teenage mothers in Los Pinos, the low rate of use of trustworthy contraceptives was confirmed. The girls said they had used some sort of protection, but for them this also included the highly unreliable methods of early withdrawal and the rhythm method. Condoms were only used sometimes. Erica recalls:

Erica: We thought that we were protecting ourselves. We both thought so, because I knew that he was protecting himself, and he told me he did; I knew...well that he was taking care of it... how do you call that, the idea that he should not come inside the woman, you know. Well, that day I remember that... well we did it like that, and well, you know, then he told me, "You know", Erica, "I am afraid I came a little bit inside you"; and it was one of those days that I could...

JO: Did you ever use a condom?

Erica: A condom? Yes, we also used that.

JO: But that day you did not. Just sometimes...?

Erica: I don't know, why we did not always use it. Sometimes we did, sometimes we did not. And I thought: well, nothing had happened thus far, so I thought that now it would be the same. I had never gotten pregnant, I had never had [menstruation] delays, and I thought we were doing pretty good.

According to Stern (2004), who writes about teenage pregnancy in Mexico, it is important to see teenage pregnancy as embedded within the social context of the place where it occurs. This means that if we want to say something about the high incidence of teenage pregnancy in certain areas, what we have to look for is each of the interrelated factors that may be considered causative (Stern, 2004:130-131; see also Raguz, 1999:64). In poor areas, such as the *pueblos jóvenes*, poverty plays a role but, as Stern repeatedly emphasises, it is not poverty as such that leads to early and unwanted pregnancies. Instead, the central concept for Stern - which I will also use in my own analysis - is 'social vulnerability', which is defined as the interaction between structural and conjunctural conditions and situations, within the economic, social and cultural aspects of life (Stern, 2004:131) According to Stern, social vulnerability in marginal urban classes is constituted by five different factors. These factors do not directly cause pregnancy and it is far too simplistic to say that girls who have a low 'score' on two or three of these factors will become pregnant before they turn 18. What the factors do, instead, is describe the propensity for adolescent pregnancies in certain social contexts and they are useful because of their explanatory value.

The following section discusses the identified risk factors for teenage pregnancy in Los Pinos. I will start with the factors discussed by Stern, as these are congruent with my own observations in Los Pinos. However, I will emphasise more than Stern how the girls experience the different factors and how they cope with them. This will be particularly clear in the discussion of the fifth factor, *confianza*.

The first factor that is mentioned by Stern as predictive of teenage pregnancy is school dropout. According to him, girls who leave school (temporarily or permanently) are more vulnerable to pregnancy than their peers who attend school regularly (Stern, 2004:145; see also Raguz, 1999:75). Stern illustrates the relevance of school attendance with the example of a girl who has to stay home for a few weeks to take care of the family when her mother is ill. During this time, she falls behind on her homework and also gradually loses contact with her friends and teachers from school. The resulting social isolation leads to an increased risk that she will become pregnant. This idea is confirmed in a report by the British NGO Save the Children. When girls are attending school, the report says, they are involved in a broader world of demanding activities. This is a world in which they have contacts with many people and in which they remain connected to a professional life project. All this gradually disappears when for one reason or another they have to leave school. Their 'worlds' get much smaller and they have less access to both peers and mentoring adults (Save the Children, 2004:14).

The relationship between education and teenage pregnancy is visible in the teenage pregnancy statistics compiled by the Peruvian statistics bureau INEI. As I already mentioned in the introduction, it seems that, even after adjusting for socio-economic background and other relevant factors, women who get pregnant before the age of 19 complete significantly fewer grades of school than women who become mothers at a later age (INEI/ Unicef, 2004). Indeed, teen pregnancy and school non-attendance are predictive of one another. Thus, girls who do not attend school or who have stopped attending school are more likely to become mothers at an early age, while girls in school who become pregnant are usually forced to leave school (Save the Children, 2004:14).

Among the girls in Los Pinos who got pregnant, there was indeed a relatively high degree of school absenteeism in the months leading up to their pregnancies. Carina and Yosara had been attending school very irregularly, Silvia had stopped attending school altogether, and Erica had stopped going to school about a month before she got pregnant. Contrariwise, the girls whom I worked with who did not get pregnant all attended school regularly.

A second factor that influences a girl's social vulnerability to teenage pregnancy, and one that is directly related to the first, is the existence of a social network around the girl and her family (Stern, 2004:144). Take again the example of the girl who has to stay home when her mother is ill. Should this family have a strong social network, consisting of family members or friends, the caregiving would not fall only on the girl's shoulders. (Stern, 2004:144) The family's or girl's social network is not only relevant for preventing the already mentioned isolation, but also for providing informational support regarding both relationships in general and pregnancy prevention in particular (Raguz, 1999:86-87).

The girl's home situation constitutes the third factor contributing to her social vulnerability. Relevant in this respect is the incidence of intra-family problems such as domestic violence, alcoholism or drug addiction. Other aspects are the stability of the parents' relationship and the actual presence at home of at least one of the parents during the day (Stern, 2004:144). The link between teenage pregnancy and the home situation has

been frequently addressed in the literature. Growing up as daughter of a single mother, for example, is seen as a clear risk factor in this respect (La Rosa Huertas, 1997:33; Sandoval, 2000). Authors also refer to the overall quality of the relationship between the girl and her parents, something I will come back to later in this section. The link with the home situation sometimes is associated with rather depressing analyses about intergenerational teenage pregnancy, the idea being that children of adolescent mothers are at high risk of becoming teen mothers (or fathers) themselves (La Rosa Huertas, 1997:33; Save the Children, 2004).

For the girls in Los Pinos, the role of domestic stability and family problems is a bit difficult to establish. It not difficult to identify a number of possible risk factors in the home situations of the girls who got pregnant. Angelica's parents, for example, had a lot of problems in their marriage and if her father was at home (which in fact was not often) the atmosphere was usually rather tense. Carina had always had a conflictive relationship with her mother and stepfather; there were often fights and she got kicked out of the house more than once. Both Angelica and Carina often told me about their feelings of frustration and loneliness. These kinds of problems however, are not different from those of their non-pregnant peers. The two sisters Elena and Marta, for example, also had many problems at home. Their father had left the family two years earlier and their mother was often very restrictive and sometimes violent towards her daughters. Elena especially was very depressed and often complained about the situation at home.

The fourth risk factor that Stern identified has to do with the content of life projects. The idea is that girls who have aspirations for the future that are well developed and that go beyond motherhood and marriage are considerably less vulnerable to pregnancy than girls who do not have such aspirations (Stern, 2004:149). At first sight, the girls' life projects in Los Pinos seem to conform to the kinds of life projects that Stern identified as helping to prevent teenage pregnancy. In Chapter 4, we saw that life projects included the goal of *ser profesional*, in combination with motherhood. When the girls were asked to make a choice between the two goals, they stated that *ser profesional* had higher priority than motherhood; they all said that they wanted to postpone having children until they had their diploma. There are however a number of potential problems with these girls' life projects. First of all, many of these life projects consisted of long-term goals that were both vague and unrealistic and that were unaccompanied by any short-term planning designed to help work toward attaining them. This means that the daily decisions girls made were often unconnected to what they identified as their life projects. Second, I think that the ideals of motherhood and marriage plaid a larger role than meets the eye. On a number of occasions, for example, the girls expressed detailed fantasies about the idea of marriage. They were dreaming of themselves in a white dress and knew what their ideal wedding would look like. My impression was that part of the explicit emphasis on *ser profesional* was related to its newness. Motherhood did not need to be emphasised because it was seen as normal. In the *pueblos jóvenes*, as we saw in Chapter 3, the value attached to motherhood is still high. Motherhood is still the most essential aspect of femininity and although teenage pregnancy as such is generally frowned upon, the teenage girls themselves tend to see pregnancy as something attractive. Furthermore, as Fuller suggests, in a socio-economic context in which educational or professional success is dependent on so many external factors, motherhood is still by far the easiest road to the status of adulthood and social prestige (Fuller, 2004:204-205).

The fifth and final factor mentioned by Stern (2004:148) is *confianza*, or trust. Stern uses this term to refer to the quality of both the girl's relationship with her boyfriend and

the relationship between her parents and her boyfriend. Lack of *confianza* was also one of the main factors that both the girls and their parents in Los Pinos identified as leading to teenage pregnancy. However, they used the term to refer to another relationship: the one between parents and daughters. In Chapter 6, we saw that a factor central to the girls' notion of *confianza* was the degree to which parents gave them the autonomy and responsibility to make their own decisions and do as they pleased. We also saw that *confianza* is reciprocal and that it thus is related to the degree to which girls share their experiences and feelings with their parents.

Before I elaborate on Stern's notions of *confianza*, I would like to take a closer look at the trust between a girl and her parents in order to see how this type of *confianza* relates to pregnancy. I will first present excerpts of an interview with Erica's mother that I conducted with her just after Erica became pregnant. We talked about the fact that there were so many teenage pregnancies in Los Pinos, and I asked her about the causes of teenage pregnancy:

I think it is because of the lack of communication, between parents and daughter. Because, if she has a boyfriend you should be open with her, shouldn't you?. But usually there isn't much confianza. Mothers should tell them, "You know what, daughter, if you have [sexual] relations with him, that's fine, but you know that you should protect yourself".

In this interview excerpt, Erica's mother used the word *confianza* to refer to open communication between parents and their daughters, in this case about sexual issues. Her message was that parents should talk with their daughters about ways to prevent pregnancy. The reference to open communication also came up in the interview with Erica herself. However, Erica indicated that she understood the notion of *confianza* in a broader sense. The interview took place when she was seven-months pregnant and we talked about how she would raise her daughter. She stated that she would most of all work on *confianza*, as that was something that had been missing between her and her parents. It was, she added, one of the main reasons for her pregnancy. The interview proceeded as follows:

JO: How do you think the lack of *confianza* between you and your parents contributed to your pregnancy?

Erica: Well, because, I didn't have confianza with my mother and with my dad it was even worse. I didn't tell them anything; my mum always warned me: "You shouldn't do this and that..." In fact it wasn't so much my mum, even more my dad. I always heard him say: "You poor unfortunate girl, I would throw you out of the house" and I don't know what else he said. Sometimes they talked about another girl [who got pregnant]: "Poor, unfortunate girl! Erica, if you did something like that Be careful!" So, they always told me those kinds of things and when I started to be with Wiliam, it was worse.... They didn't let me be with him and they said he was bad, and other things. They just said what other people told them, but they didn't see the reality. And I told my mum, and in that sense I also made a mistake, I told her that it was not true. She insisted: "You are with him". [I would say]"No that is not true". Just out of fear, you know. My mum always warned me, "I don't want to see you with that boy". My father said the same: "Don't meet him again, and if you do and I find out, I will go after both of you, I will beat you up", and all those things... There wasn't really that much confianza between us.

JO: But, how did that lead to your pregnancy? I mean, your parents may have said a lot of things, but how was that related to your pregnancy?

Erica: Well, so much they said about him [her boyfriend], that he [her father] did not want me to be with him, and I don't know what more, I felt I had to do this, so that my parents would shut up. I was not really thinking about it, but I felt something had to happen... The idea was.. I don't know, that they would no longer tell me all those things, that after that they would really accept it, really, you know. I hoped that then they would notice, that .. of everything, you know, that I wanted to be with him, that they let me be with him, but, you know, it is not that I really wanted [a child],, sometimes I wanted it, and sometimes not. "How was I going to go about it", I said to myself. In sum, I did not really plan it.

JO: But it did go through your mind sometimes?

*Erica: Yes. Because, and that is what angered me most, because I never had *confianza* with my mom; sometimes my friends told me they share things with their mother, but I could not. I told her things, but from school, I told her about little things, but I never touched this theme. Never, I never told her, "You know mom, I am in love with this boy". Those things I never brought up.*

In the interview, Erica links her pregnancy to the lack of *confianza*, or trust, between her and her parents. She says that there was not much openness to begin with and she admits that she herself also had a part in this situation: she never told her parents the truth about her relationship with her boyfriend. What she refers to, in fact, relates to the factor of social isolation discussed before. Because of a lack of openness between a girl and her parents, the relationship with her boyfriend increasingly becomes the main thing in life. The boyfriend becomes the only person to turn to for advice. What happens in such situations is similar to the world becoming smaller when a girl leaves school. She gets totally immersed in her love relationship and having sex is then seen in some way as the next logical step.

When I asked Erica how exactly the problems with *confianza* were related to her pregnancy, she focused most of all on the 'control part' of *confianza*. According to her, her pregnancy could perhaps best be seen as a reaction to the high level of control her parents exercised on her. This idea also came up in the interview with Britney. In the following interview excerpt, Britney, pregnant when she was 15 years old and at the time of the interview the mother of a two-year-old daughter, looked back at the period before she got pregnant:

JO: How was the relationship with your mother at that time?²²⁷

*Britney: Well, she was rather protective. But she also gave me *confianza*, I can't complain about that. I introduced him [her boyfriend] to her as a friend. Later, I also told her that he wanted to be my enamorado and she said yes. "If you like him, I'll accept him". But not much later, she set a limit; she didn't want me to be with him anymore. So... what I did was... maybe I had a crush on him, maybe it was just a dream, I don't know. You know, until today my dream about him goes on, but to be honest, it isn't like it was before. On a scale of 10, it now is about 4 or 5 or less. Anyway, I had a crush, and I said to myself, if I had a baby with him, nobody could separate us anymore. That is what I thought - that I wanted the baby.*

Both of these girls thus suggest that getting pregnant for them was not as unplanned as one might think. To speak about the pregnancies as if they were consciously planned, however, goes much too far. In the above quotes, we clearly see the girls' feelings of confusion and despair during the period before they got pregnant. In these kinds of situations, nothing

227 Britney has always lived with her mother. Her father left the family when she was a baby.

can be really planned and, in fact, I would say that speaking about planned or unplanned pregnancies is not very helpful at all. The picture that emerges from the quotes is that of a situation in which the girls saw both negative and positive sides of a possible pregnancy. They feared the consequences for their lives and life projects in the longer term, but also hoped that it would solve one problem that was very urgent to them at that moment: they hoped that with a child, their love for their boyfriends would finally be taken seriously (see also Arias and Aramburú, 1999:134-143).

For Stern, *confianza* refers to the trust a girl has in her boyfriend and in the relationship as a whole (Stern, 2004:148). Paradoxically, in this case more trust means being at greater risk to become pregnant. Stern's idea connects to the notion of 'true love' as discussed in Chapter 5. There, I explained how a girl assesses the relationship with her boyfriend with respect to its seriousness and that only when she regards it to be 'true love' is the decision to have sexual relations taken (De La Cuesta, 2001:188). Girls experience the decision to have sexual relations as a decisive moment that will have crucial consequences for their lives and identities. Getting pregnant is seen as one of the possible consequences and this consequence thus is a factor in the girl's decision-making process (ibid.). It is not, however, seen as a separate risk. What is important is to know what her boyfriend would do in the case of pregnancy.

In this respect, some attention to the oft-heard distinction between *amor* and *ilusión* is in order. In the quote by Britney, above, we saw that she said about herself that she may have 'had a crush' (*encaprichada*); other pregnant girls often used the words *fue una ilusión* (it was just a dream). These were also the words non-pregnant girls tended to use when they were asked to identify the causes of teenage pregnancy (see also Arias and Aramburú, 1999:203). These words in fact are a comment on the decision-making process Stern and De La Cuesta discussed. The main point for our purposes is that according to the girls they tend to confuse *amor* and *ilusión*: they tend to believe in the 'true love' they feel for their boyfriend, something which afterwards only turns out to be an *ilusión*.

In the previous paragraphs, being at risk for teenage pregnancy was linked to the degrees of openness and control in the relationship between girls and their parents. One could thus draw the conclusion that the more controlling and prohibiting parents are with respect to their daughter's interaction with boys, the more vulnerable the girls will be to becoming pregnant. According to Stern, the opposite is true as well: a situation in which parents totally accept their daughter's relationship also constitutes a risk factor for teenage pregnancy (Stern, 2004:147-148). It is here that Stern's second interpretation of the notion of *confianza* comes into play. According to Stern, in a situation in which parents accept the relationship of their daughter with her boyfriend, *confianza* refers to the trust parents express in him. Symbolised by the mandate *cuidala bien* (take good care of her), from that moment on, part of the care and responsibility for their daughter is handed over to the boyfriend. As in the previous case, more *confianza* leads to higher risk of pregnancy. In these kinds of situations, girls are allowed to go out with their boyfriends relatively freely, a situation that in itself favours opportunities for sexual intercourse. Furthermore, for girls in search of 'true love', such a parental attitude strengthens the idea that this boy is an acceptable partner. In other words, such an attitude unintentionally influences the way a girl values the relationship with her boyfriend, and also increases the influence her boyfriend has on her (ibid.).

Each of the factors discussed in this section plays a role in explaining teenage pregnancy. To conclude this section, I would like to emphasise that the key question for the girls in Los Pinos was not whether or not they wanted to become pregnant. Instead, the decision the girls

made was more in terms of sexual initiation and sexual activity. The risk of pregnancy was not something that was dealt with as such; but rather something that lurked in the background of what the girls saw first and foremost as a question of whether they wanted to experience sexual intimacy with their boyfriends. One of the possible disadvantages of sexual relations is that you might get pregnant; however, this risk is inherent in sexual activity. This risk is simply one factor among other advantages and disadvantages.

Being pregnant: telling your boyfriend

When a girl in Los Pinos gets pregnant, her life changes drastically. The first weeks, in which she has to tell her boyfriend and parent about her pregnancy, often prove to be the most emotionally turbulent of times. All five pregnant girls featuring in this chapter first informed their boyfriends. Public speech in Los Pinos and in other *pueblos jóvenes* suggests that many boys try to escape their responsibility when a girl gets pregnant. This picture also emerged when I asked the girls to create fictitious but realistic stories about pregnancy. Below are two of these stories. The first story is written by Lilia (17 years old), the second one by Elena (16 years old). Each of the girls elaborates on a given premise. In both of the stories, the boys are presented as very rejecting with respect to their girlfriends' pregnancies. In the first story, the boy insists on abortion; in the second one, the boy even denies that the baby is his.

Story 4. Pregnant

Introduction (provided by researcher):

Paulina is a 15-year-old girl who is one month shy of her 16th birthday. She is in fourth grade, and after high school, she would like to study journalism. For the past year, she has been dating Pedro, who is 17 years old. They have been having sex for the past two months. At school she had heard something about the rhythm method, but she did not know who to turn to in order to find out how it really works, and what the risks were. So, she did it the way she thought it should be done. Besides, Pedro told her not to worry, as he was taking care of it by 'pulling out early'. The first month after they had sex, she had normal menstruation. But now, it is already two weeks delayed. What do you think would happen next?

Lilia's version:

She does not know what to do. The only thing she can think of is telling Pedro. When he finds out about the news, he tells her that it is impossible and that it would be better for her to get an abortion. In desperation, she thinks of doing it, but also realises it is not the right thing for the baby. She has many doubts. Then she tells her friend, Mariana. She advises her to tell her parents, so that they can help her. "You idiot", Mariana says, "how come you didn't use protection?" But Paulina says, "No". She does not want to go to her parents, because they are going to kill her. She is very afraid. But, as she feels that she is in a really tough situation, and she doesn't want to get an abortion, in the end she decides to tell her parents. She also says to her friend Mariana that she does not want to know anything about Pedro anymore.

She decides to tell her parents, and meets with the two of them. They already suspect something, because she looks kind of strange, she is kind of pale, and hasn't been eating much. She tells them that she had a boyfriend, and that she is pregnant now. Her parents were seated, and her father, furious, stands up. "That cannot be. You have disappointed me as a daughter. I always thought the best of you." Her mother, upset, smacked her in the face, and said, "How could you disappoint us so much?"

Then the parents spent some time talking about it, and they decided they were going to support her, as she was still under 18, and she could not easily find work herself, something that would be necessary for taking care of the baby.

That whole year, Paulina doesn't go to school, as she has to take care of her pregnancy and the baby. After that she will continue school, at a special *colegio no escolarizado*²²⁸, so that she will not be away from her baby for too long. Her boyfriend decides to ask for an opportunity to be together, to educate their child together. But she says no, because what she felt for him was not love, it was more like a dream. She told him he could see his child, but they are not going to live together. Because, she wants to be someone in life, and wants her child to be proud of her.

Elena's version:

After three weeks, she goes to a doctor, who tells her a few days later that she is pregnant. Then she goes to her boyfriend, and tells him she is pregnant. Pedro is sure the doctor has made a mistake, so they go together to the doctor and he again tells them that she is pregnant. Then Pedro says it cannot be his, because he was protecting himself, so for sure she has cheated on him with another boy. Then she felt very bad, and she went home, crying. She could not believe that she was already going to be a mother at her age. For one week, she did not leave the house. She did not go to school either. Her parents did not know, because they were not at home during the day. They left for work at 5 in the morning, and came home at about 10 or 11 at night.

Then she left her house, and went to a friend, Maria, and she told her that she was pregnant. Her friend asked her why she didn't use any protection. And she answered that her boyfriend, Pedro had taken care of that. Then Maria hugged her, and told her that she loved her a lot. Then she told her friend that Pedro had not come to her house for a week, and that she had no idea where he was.

One day, on Tuesday, her mother went to school, where she found out that Paulina had not come to school for two weeks now. Her mother came home very angry, and asked her in a rage why she had not been going to school. Then Paulina told her the whole truth. Her mother was very angry and also very surprised, because she did not even know that she had a boyfriend, and she started crying. That night, also her father found out. He was very angry, he shouted and wanted to kick her out of the house. Her mother did not want him to, and they had a real dispute. Paulina was crying all night and was very sad. She was also very, very preoccupied because she did not know whether her boyfriend was going to take responsibility.

She had to go back to school, because her father told her to keep on studying, so she obeyed. Her friends noticed she was looking a bit strange and a little bit heavier than before. One time, she fainted at school, and then her friends said that they thought she might be pregnant. The whole school was talking about it.

After one month, her boyfriend had still not come to her house. Then her mother decided to go to the house of her daughter's boyfriend, to make him assume his responsibilities. She talked with him and with his mother and then he told her that he was going to take responsibility for his child. Later that day he went to her house, and asked her if she could forgive him, and told her he loved her. He stayed with her until late. Her father arrived, and he shouted at Pedro, and Pedro said he was going to take responsibility for his child.

When she was six months pregnant, she decided she would no longer go to school, because she had too much nausea and vomiting, and she could not attend classes. So she stopped going to school.

228 *Colegio no escolarizado*: Adult education classes, usually held at night.

Her father was very angry, but her mother was very supportive. Her boyfriend worked every day, and together they were saving up money to buy the things needed for the baby.

In both of the stories, the boys are very surprised, and they can't believe what their girlfriend tells them. In reaction, they try to push away in some way or the other the responsibility for the pregnancy. The more extreme example of this is in the second story. In that story the boy first thinks that the doctor has made a mistake. Then, he states that he cannot be the father and he accuses her of having cheated on him.²²⁹ Only later, when her parents explicitly confront him about taking responsibility, is he willing to assume his role as the child's father. In the *taller* in which these stories were written, but also on other occasions, the girls repeatedly told me that this rejecting attitude of boys is normal.

A more positive picture emerges from my own experiences than the one suggested by the fictitious stories. In the cases of the girls in Los Pinos who got pregnant, their boyfriends' first reactions were indeed characterised by disbelief and astonishment. Angelica recalls the moment when she told Simón about her pregnancy:

First he didn't believe me. He said, "Don't play with me like that". And I said, "Well, do you want it or not? Just tell me. I am not lying to you, it is not a lie. Just tell me." And then he slowly let it enter his head. "Is it really true, Angelica?"

This reaction of surprise and disbelief is similar to what other girls told me about the time that they told their boyfriends about their pregnancies. It took some time for the boys to realise they were going to be fathers. None of them, however, tried to deny their responsibility. The only exception in this respect was Carina who did not get pregnant from a boy she had a stable relationship with. Presumably, the boy in question did not even know he was going to be a father. Sometimes, boyfriends even reacted enthusiastically, as was the case for Yosara. When she got pregnant, she told me:

For me, it was a real shock; for him it wasn't. To be honest, I sometimes think that he always wanted it. That is why he didn't use any protection.

Telling your parents

Sooner or later girls also have to tell their parents about their pregnancy. For many girls this is a difficult and scary thing to do. In the following excerpt from the interview with Angelica she recalls her thoughts and fears when the doctor confirmed that she was pregnant:

Angelica: I thought, well, most of all I thought about my mum. You know, time and again, for example when the doctor's assistant told me something, Oh my mum! My mum, my mum, my mum....

JO: What did you think, what was it you were afraid of?

Angelica: Everything really, for example how she would react. How could I have done this to her? I promised her so many things, so many things I had told her, so many things that I had

229 When a boy denies that the pregnancy is his 'fault' he usually refers to the fact that it cannot be his child, because he has 'taken care of things', meaning he has ejaculated outside of the girl's vagina.

thought I would do for her; and, how could I have done this to her, after everything that she told me? Oh my God, what can I do? All those things, you know; from the first moment, the only thing I could think of was my mum, my mum, my mum. And you know, I didn't even tell my mum. First I told Juli [her sister], I just couldn't. I couldn't look my mother in the face.

The girls' fears are very understandable. Parents have always made it perfectly clear that the worst thing their daughters could do is to get pregnant, to come home *con paquete* (with a parcel) or *con regalo* (with a present), as they call it. Many parents explicitly threaten their daughter with being kicked out of the house if that would happen. In the *taller* in which the stories about pregnancy were written, Lilia for example told me: *My father says, "I promise you that I will kick you out, this will not be your house anymore"*. Another girl added: *Fathers are usually more disillusioned because they are more jealous and possessive towards their daughters. Mothers are generally more understanding; they are more supportive*. At the same time, although this sounds contradictory, both of these girls did expect that in the end their parents would support them if they would get pregnant (a paradoxical reaction that was also reported in a study by Raguz, 1999:87). It seems that, despite their fears, deep in their hearts, the girls knew and expected that, despite their initial anger, parents would end up supporting them in whatever way they possibly could.

This paradoxical reaction was also expressed in the two stories that were presented in the previous section. In the first story, the girl initially does not want to tell her parents at all. When she finally tells them, they react very angrily. In the second story, the girl also postpones telling her parents as long as possible. In the end, her mother forces her to explain what is going on. The mother's reaction is a combination of anger and sadness; the father is mainly just angry; he says he is going to throw her out of the house. In both of the stories the parents calm down in the end and accept the situation. They decide to support their daughters, and, in both of the cases, the girls stay at home to wait for their babies to be born.

In reality, most parents reacted the same as the parents in the stories. After a few days of anger and a lot of tears, they accepted the pregnancy of their daughters and told them they were going to support them as much as possible. None of the girls was kicked out of the house because of her pregnancy. Erica is a case in point. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, Erica ran away when she found out she was pregnant. She moved in, for the time being, with her boyfriend Wiliam. On the same day that I visited Erica, her father found out where Erica was and went uphill to see her. Erica recalled this visit as follows:

My father asked me: "You are pregnant, aren't you?" And, in the end, I finally said "Yes". I was really in doubt: should I tell him or not? But in the end I told him.

That same night Erica went downhill to talk to her parents, together with Wiliam and Wiliam's mother. To Erica's surprise, her parents took the news rather calmly. They did not yell at her or her boyfriend and they were in fact, to use the word Erica used, very 'understanding'.

A few days later I made an appointment with Erica's parents to talk about Erica's pregnancy. They were indeed rather quiet and calm, although Erica's mother also expressed disappointment, as the following lines from Erica's mother show:

I never expected this. I had so many dreams for her, she is my first daughter, she is the oldest. I wanted so much for her, and we always worked hard for her, you know. We always gave her everything and now this [happens]. She wanted to be a secretary, that was her dream.

But, at this point, there isn't much we can do. You know, it is difficult, but one can accept everything. I would have preferred that my daughter finish university and then get married in a white dress with a boy who Well, even if it would be him, that would be okay. But most important would be for her to finish her study. I still haven't lost all hope, though. It happened and ... well, we'll just have to accept it.

For the other pregnant girls, the same picture emerged. After initial shock followed by anger, their parents seemed to realise that the most important thing was to look forward, and deal with the new situation as it was. They did not play down the situation, but realised there was no good in looking back. This was something they also emphasised towards their daughters. Below is an excerpt from the interview with Britney's mother, in which she describes the moment her daughter told her she was pregnant:

"Nothing can be done about it anymore, just nothing, you apparently wanted to be a mum, my daughter, so that is what you will be. You have not finished being a daughter yet and now you are going to be a mother", I told her – those were my words – "you have not finished being a daughter yet and now you are going to be a mother. Now you are going to be a mother and you will notice how it is to raise a child. You will know what is pain and when you have that child, you will value the suffering mothers endure." I told her: "Caramba, you will suffer in everything, from the moment your child comes into the world you will suffer. Is that what you wanted? Well, you will get it. Here in the house you are going to be, and that man will just have to support you".

In the above quote, Britney's mother states that her daughter's boyfriend should take financial responsibility for the baby and if possible also for her daughter. This is something I heard from all parents, whether their daughter was going to live with the boyfriend or not. As he is considered responsible for the pregnancy he also has to assume his role as provider. What I also heard from parents was a feeling of disappointment about the way their daughters' boyfriends had dealt with the 'trust' they had given them. The following is an excerpt from the interview with Silvia's mother, right after Silvia got pregnant. As we saw in Chapter 6, Silvia's mother knew about her daughter's boyfriend and she gave the couple some freedom to be together.

I told him more than once: "You are much older than she is, so help her, counsel her, don't treat her as..."; how do you say that... You know, "not as just a little girlfriend from the street". That is what I told him. Later, I told him, with tears in my eyes, as they say, practically with my heart in my hands, I told him: "You failed me. Because I really gave you a lot of confianza with my daughter." It was really very painful for me. Very, very painful, most of all because I gave him so much confianza, both to him and to her. You know, he would come to me, "Señora, could I take your daughter out?". They left early, and they came back at the time they had said. You know, he was very good to her. So, how could I have expected something like this?

In one of the fictitious stories, abortion is brought up. Among the girls in Los Pinos, as I already said in Chapter 5, this proved to be a subject that was very difficult to broach. As far as I know, none of the girls in my research group actually had an abortion while I was there. Two girls did tell me that in the first weeks of their pregnancies, the possibility of abortion had gone through their minds. One of them was Britney:

Britney: When I actually got pregnant, well, that was something... How can I put it? Well, I didn't want it anymore. I said to myself "No, I don't want it", and I even injected myself with something, so that my baby would not come, all those sorts of things.

JO: You wanted to take the baby out?

Britney: Yes, that's what I wanted, and my mother also wanted it.

JO: And your boyfriend?

Britney: He didn't want me to do that, he said "no, definitely no. I will be able to deal with whatever happens". He definitively didn't want that.

The period of pregnancy as a transition period

There is a good deal of literature about the backgrounds of girls who become pregnant as teenagers and the presumed negative effects that pregnancy has on their lives. However, very little appears to have been written about the period of pregnancy itself. How do girls experience pregnancy? How do they and their parents deal with the changes that take place during pregnancy? The way in which the girls experience their pregnancy is to some extent similar to the way that adult women experience their pregnancy. There are, however, also many important differences. In order to highlight both the similarities and the differences the concepts of 'rites of passage' and 'liminality' are helpful. I will briefly discuss the origin and meaning of these two concepts before turning to the pregnant girls' experiences.

The concept of 'rite of passage' was introduced by Van Gennep (1909) to describe the passage of a person from one social status to another during the course of his or her life. Typical examples are pregnancy and childbirth, childhood, puberty, betrothal, marriage and death. Each of these rites of passage includes three stages. In the first phase (separation), people withdraw from the group and begin moving from one place or status to another. In puberty rites, for example, this might be done by removing the child from the presence of the mother. In the third phase (reintegration or incorporation), people re-enter society, having completed the rite. The second stage is the period of liminality, which encompasses the period in between withdrawal from, and re-entry to, society. It is a vulnerable borderland on the threshold of a new stage of existence (Van Gennep, [1909] 1960).

During the stage of liminality, subjects occupy an ambiguous social position and exist apart from ordinary life. They are in a cultural realm that has few if any of the attributes of their past or future state. Subjects in this stage are, as Turner (1969) says, living in a sort of 'time out of time' in which they are 'betwixt and between' social categories and expectations. Turner also emphasises the aspect of '*communitas*', which he uses to refer to the fact that rites of passage usually take place within a group. The fact that passage is experienced within a group promotes a feeling of great social solidarity, equality and togetherness; people experiencing liminality together form a community of equals (ibid.).

If pregnancy constitutes a liminal stage, then teenage pregnancy does so to an even greater extent. This means that the elements of liminality that are usually experienced by pregnant women are experienced more intensely by pregnant girls. One of the first things

that struck me about the experiences of the pregnant girls were their feelings of sadness and regret. More than most adult women who get pregnant, they seemed to have a hard time coming to terms with the sudden and unexpected end of the previous period. In the interviews and conversations I had with the pregnant girls, they made many references to the period before they got pregnant, always with a sort of longing for everything that was now over. For all girls, the period of pregnancy was a period of saying farewell to the dreams and plans of the past. It was a period of saying farewell to the 'free life' they had had before. The girls also experienced growing feelings of love for their unborn baby. These two kinds of feelings often got mixed up. In the following interview excerpts Erica and Angelica described their feelings. In both excerpts, one can see the combination of regret over a past identity that is slipping away and a growing love for the baby soon to be born. In the end, it seems that none of the girls wished that they were *not* pregnant.

Erica: When I had just got pregnant, I sometimes thought: why is this happening to me? I looked at other girls and thought I should have been more careful. Why have I done this? And all those things I thought; now I'll just be like this [i.e., pregnant]; What's going to happen to me? I won't go to school anymore, I'll miss my friends, I won't be able to go out anymore; all those things, you know. I regretted everything, just everything, but later I said to myself: that's how it is; what can I do?

JO: Would you change it if you could?

E: No, because I have already started to love it too much

J: You mean the baby?

E: Yes I've really started to love it, and I would not change the situation, I think.

Angelica: Sometimes I feel bad. Instead of studying, instead of making something of my life, this is how I am. Oh my God, what should I do? I wish it wasn't like this.

JO: You wish it wasn't like this?

Yes, I still think these things. But you know, when I feel something here [pointing at her belly], or when I go to the doctor and see things on the echo, I do feel I want it. But at other times, I don't.

Liminality involves the idea of being 'out of time', of not taking part in real life. It is perhaps this element that struck me most in the situation of the pregnant girls (Olthoff, 2004b). Directly or indirectly, all six girls expressed the idea of living in a separated, shut-off space. One aspect that gives rise to the feelings of 'living out of time' is that none of the girls were attending school during her pregnancy. As I already stated in Chapter 4, Peruvian Law does not allow schools to expel pregnant girls. In spite of this, sometimes school directors exert a certain amount of subtle pressure. When a girl's pregnancy becomes visible, she is strongly encouraged to stay at home until she has the baby. Many girls, however, leave school much earlier, often, as soon as they realise that they are pregnant. Shame seems to be the most important factor. Of the pregnant girls in my study, Britney and Yosara stopped going to school just after they got pregnant. Erica and Silvia had already left school before becoming pregnant. Erica had stopped going to school several months before becoming pregnant. She had increasing conflicts with her parents, mainly about her boyfriend, and she ran away from home a few times. Silvia left school much earlier. When she was in third grade, she already

decided she did not want to go to school anymore and, despite many efforts on the part of her parents to get her back in school, she just stayed at home.

Not attending school, nor having any outside activity such as work, led to a situation in which the pregnant girls in Los Pinos were largely confined to their houses. They only went out when they had to and, even then, their excursions outside of the home were to a certain extent 'undercover'. They tended to go out with their heads covered, or at night, and to otherwise assure that they would be seen by the minimum number of people in their community. The girls were ashamed of their pregnancy and were afraid that the neighbours would find out. Shame is indeed an important factor lying in the background of the out-of-time- feelings. Take Angelica, who stated:

I don't go out anymore, I am at home. I don't even go to the market anymore. Because, you know, maybe people already know, but I really prefer to stay here. Sometimes I go out at night or late in the afternoon, I leave well covered, with my scarf pulled till here so that you won't see anything

Trapped behind the walls of their homes, the girls were rather inactive. They watched television a lot and they all reported feelings of loneliness and boredom. These feelings constitute the next element of liminality. The feelings reported by the girls in Los Pinos are similar to those found by Arias and Aramburú in their study of teenage mothers in Metropolitan Lima, Cusco and Iquitos. Asked how they had experienced their pregnancy, they all mentioned aspects of exclusion, abandonment, solitude and pain (Arias and Aramburú, 1999:136-143).

One of the girls who most clearly expressed the idea of being 'stuck' in her home was Yosara, who left her parents' house when she became pregnant. She moved in with her *marido* Guillermo, in Villa El Salvador, an adjacent district, about three kilometres away. When I visited her, she was eight months pregnant. She told me:

My life has become very boring. "This is how my life has ended up", I sometimes think. Now I start to think about things, you know, I don't know what I was thinking before. I could have been working already by now. I thought it would be easy, and I don't even have the baby yet.

Guillermo, Yosara's boyfriend, was a silversmith with a rather stable network of clients; Guillermo's mothers house where they lived on the second floor, was actually in fairly decent condition and had stone walls and a zinc roof. Yosara spent nearly all of the daytime hours alone in the house. She did some cleaning and cooking, and was often bored. During my visit the television was on and we started to talk about TV series. She told me that she actually watched television the whole day while she engaged in various household chores. She summarised her daily routine as follows:

I get up early to prepare breakfast for Guillermo. I eat breakfast a little later. I sweep the house, I clean. At 9 a.m. I have breakfast. Then I soak my clothes. I go to the market. I go a bit early, when it isn't so hot. Then I cook lunch, it takes quite some time, because I only have two [burners]. I make soup and a main dish. After lunch I wash my clothes. Sometimes, like today, I don't wash. Well, and then at about 5 a.m. I am done. Sometimes I go downstairs to help my nephew with his homework; if not I am just bored. I am bored a lot. I never thought it would be like this.

The feelings of seclusion and of being out of place are related to a number of factors. First of all, they are caused by the way the community reacts to teenage girls' pregnancies. As we already saw in Angelica's statement above, the girls' confinement to their houses is related to feelings of shame and the attempt of girls to keep the pregnancy a secret. In the beginning usually only the girls' parents and a number of close friends know. The pregnancy is kept secret from the rest of the community for as long as possible. However, there is often already a lot of gossip and speculation about the girl long before the neighbours actually know about the pregnancy. When the news of the girl's pregnancy becomes public, the reactions are usually very negative and condemning: not only the girl but also her parents are seen in the eyes of the whole community as having failed. Physical isolation accompanied by a subdued attitude for pregnant girls is expected and considered appropriate by the community. Related to the idea of having made a mistake, the period of pregnancy is also seen as a time for reflecting upon one's sins.

Loneliness was reinforced by the fact that the girls felt growing feelings of distance in relationships with their friends. Most girls see their friends less often after becoming pregnant; if they do see their friends, they usually feel more emotionally distant from them than was previously the case. Yosara told me that, since she had moved in with her boyfriend in Villa El Salvador, she received only a single visit from one of her friends. Erica and Angelica stayed in their parent's homes while they were pregnant and, in their cases, the loss of contact with friends was not as dramatic as it was for Yosara. However, both of the girls felt more emotionally distant from their friends than they had before. In the first weeks after she became pregnant, Erica was afraid of how her friends would react. She actually felt ashamed about telling them, since as she said, *they always have given me so much advice*. Their first reactions, however, were very supportive; they seemed to like the fact that Erica would be having a baby. They all said they wanted to chip in to help Erica out with the baby when necessary. In spite of their enthusiasm and support, Erica felt a growing distance between her and her friends:

Erica: Sometimes when I am talking with Rosita, or with Verónica, and when they tell me this or that, something that has occurred to them [...] I can't talk with them the same way anymore. What I mean is, I can't say anymore, "You know, that boy from over there came to me and said this and that to me. I don't know, but I can't talk with them the same way as before. They tell me things, and I listen to them; I also tell them things, but I feel kind of indifferent.

JO: You feel a certain distance?

Erica: Yes, sometimes I am also a bit reserved in sharing things with them, because: What will their reaction be? Maybe they will feel strange as well when I tell them things. I think they might not even understand. So, yes, I feel strange when I am with them and when we talk about something. They do try to treat me normally, they in fact didn't change the subjects of talk, But, still, I think they also notice something; however, they don't dare talk about it.

Erica adamantly warned her friends to not make the same 'mistake' she had made. In fact, with that warning, she actually defined the emotional distance she felt from them: her friends still had many opportunities and they had to take advantage of them. Erica herself no longer had these opportunities.

The period of pregnancy is not only a period of saying farewell to the former life. It is also a first step towards a new life, a period of preparation. This aspect of preparation or

orientation - the second element of liminality - was evident in the case of Yosara, the girl who moved in with her boyfriend Guillermo after she got pregnant. The period of pregnancy for her clearly meant a preparation for her life as a wife and mother. In practice, it meant, for example, that she had to learn how to cook. Unfortunately, her efforts did not always meet with Guillermo's approval. She told me that when he came home, he would always have a taste of whatever she had prepared. If he didn't like it, he would suddenly say that he had an urgent appointment.

The aspect of orientation and preparation is also present in the girls' thoughts and choices regarding where to live. Britney's mother told me that when her daughter got pregnant, she wanted to go and live with her boyfriend. Britney's mother did not hesitate for long, grabbed all her daughter's belongings and left her daughter at her boyfriend's place. In the course of her pregnancy however, living together turned out to be more difficult than Britney had expected and, after about three months, she moved in with her mother again. Britney later told me about this move:

And then I went home again. My mother was very happy and only then did I really get my belly, when I stayed with her. You know, when I was five months pregnant I didn't have any belly and only when I stayed with her, my belly started to grow, grow, grow. It became very big, it was as if I now felt happy, and with him I didn't. [With him] I felt sad, and the baby did as well.

Erica also moved back and forth several times between her parents' place and that of her boyfriend and, throughout the whole period of her pregnancy, the question of where she and her boyfriend were going to live repeatedly came up. Sometimes, Erica said she was going to live with Wiliam and the baby in his mother's house. At other times she said that her parents would construct a room upstairs for her, Wiliam and the baby. As far as I know, this plan was never carried out. When she got pregnant, Erica initially stayed at her boyfriend's place for a few weeks. Her parents urged her to come home since, in their house, she would be safer and she would have more support. After a few weeks, Erica started to spend more and more time at her parents' home. Usually she spent the days there, whereas at night she still went up to Wiliam's place. Later in her pregnancy she also stayed the nights at her parent's place and, after giving birth to her baby, both Erica and Wiliam started to live there.

Yosara, as mentioned before, moved in with Guillermo when she got pregnant. She did this, however, not so much as a result of her own choice. When I visited her, she told me that she would have liked to stay at her parents' home, just like her sister and her boyfriend were then doing. Guillermo, however, did not want to live at her parents' place; for him the idea of having their own house was very important. About one month before giving birth, Yosara returned to her parents' home. After giving birth, she stayed there a few weeks longer and then she went back to Guillermo's house in Villa El Salvador. Angelica stayed at home during her pregnancy. Just after giving birth, she moved to a little house next to the home of Simón's mother, just like they had planned. Silvia also stayed at home during her pregnancy.

Most of the girls thus stayed at home during at least the majority of the time that they were pregnant. Their positions in their families, however, were no longer the same as they had been before (Olthoff, 2004b). This was particularly the case in financial terms since, when a girl gets pregnant, her boyfriend is considered to be the one financially responsible for her. In the interview with Britney's mother, she repeatedly mentioned the responsibilities of her

daughter's boyfriend to me: since he had made her daughter pregnant, he also had to take financial responsibility for her and the baby. In the following excerpt from the interview with Britney's mother, she told me what she had told Cr stifo, Britney's boyfriend:

“From now on, you will have to ‘give’ for my daughter. From now on, you are the one who has to maintain my daughter because she has your child inside of her. That is how it will be. However, you are not allowed to come here to sleep with her”, I said. “You wronged my daughter while she was still in secondary school”. That is how I talked to him!

Parents insisted that their daughter's boyfriend should financially support both the baby and for the girl. In practice however, this did not happen while the girl was still living at home. Most boys did take financial responsibility for pregnancy-related costs, such as visits to the doctor. It was far less frequently the case that boys also contributed to the girls' living expenses during pregnancy. In such situations, parents repeatedly made mention of this omission and many girls told me that this made them feel very uncomfortable.

The fact that there are clear expectations with respect to financial responsibility does not mean that the couple is also required to live together, much less that a formal marriage is expected. Britney told me that, when she first became pregnant, some people in the family suggested that she and Cr stifo get married. Her uncle however, himself a *profesional* as Britney emphasised, was opposed to this idea. His opinion, according to Britney, was the following:

Getting pregnant is one thing, but that doesn't mean she will have to tie herself forever to this man. Let's not make another mistake here. Maybe, the day will come when they don't want to be together anymore and they will then be able to separate much easier. If they were married, then it would be much more difficult.

Afterward, Britney was very happy with her uncle's intervention, as the following quote shows:

Think about it, if I would have married him, I would be tied to him, I would be living with him, there [in his house] because when you are married, you are not going to live like me, one here, and the other there. He could even sue me, or I could sue him. For abandonment, you know.

Erica's parents told me that marriage would be something for later. They said it would all depend on how their relationship progressed and to what extent he would really prove to be a responsible father:

Gisela: If they stay with each other, if he supports her in her studies, and above all with the baby, so that she can become what she wants to, we are not against it, on the contrary. He can help us with the baby, no? It's good for my daughter as well. We want him to support us. Above all for the baby....

Sebastian: Yes, because the baby is going to need [many things].

Gisela: And he will have to take care of that. But, I have to say, until now he is a good boy. He is a good boy. Quiet, above all, and a worker....

The different position of the girls in their families also had emotional aspects. Most important was the changing relationship between them and their parents. As one of the girls once said to me, it was as if a new type of relationship had to be established. Angelica had the following to say about the relationship with her parents:

My mother acts a bit strange with me. Just a bit, you know. Before, when she just found out, it was even more. She does not really shout at me, but... she just looks at me. It makes me feel as if I want to cover myself with something. But actually, at the moment things go just fine between my mum and me. I have more problems with my father. I don't talk to my father. But it hurts. Sometimes I want to tell him something, but I can't. Simón also came to our house a few times to talk to my father, but my father didn't feel well, or he wasn't at home, he was at work, or at my uncle's house; every time there was something else.

In practice, the changing relationship between girls and their parents is most visible in the decreasing control that parents exercise over their daughters. From what I saw and heard from the girls, their parents generally left them alone when they were pregnant. This constitutes a big change from the often rather conflictive period beforehand. Usually, this was a period in which because of the girl's relationship with a boy, she was subject to a high degree of parental control. In this sense, the ideas some girls had previously had about escaping parental control by getting pregnant turned out to be true. In the following interview excerpt Erica described the changes she experienced in her relationship with her parents:

Erica: You know, they no longer treat me as... they don't control me anymore. They don't tell me anymore what to do and what not to do; they don't do that anymore.

JO: Do you mean you are not treated like a child anymore?

Well, my mother still... She still gives me advice, she still tells me certain things. But it is not the same as it was before. Before she told me, "You know Erica, don't make this and that mistake, don't do this or that", or "Cuidate, you have to take care of yourself". Those kinds of things are over. Now, she tells me other things, it is different now.

JO: And your father?

Erica: He has also changed. Before, my father always said: "You know Erica, you have to do this and that and if you don't, I will hit you in the evening when I come home", that's what he always told me. But now, he doesn't do that anymore; now he just asks me to clean and to cook, but only if I have the time to do it.

When I asked the pregnant girls how they viewed their future, none of them really knew how to respond. They seemed to be looking forward to the birth of the baby and they had rather romantic ideas about what they were going to do and how they were going to care for the baby. For example, Erica told me: *I already dream about it, about what I am going to buy for the baby, all those cute things.* At the same time, though, the girls did not have any idea about what this future would actually look like. It was as if they just managed to cope with the changes that had been taking place during the previous months; the future was still something far away; again a situation where the concept of liminality comes into play. The only thing they knew for sure was, as Erica put it in the following quote, was that everything would be different from now on:

From now on, I don't know, it's going to be different; it's going to be different than before although already now things are different than before; before, I went out with my friends. We went to many places. Now, that is over, I don't even feel like going out, I don't know, I don't feel anymore like .. all these things that are typical for my age, you know, like going out to parties. Before, I always wanted to go to parties with friends, I never wanted to lose out on something. But, now, that is all over.

When Angelica became pregnant, Erica had already given birth. In her views about the future, Angelica was thus influenced to some extent by Erica's experiences. Still, however, she was unsure about what would be waiting for her:

Well, I think I will have to do a lot of things. But beyond that, I don't know. Erica came by the other day and she told me a lot of things. She told me she often doesn't have enough diapers and that she doesn't have money to buy milk; and that the baby cried all the time. "Oh! I can see what's in store for me", I told her.

One aspect of liminality, emphasised by Turner, that was less easy to recognise in the case of the pregnant girls in Los Pinos is *communitas*: the idea of solidarity between people who are in the same situation. Pregnancy is of course, to a large extent, an inherently individual process, which usually does not occur for a group of girls at exactly the same time. In that sense, we cannot really speak of *communitas*. The pregnant girls however, clearly felt a sort of identification with other pregnant girls. This was particularly clear for Britney, who during her pregnancy spent a great deal of her time in a centre for pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers. She told me she liked it because, as she said *I don't feel so different in there*. Some girls also mentioned that they felt there was more *confianza* between them and their mothers as compared to the period before their pregnancy, something they partly ascribed to the fact that the girls now shared with them the experience of being pregnant.

Liminality means that social positions become unclear and undefined. This is the last element of liminality that I would like to focus on. What I saw in the cases of the pregnant girls in Los Pinos was that their parents did not really know how to position them. They no longer saw them as adolescents, but they also hesitated to call them adults. In this respect, I would like to recall what Britney's mother said earlier in this chapter: *You have not finished being a daughter yet, and now you are going to be a mother*. Erica's mother expressed a similar feeling when she said:

She is still a child, and sometimes it takes time to mature. She will have a child now... and she is still not finished being a child herself. She is still a child, and she will have a child. Well, little by little she will become more responsible, don't you think?

The aspect of undefined positions is also clear in how the girls looked at themselves. On the one hand, just like their parents they no longer saw themselves as adolescents. They did not go to school anymore and, as Erica put it, they no longer did *those normal adolescent things, like going out with friends or going to a birthday party on Friday night*. However, again just like their parents, they were a bit reluctant to start calling themselves adults. They felt they were forced to make a step they were not entirely ready for yet, and they all stated that, to become

real adults, they had to become more mature. But they realised that they had no choice. As Erica said:

I am trying to grow up. But it is difficult. I like going to parties, I like going out. But that is not possible anymore. I have to grow up!

In the case of Britney, the feeling of liminality carried over into motherhood itself. She was the mother of a two-year-old girl, but was still reluctant to say her youth was over. She was aware of the fact that she had changed and that she was no longer the adolescent she was before. At the same time she did not yet see herself as an adult. When I asked her why she described herself this way, she mainly pointed to the role of education:

Before, I was different; I didn't think like I do now, Now I do think. Before, I really didn't know anything; I was in fourth grade and I didn't know what I wanted to study, I didn't know. I behaved like a child, you know. I changed a lot; I am no longer the 15 or 16-year-old girl I was then. [I am no longer] the crazy girl I was then.

[However] I feel young; I am still not like you, not an adult. Not yet. Maybe I will feel like an adult when... I have my profesión, my diploma. But, for now, I am still young. [...] I don't feel like I'm a little child either, but, how can I explain it to you? I am not involved anymore in those childish things, games here and games there, But... Well, I still feel like I'm a kid, but different.

In the beginning of this section, I stated that liminality is useful as a structuring concept in the analysis of the experiences of pregnant girls in Los Pinos. In the previous pages, we saw how all the girls had feelings of regret and nostalgia for times past. We also saw that they had difficulties adapting, often spent long hours in their houses and interacted as little as possible with people outside their direct family. They knew they had transgressed the social norms and values and knew the neighbours would gossip about that. Because of being pregnant, they were stigmatised by their community, and thus their isolation could be seen as both self-imposed and as something viewed as natural within the larger social context of the neighbourhood. This isolation illustrates the idea of pregnancy as a liminal period, a characterisation that seems especially apt for teenage pregnancy. Overall, it has become clear that liminality for pregnant teenage girls is particularly deep and intense. The transition that has to be made from being a teenage girl to being an adult mother is considerable. Even more importantly, out-of-wedlock pregnancy involves far more shame and negative feelings for teenage girls than it does for adult women. Teenage girls are much less likely to have friends and family who are uncritically supportive, or even downright enthusiastic, about their having a child than unmarried adult women in a similar situation (Olthoff, 2004b; see also Araya et al., 1996:28-29).

Being a mother

With the birth of the baby, the transition period comes to an end. The pregnant girl is now a mother. For pregnant girls in Los Pinos, birth usually takes place in Maria Auxiliadora Hospital, which is about two kilometres away from the residential area. In the absence of complications, the girl and the baby can go home one or two days following delivery. Even when the girl already lives at her boyfriend's place, she usually stays for a few days or weeks at her parent's home after giving birth in order to regain her strength. This is most of all a

period during which the girl is just happy with the new baby. However, life as a very young mother, with many problems and challenges, looms as an impending reality that soon must be faced.

Erica, Angelica and Britney were the three girls whom I was able to follow both during their pregnancies and after they became new mothers. When I asked them how they experienced the period of motherhood, all three said that their new situation was much more difficult than they had ever thought it would be. As both Erica and Britney stressed, one of the most pressing problems was finances:

Erica: Every day, the whole week I have to worry, because I might not have something for my baby, and well, if I need to buy something, who is going to lend it to me? That's how it is every day! All those preoccupations, that's how it is. That's how I am. You know, sometimes, the baby cries, and then I say to myself: I don't have money to buy what he needs; and I ask myself, where can I find it? It makes you desperate, you know. And, then, when the baby gets desperate [when the concerns about the baby make me desperate] William [her boyfriend] has to go out to borrow money somewhere. Even in order to buy milk for the baby! That's how we are. All the time worried. Because, sometimes, for one or two days things go well, but then after two days we run out [of money] and then again more worries....

Britney: The life I am leading is very difficult, very difficult, because... I have to sacrifice everything. Everything I have is for my daughter. That's why I tell you it is difficult. It is very difficult how things go today. Particularly in comparison to how things were before. Before, my mother gave me everything I needed, but now she doesn't do that anymore; now I have to get [money] from wherever I can....

Angelica also had a difficult few months after her baby was born. She started to live together with her boyfriend Simón in a little hut next to his mother's place. Simón sometimes worked as a *cobrador* (money collector in a bus), and later in construction work. Both of these jobs were irregular in nature and thus did not enable him to generate a stable income. Often, Simón could not give her enough money to make lunch and to buy milk for the baby. If she wanted to visit her mother, a trip of about three kilometres, she usually had money for only part of the trip. This meant that she had to walk, and often she simply decided not to go. After about six months, Angelica increasingly felt she wanted to return to her parent's place to live there. The romantic idea Angelica had before getting pregnant that having the baby would bring Simón and her closer together had not become true. Apart from the financial problems, the two often quarrelled, and other people told me Simón sometimes became rather violent. Finally, Angelica and Simón separated and, as far as I know, Simón no longer helps to financially support the baby. Angelica found a full time job in order to be able to financially support herself and her baby. Her mother takes care of the baby at the market where she works.

In the preceding sections we saw that, despite the gloomy scenarios that parents had envisioned before their daughter got pregnant, their attitude was rather mild and pragmatic once their daughter actually became pregnant. We also saw that, compared to the period before the girls became pregnant, during the pregnancy the relationship between parents and daughters was relatively calm. After the child was born, the situation changed somewhat. On the one hand I saw parents trying to support their daughters in many practical ways, as they

had said that they would. The girls got a lot of support from their parents, most of all from their mothers. The latter, for example, would care for the baby when necessary and also taught their daughters how to properly take care of the baby.²³⁰ Parents sometimes even said they saw the new baby more as their own child than as their grandchild. For example, Britney's mother said: *I feel as if it is my own daughter. The only difference is that I didn't feel the pains. But for me, it is like having another child.* Erica's mother expressed a similar attitude when she told me: *For me, it is like another child. I always wanted to have one more child, but now I won't do it, since I have already one.*

On the other hand, I also saw growing tensions between the new young mothers and their parents, especially when the girls were still living at home. It was, as one of the girls said, as if it was only at this stage that parents expressed their anger about the pregnancy. A practical problem was that, despite their efforts, the girls' mothers sometimes could not live up to the expectations of their daughters. They often had their own jobs and activities and they were of course not always around. Erica's mother for example had a full-time job in a hotel, and she could only take care of the baby in the evenings and sometimes on weekends. In the case of Angelica, who as we saw returned to her parent's place after having lived for about six months with her boyfriend, the situation was a bit easier. Her mother could take the baby to the market where she worked. This way Angelica had the freedom to work six days a week in a store. Britney and her mother coordinated their outside activities. In their case, more reciprocity was involved, as Britney's mother also had the responsibility for two other grandchildren whose mother lived abroad. In the following excerpt, Britney told me how they planned out every week:

Mother, could I... when do you leave...? Okay, you leave that day, then I will stay with the children. But then you will have to commit yourself for that other day. In this way, we help each other out. She has her two grandchildren and I have my daughter. So, when I stay home, I am with three children, who would cook and take care of them otherwise? And when I leave, my mother takes care of the three of them. So I tell her, if you go out that day, I won't.

Both Britney and Erica reported that, overall, the relationship with their parents had become more tense. Erica mentioned both emotional and financial problems:

We are no longer, how could I tell you, we are no longer as close as we were before, there is more distance. Because, well, I am with Wiliam now, we have our lives and they have theirs, don't they. My mother changed considerably towards me. It hurts, and I sometimes think, "Oh my mother!". Why does she behave that way toward me? That is what I sometimes think. She sometimes says things I don't like, things that hurt me, no? I am afraid that she doesn't like me anymore, that I bore her, or that we bore her. That's why [I feel bad]; I feel like she's uncomfortable around us now. That's what I sometimes think. Well, I give my mother 20 soles per week. But, sometimes she tells me, you know... she tells me, "Oh, I don't have money", things like that; I get the feeling she tells me these things so that I will give her more. But I don't have more! If I had more, I would give it to her. But I don't have

230 For the girls who lived neither with their parents nor near them, like Yosara and Angelica during the first few months, practical care fell almost entirely on their own shoulders. This was a heavy burden and left the girls very little time for anything other than household tasks.

enough myself. I give her 20 soles, and that already hurts me a lot, because, you know why? Because, sometimes I think, maybe next week, I am going to need something [for the baby]. So, I give her to just give her something, I have to, so I do, but And, besides, sometimes when I turn on the radio, my mother says to me "Oh, why do you turn on the radio? Are you the one who is going to pay for the electricity?"

Britney told me that the relationship between her and her mother was sometimes very difficult. As we saw, Britney's mother took over much of the practical responsibility for Britney's daughter, so that she could go to school or work. Her mother sometimes supported her financially as well. What Britney missed most, however was being able to be more of a daughter in her relationship with her mother:

Before, how could I tell you, before I was like her baby, but it's not like that anymore. She doesn't treat me with the same love anymore. That has all changed. Because, she knows I have my boyfriend now, so she perhaps feels kind of uncomfortable.

The general impression I got from conversations with the new mothers and their parents is that parents tend to provide their daughters 'conditional support'. The conditions may not always be communicated explicitly, but it is nonetheless clear that the parents support them in large part in order to help them to eventually be able to achieve something in life. As I've said, both Britney's and Erica's mothers thought of their daughter's baby as more of a child than a grandchild. Of course, this feeling was partly due to the fact that they felt a strong connection to the baby, whom they were taking care of a good deal of the time. But expressing the matter in this way also seemed to be a way of communicating to their daughters that, despite having had babies, there would still be a future for them. Their daughters would still be able to achieve something in life. It seems as if the grandmothers try to assume some of the responsibility for the *error* that their daughters have made, in order to ameliorate the consequences for their daughters.

When the girls got pregnant, their parents reacted for the most part with shock and disappointment, most of all because at that moment the dream of social mobility through education seemed to be shattered. In the months that followed, however, parents 'picked up the pieces' as it were, and slowly began to reconstruct this dream. The girls' parents felt that it was still possible to make something of their daughters' lives, if they and their daughters made enough of an effort. The dream of socio-economic ascent, despite the setback of pregnancy, was born anew. In this context, the parental demands of their daughters were expressed with an even greater urgency than before. This also explains both the very practical character of most parental support as well as the girls' impressions that their parents seemed more angry about their pregnancies than they had been before. It was probably the case that parents now realised that the hopes that they had previously had harboured were not very realistic, and that the only chance for a better future for their daughter lay in their own willingness to sacrifice - and in their inculcating a similar willingness on the part of their daughters.

How have the relationships between the girls and their boyfriends evolved following pregnancy? Britney, who at the time she was interviewed had a two-year-old daughter, told me that the relationship between her and Crístofo had changed drastically. He still visited her and the baby regularly, and most of the time he helped out financially. Her feelings for him had changed however:

I go to his house. Before, I used to stay there at night, but now I don't do that anymore. Because, I have so many problems with him. ... It's as if he doesn't like me anymore. You know, I think he changed as well, not just me, also him. If you believe that when there is love, this will never disappear, then I would say in our case there wasn't love. Because, things have definitely changed. He is a taxi driver, you know that, right? Well, he is a taxi driver, which is an independent profession. So, before, he used to come by to see me, to have lunch, and we always gave him lunch but that was before, now things are different. Before, when we had an argument, he couldn't leave for work without having made up with me. And now, it's not like that anymore. And before, when we made up again, I cried, and I felt happy for having made up. When we would argue I would be sad. But now, it's all different. I argue with him, and then three or four days may pass; this wasn't the way it was before. And when we do make up, we don't hug each other anymore, there are no longer the sweet kisses. Everything is different now!

Erica, who had told me during her pregnancy that the problems between her and Wiliam had finally disappeared, said three months after the baby was born that the two of them were now arguing more. Most of these arguments were about finances:

Sometimes, there are problems, mainly because of our worries, because we constantly need things. Sometimes he becomes worried, no, and then he takes out his anger about small things; and I don't like it when he does that and that's why we sometimes argue.

Despite these problems, Erica is still living together with Wiliam (in her parents' house) and she is rather happy with her relationship. The two would like to live alone (i.e., outside her parents' place), but due to financial problems this will probably not be possible in the near future.

Angelica returned to her mother's place. She no longer lives with Simón. The couple had a lot of financial problems and were arguing a lot. Furthermore, Angelica felt very alone in Simón's house and it seemed to her that she was on her own when it came to caring for the baby. I do not know whether he still has any contact with his daughter.

Final reflection

According to a saying popular in Lima, '*El hombre siempre cae parado*'. Literally, this expression means 'a man always falls down upright'. This proverb implies that, whatever happens, boys are never hurt as much as girls. The saying is most often used to refer to teenage pregnancy which, although biologically the result of an action by a boy and a girl together, is without a doubt more burdensome for girls. The experiences of pregnant girls and teenage mothers presented in this chapter seem to stand as eloquent testimony to the truth expressed in the proverb. At the same time, it is good to realise that this is just part of the story: girls also struggle to get back on their feet again. One thing that became clear from this chapter is that the gloomy scenarios that had previously been envisioned by parents do not come to pass: girls are usually not thrown out of their parents' house when they get pregnant. Instead, parents seem to support their daughters in myriad ways. And, when the girls stay with their babies at their parents' home, there may be even some possibilities of finishing school or finding a job. In such cases, their mothers or other family members then take over some of the childcare responsibilities. At the same time, girls themselves experience the period of motherhood as very hard, harder than they had expected. They struggle with financial

problems and with providing practical care for the baby and, in addition, experience tensions in their relationships with their parents and their boyfriends. In the larger context the neighbourhood, they acquire a stigma that was very hard to efface.

What are the future possibilities for these girls? To what extent will the difficult economic situation remain the same in the years to come? Will they bear the stigma of early pregnancy and teenage motherhood forever? Because of the limited time frame of this research, it is impossible to give definitive answers to such questions. However, a number of general and tentative remarks can be made.

With respect to the economic and educational consequences in the longer run, we saw that some girls left school after becoming pregnant but before getting their diploma. What are the chances that they will eventually get a diploma? And what possibilities do the girls have of getting a job that would provide some financial security for themselves and their babies. Looking at the five cases of girls who got pregnant we see Britney, who managed to finish school and who is now working and studying at a centre for adolescent mothers. Angelica already finished school before she got pregnant and now has a full-time job. Erica, Yosara and Silvia have not finished school; all three are at home, neither working nor studying.

These five cases are of course not representative of all teenage mothers. However, to me, it is no surprise that the two girls who are now working outside the house or going to school (Angelica and Britney) both live in their parents' home without their husbands. Living together with the baby's father (even if this is at your parents' place, as is the case for Erica) means more work for the girl, as she is then responsible for maintaining an entire household. Furthermore, in these circumstances, the parents seem to be less inclined to provide practical support to their daughters. She now has her *marido* to take care of her. Of course, these interpretations do not suggest that all girls who live at their parents' home are able to go to school or work. It is undeniable, though, that such a setting affords a greater opportunity to do so.

The validity of this somewhat optimistic outlook also depends on whether or not additional children are born. Of the girls we have followed in this chapter, none of them has more than one child and, as far as I know, none of them are currently pregnant. Unlike before, they now use contraceptives, usually the pill or a hormonal injection. When they went to the doctor for their babies, they were also encouraged to protect themselves against another pregnancy. Erica and Yosara, the only two who were still in a stable relationship with their boyfriends when I last saw them, said they would like to have a second child in the distant future. However, they wanted to have financial security and more stability in their relationships before doing so. Erica also wanted to have her own house.

What about the possibilities for removing the stigma? Jeanine Anderson,²³¹ author of several studies on youth and gender in Peru, has suggested four possible scenarios. The first scenario involves a girl giving up the baby, either by formally putting it up for adoption or sending it to a family member who lives in the provinces. In these cases, according to Anderson, the stigma of getting pregnant probably disappears relatively soon. It is as if the *error* is instantly and entirely effaced. In Los Pinos I did not come across examples of girls who took this road.

231 Personal conversation with Jeanine Anderson, June 2002.

The second possible scenario is the one of the *madre-monja* (mother-nun), who stays in her parent's home and dedicates her time to work or school and to caring for the baby. In the longer term, within three to five years, she may recover her standing in the community. According to Quintana and Vásquez (1999) who asked adolescents (both male and female) about long-term image recovery, a critical factor in this regard is the girl's ability to finish high school.

Image recovery is also possible if girls follow the third road, the road of the *madre-esposa* (mother-wife). In this scenario the girl lives together with her partner in a stable union and is a good mother to her child. According to Quintana and Vásquez (1999:174), it seems that what is most important here is the couple's ability to provide the economic conditions in which good care can be provided to the baby. To some extent, financial problems are normal and, as a good mother and wife, she is supposed to handle these challenges. If the financial problems are too great however, this is ascribed to the inability of her partner-provider, and she may then be reproached for staying with him.

The last scenario is the one of permanent stigma. Girls in this scenario continue to act like they are still teenagers. They date, go out and have parties. It is as if these girls do not want to recognise their new responsibilities. In this scenario, according to Anderson, girls will always be disgraced in the eyes of the community.

When we look at the teenage mothers in Los Pinos, Yosara and Erica may be good examples of the third scenario (*madre-esposa*). It seems that if they continue to be good mothers to their babies and good wives to their partners, the community will gradually forget the negative teenage pregnancy label. Britney has been working hard to get on this path. After her baby was born, she went back to school and got her high school diploma. Now she is gearing up for further studies or work. Britney is determined to provide a good life for her baby and is doing everything she can to get ahead. In the neighbourhood however, Britney is known as a *pendeja*, an easy girl, who 'is with one boy after the other'. Besides, neighbours say she leaves her baby with her mother too often. In the eyes of the neighbours, Britney is definitely on the fourth road. Britney's example shows how fluid and slippery the different scenarios are. Behaviours are too easily understood in the light of an existing stigma and an extreme effort is needed to convince people in the surrounding community otherwise.

Angelica started on the third path, living together as a family with her partner and the baby. This did not turn out well, and she now lives with her parents. She thus switched towards the second road. Switching from one road to another is probably not very positive for your image, since it constitutes an additional failure. On the other hand, if one road does not work out, the chances of success are best by changing to another road (other than that of 'permanent stigma'). So, in the long run, Angelica's move may work out well.

Photo 8 Group of girls in Los Pinos



Chapter 8. Final discussion

This study focused on the lives and futures of teenage girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* (migrant popular neighbourhoods) of Metropolitan Lima. It is based on a case study, carried out in Los Pinos, a small *pueblo joven* in San Juan de Miraflores, in the southern cone of Lima. The majority of the adults in the neighbourhood are rural-to-urban migrants who came to the city with a dream of progress. They now expect their children, who were born in the city, to fulfil that dream.

In recent decades, one of the principal research themes among Latin Americanists has been the complex reality of migrant popular neighbourhoods. Especially in Lima, where the *pueblos jóvenes* have grown enormously during the last 30 years, a great deal of research has been carried out. Researchers focused, for example, on the creative ways in which migrants dealt with the challenges of urban life and on the informal economy and society that came into being in the *pueblos jóvenes* (De Soto, 1986; Golte and Adams, 1987; León and Cermeño, 1990; Palma, 1987; Riofrío, 2003). Other researchers focused on the *pueblos jóvenes* culture, highlighting the presumed high levels of solidarity and cooperation in these neighbourhoods and the mixed *chicha* culture that emerged there (Lobo, 1984; Matos Mar, 1984 and 2004; Portocarrero, 1993; Thieroldt Llanos, 2000).

The youth within these popular neighbourhoods have also received a good deal of attention during this time. Although in the 1970's there was already some youth research, that focused, with a strong Leninist bias, on the relationship between youth and political structures, it was not until the 1980's that youth really became a central theme in social science studies conducted in Peru (Montoya, 2003). Because of fast urbanisation as a result of rural-to urban-migrations and a growing democracy, new actors, such as migrants, women and youth increasingly got attention. In the 1980s, most studies examined the phenomenon of collective action on the part of youth (Degregori et al., 1986; Cánepa, 1990; Grompone, 1991; Tejada, 1990). From the 1990s onwards, attention shifted to youth cultures and youth politics (Macassi, 2001a; Santos Anaya, 2000). In recent years, researchers have also focused on the social networks and socialisation processes of popular youth (Anderson, 1994; Cárdenas, 1999; Ennew, 1986; Mendoza, 1993; Panfichi, 1993; Santos Anaya, 1999; Vega-Centeno, 1993). It has become clear that today's popular youth are subject to many different socialising messages and influences, often of a contradictory nature. However, very few studies have dealt with the backgrounds and construction of the messages themselves: What are these messages and why are they constructed in the ways that they are? What is the role of the parents' migrational background in how their children are socialised? Another point that has been largely neglected so far is the reaction and interpretation of socialising messages by youth themselves: How can their behaviour and views be linked to the parental messages and context of the *pueblos jóvenes* in general?

This dissertation is an attempt to address some of these omissions. I focused on the socialisation of teenage girls. As a result of the general tendency of youth research to focus on what is most deviant (e.g., youth violence, drug use, street children and teenage pregnancy),

teenage girls are generally not getting much attention in academic writing (see, for Peru: Montoya, 2003; for Latin America as a whole: Lozano, 2003). In the *pueblos jóvenes*, girls form a rather invisible group. They spend most of their time inside their houses and do not generally display the extreme kinds of problematic behaviour that tend to draw the attention of researchers and policy-makers. Within the socialisation relations the girls engage in, this study dealt only with the interaction between the girls and their parents. This choice was motivated by the observation that the girls spend large part of the day at home with their family and are thus in close contact with their parents. Moreover, in my fieldwork the girls indicated that they saw their parents as the most important persons in their lives.

The role of parents in the socialisation of girls in popular neighbourhoods has not received much research attention in recent years. Analysis was limited to statements about the negative effects on children of family instability and psychological problems related to poverty (see, for example, Mendoza, 1993; Nieves Rico, 1999; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1996). The picture that emerges from these studies is that, in a fast changing context like the *pueblos jóvenes*, the parental role is in fact almost played out. My research showed that the real situation is in fact more complex. Of course, the new context with new challenges and requirements changes the position of parents in socialisation. This change, however, does not necessarily imply a simple reduction. On the contrary, especially in the context of Latin America, where family relations and family socialisation always have been strong, parents remain the primary socialising agents. They are the ones children spend most of their time with.

How then do parents cope with their changing positions? To what extent and how are they trying to raise their children in the context of a changing urban society? And how do the girls themselves experience the relationship with their parents in the midst of so many other actors and influences? How do they live their lives in the *pueblos jóvenes* of Metropolitan Lima? It was these kinds of questions that were the focus of my work.

Los Pinos, the neighbourhood where I carried out my research, was created in 1984 by an *invasión* (i.e., an overnight settlement of land) and now contains about 120 households. The houses in the neighbourhood are built on the slopes of a hill on chalky soil. At the time of my fieldwork some of the houses still consisted of wood, corrugated iron, and reed mats; although the majority did have some stone walls. Most of the houses in the neighbourhood had direct or indirect access to water and electricity. The girls I worked with were between 14 and 18 years old and were all born in Metropolitan Lima. Many of them were the oldest daughters in their families. Family incomes were low, often below the extreme poverty line. They generally lived in nuclear families consisting of a father, a mother and between three and six children. Of the 19 girls most actively involved in the case study, two came from female-headed households. As a consequence of the age of the neighbourhood and the fact that many people started to build their families after they settled there, many children had reached adolescence within the past few years.

In this concluding chapter, three broad themes will be analysed. First of all, I will review some of the literature on the culture of poverty in order to examine its relevance for girls growing up in *pueblos jóvenes*. I will also discuss the position of popular girls' culture within the broader youth culture in Lima. Specific attention will be devoted to addressing the apparent contradiction that, in spite of the bleak future that appears to lie ahead, girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* keep dreaming of a brighter future for themselves. The second set of questions addresses the interaction between parents and their daughters and some issues regarding

child-raising cultures. I will discuss the educational messages that parents construct in the interaction with their daughters and how the girls respond to these messages. Finally, some concluding remarks will be made with respect to gender relations, a topic I have addressed throughout the present study.

Poverty and marginalisation

Levels of poverty in Peru, and more specifically in Lima, have been consistently high for many years. In 2000, at the beginning of my fieldwork, 45% of Lima's population was reported to be living below the poverty line (Instituto Cuánto, 2000). The situation is the most severe in the *pueblos jóvenes*, where millions of migrants from the provinces have settled. Although many of its inhabitants have access to basic services like education and healthcare, they suffer from inadequate housing and have a very low mean family income. Moreover, they suffer from discrimination for racial, socio-economic and cultural reasons (Riofrío, 2003).

Since the emergence of the *pueblos jóvenes* in the 1970s, the lives of their inhabitants have given rise to many studies and reports. One theme within those studies was how the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods were dealing with the economic problems they encountered (De Soto, 1986; León and Cermeño, 1990; Palma, 1987). Two different lines of inquiry can be distinguished. On the one hand we see a focus on agency and survival strategies, a focus in which perseverance and inventiveness is central. In this literature, *pueblos jóvenes* inhabitants are applauded for their entrepreneurship and their industriousness (Adams and Valdivia, 1991; Golte and Adams, 1987; Palma, 1987). On the other hand, we see literature on the marginalised position of these people and, more particularly, on the vicious circle in which they are supposedly stuck (Barrig, 1993). This line of research can be summarised under the heading of 'culture of poverty' studies. The idea of a 'culture of poverty', originally introduced by Lewis, is that people who are living in poverty often develop a way of dealing with it that is self-sustaining (Lewis, 1959, 1961 and 1965). Poor people develop survival strategies that, although viable and useful in the short term, are not always helpful in the longer term. What emerges is a system of beliefs and practices, a culture that, instead of surmounting poverty helps to perpetuate it. According to Lewis, the 'culture of poverty' is characterised by, among other things, passivity, a short-term focus, unstable family relationships and a predisposition to authoritarianism within the family. It emerges particularly among marginalised groups living within a class-stratified, highly individuated capitalistic society (Lewis, 1965).

In the years since it was introduced, the idea of a culture of poverty has come under attack from a variety of different quarters (see, for example, Lomnitz, 1975; Perlman, 1976; Portes, 1972). However, the theory has never entirely disappeared and, as a recent review article on poverty and marginality concludes: "There is now increasing evidence that although classic marginality may have lacked empirical veracity in its earliest iteration, changing economic conditions born of [the] structural adjustment and austerity of the 1980s, together with the neo-liberal restructuring of the 1990s, is today creating the very conditions and cultural constraints conceived and predicted by ... [among others] Lewis" (Ward, 2004:185-186). Even Perlman, once one of the fiercest critics of the culture of poverty, recently stated: "What we have been observing over these decades is the transformation from the 'myth of marginality' to 'the reality of marginality'" (Perlman, 2005:22).

Based on what I observed, my conclusion is that many elements of the culture of poverty and of marginality do indeed exist and that these are important factors in understanding what is going on in the daily lives of people. For example, intergenerational transmission of

poverty can be readily observed in Los Pinos, as can the phenomenon of prioritising short-term needs over long-term goals. What I do not recognise, though, is the high degree of passivity or apathy which Lewis sees as typical for people living in a culture of poverty. What I saw instead were many examples of creative and inventive survival strategies. One cannot deny, though, that poverty persists for large groups of people and that in spite of numerous attempts of people to work their way out of their disadvantaged situation, only very few succeed. Many people, in short, seem to be trapped in a situation of poverty and stigmatisation.

Intergenerational transmission of poverty

The persisting high level of poverty in the migrant neighbourhoods of Lima raises questions about the chances that its youth might be able to climb out of poverty in the years to come. For the girls in Los Pinos, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions because of the time span of the research. Their life stories thus far, however, indicate that they are not proceeding along a path that would realistically help them achieve the goals they say that they have for themselves. Many of them feel that they are stuck in the same kind of poverty as their parents. The resulting feelings of hopelessness lead to inaction and or problematic behaviour on the part of these teenagers that make it even less likely that they will better themselves economically.

A look at the lives of the girls who did not get pregnant tells us that, even in these cases, it is difficult to substantially improve one's socio-economic standing. Because of financial problems, continuing their education beyond high school has not been possible for most of the girls. For most of them, the informal sector is looming, as can be seen in the following concrete examples. Elena's older sister Marta has already been at home for two years, because neither she nor her family have the money that she need to go to an *academia* to prepare for university. She is helping out her mother in the little shop that she runs. Consuela's parents are very poor as well. They both lack stable jobs and, since Consuela is the oldest child, she will probably have to start working as soon as possible. For these families, the sincere wish that their children be better off in the future clashes with the financial exigencies of present everyday life. Yet there are also exceptions. In the group of girls I worked with, the twins Lilia and Carolina and their younger sister Celeste had parents who both worked and whose combined family income was relatively high. Their school grades were relatively high, and more importantly, none of the three girls is pregnant thus far. In this family, it is possible that at least one of the girls might make it to an institute of higher education.

One of the reasons for my pessimism regarding upward socio-economic mobility is related to the culture of poverty discussed in the previous section. The focus on short-term survival, which I identified as one of the central elements of *pueblos jóvenes* culture, is reproduced by youth. Just like their parents, the girls' decisions and activities could be most accurately characterised as short-term oriented and *ad hoc*. In the girls' lives, short-term needs often got priority over longer-term goals. The longer-term objectives related to education, for example, easily gave way when there was no money, or when girls felt they were needed in household activities or work. Girls regretted having to make such choices, but they also indicated that it was logical and understandable. The girls also displayed an incredible amount of resilience. No matter what adversity befalls them, the girls almost always recover quickly and are able to move on with their lives. Although such resilience is admirable in and of itself, this quality is of limited value when not employed in the service of realistic long-term goals.

Apart from these internal factors, there are also a number of external factors that limit the girls' possibilities of working their way out of poverty. Most important in this respect are the low quality of education, the lack of work in the formal sector and the fact that people from the *pueblos jóvenes* are often discriminated against in the labour market. Teenage pregnancy is also an obvious adverse factor in this respect.

Popular youth culture

Most of the literature on the ways in which people from the countryside deal with their new lives in the city is based on the adult generation, i.e. the first generation of migrants. This leaves us with the question of what the lives of today's popular youth look like. To what extent is the *pueblos jóvenes* culture reproduced by youth.

When we compare the lives of today's youth with the lives of their parents, one of the most remarkable differences is the younger generation's significantly higher educational achievement, as measured by the average total years of school completed. For today's youth, attending school is common practice (INEI, 2000c). In Los Pinos, going to school is common practice as well, at least until the age of 15 or 16. This definitely gives youth a better start in life than their parents had. The public schools they attend, however, are usually of a very low quality. Class sizes are large, teacher's salaries are low, and educational materials are scarce and expensive (Ansión et al., 1998; Macassi, 2002a; Méndez, 1990; Oliart, 2001; Portillo, 1999). This leads to a situation in which, even with a diploma, it is difficult for youth from the lower classes to compete with peers from higher socio-economic classes. Another problem is that too many young people leave school prior to graduation (INEI/ Unicef, 2004; Saavedra and Chacaltana, 2000).

Work is an important element in the lives of popular youth. It is such a central aspect of their lives that it can be considered part of their identities (Munar et al., 2004:31). The importance of work, both paid and unpaid, outside and inside the household, was clear throughout the course of my fieldwork. Girls spend many hours a day working, most of all doing chores inside the house but also outside in paid (informal) jobs. And, as Munar et al. (ibid.) had also found, these girls viewed their responsibilities as acceptable and normal.

With respect to leisure activities, my conclusion was that these took place either within the house itself or very close to it. Girls meet with friends outside their houses or at the central square of the neighbourhood, or they stay inside to watch television. Due to gender-related restrictions and financial reasons, they only leave the neighbourhood to do shopping for the household or to go to school. They are furthermore expected to stay close to the house, where they can easily be controlled and where they can also be called inside to do household chores if necessary (see also Protzel, 1989; Munar et al., 2004; Santos Anaya, 2000).

The way in which youth as a category is constructed in the *pueblos jóvenes* stresses the idea that they are in an intermediate position: i.e. between being a child and being an adult. In the literature, such a position is often termed a 'social moratorium'. The combination of activities and responsibilities for youth in these neighbourhoods, however, suggests that instead of talking about youth as a period of 'social moratorium' it is perhaps better to speak of it as a period of 'social initiation'. With regard to particular aspects of life and at certain times, the girls are full participants in the adult world, whereas in other aspects and at other times, they occupy a marginalized position. For the girls in Los Pinos, this situation was not always easy. It meant that they had more responsibilities in one field than in another and that they had to deal with varying expectations about their behaviour and activities. The autonomy they had at

one moment was much greater than at other times. Furthermore, although both the girls and their parents agreed that the girls were not yet fully ready for adulthood, disagreement often arose with regard to granting them autonomy under particular circumstances. The situation gave rise to many tensions and recurrent conflicts, particularly in those areas where the girls were not supposed to be fully participating yet.

In the literature on popular youth, hardly any distinction is drawn between youth in migrant and in non-migrant neighbourhoods and, in fact, the migrational factor is often not discussed at all. Probably, this is due to the fact that migration from the countryside has almost stopped, or at least is exceeded in numerical importance by the overall population growth within the urban area. The majority of urban youth today are born in the city. For youth in migrant popular neighbourhoods, however, their family background and *provincia* origin is still very important. They definitely do not see themselves as *limeños* (i.e., natives of Lima). Youth in the *pueblos jóvenes* have all kinds of stereotypes about the *limeños*. They are seen as not very inventive, as arrogant and are said to be not as hard working as people in the *pueblos jóvenes*. Youth from the migrant neighbourhoods are in turn subject to a lot of discrimination by *limeños* of non-migrant origin. In the course of time, it has become more difficult to recognise people with an Andean or *selva* background in Metropolitan Lima; they no longer wear indigenous clothes and all use Spanish as their first language. However, people from the *pueblos jóvenes* can still often be identified by their names, accents, addresses and physical appearance (see also Miles, 2000:60). My impression is that the discrimination that the girls in Los Pinos confronted is usually subtle but nonetheless unmistakably present. They still suffer from prejudices based on their generally strong indigenous physical features and the fact that they live in one of the *pueblos jóvenes* of the city. They also suffer from a low valuation on the part of the general population of the (often objectively deficient) education that they have received.

There is a difference in the ways girls and their parents identify and present themselves. The girls no longer present themselves as *provincianas* and do not emphasise the specific region of origin of their families in their identification. Rural traditions, such as the celebration of the *yunza* and traditional music like the *huayno* are regarded as old-fashioned. What also seems to have changed is that, among youth, ideals of solidarity and communal struggles were much less emphasised than among their parents.

The picture that emerges from my fieldwork is that a *pueblos jóvenes* identity is still highly recognisable among popular youth. The literature usually emphasises that the culture which is prevalent in the migrant neighbourhoods is more than just a mix of rural and urban elements. Instead, it should be perceived as a new, autonomous culture that is built on a foundation that comprises both rural and urban elements (Degregori, 1999; Panfichi, n.d.²³²). This building process continues in the youth culture. Parents had to reconstruct their lives in Lima after they migrated from the provinces. Now it is their children who must construct their own identities in the city upon the foundation laid by their parents. Youth born and raised within the *pueblos jóvenes* are confronted by enormous challenges. One of these challenges has to do with how to connect the migration-related dreams of their parents with their own future aspirations. A second is related to the actual possibilities of fulfilling any of these dreams in practice. Finally the challenge for each of the young persons is how to construct an identity in relation to that of other youth from both the *pueblos jóvenes* and from other social classes.

232 References in the document show that it dates from 1999 or later.

Goals for the future

When the girls in my fieldwork were asked about their futures, it appeared that all had surprisingly positive and optimistic views about what they would be able to achieve. This observation is comparable to what other authors found (see, for example, Basili and Encinas, 1999; Cortázar, 1997; Macassi 2001a; Saavedra and Chacaltana, 2001). Central in the life projects of the girls was the idea of *ser profesional*, standing both for a certain level of education (higher than secondary, preferably university) and a specific type of job (employee in the formal sector). Getting married and having a baby were also important in the girls' life projects, but for most of them this was secondary to the ideal of *ser profesional*. Starting a family was something they envisioned for the future, but as one girl said *first things first*. At first sight, the lives the girls saw ahead for themselves (higher education, a professional career and a delay of marriage and children) seem to be incongruent with both their family background and their immediate surroundings. Their parents had almost invariably not achieved such a status, and neither had the overwhelming majority of girls and young women in Los Pinos. In short, the odds against the girls fulfilling their self-declared life projects seemed very long indeed.

During my fieldwork, it became clear that the girls' trust in the future was in several ways a product of the migrational background of their parents. The most important factor in this respect was the socialising messages transmitted to them by their parents, which stressed *ser profesional* as the most important way to attain a better economic position. This emphasis connected to the parents' background of migration: economic rise was the reason why the *provincianos* had come to the city 20 or 30 years ago and it had remained their primary goal over the years. After they had come to the city, the migrants felt that it was their lack of education that constituted the chief barrier to their socio-economic progress. Now they wanted to see their children surmount this same barrier (see also Mendoza García, 1995). Education could also compensate for the other drawbacks that youth would face in the labour market, such as discrimination on the basis of ethnic background or neighbourhood of residence. Education, furthermore, was seen as one of the few areas of life where one could depend more or less solely on his or her own individual effort.

The goal of *ser profesional* was also motivated by gender specific-considerations. As a *profesional*, the girls would always be able to *defenderse*, or 'fend for themselves' as adults. This refers to both their economic standing within a marriage (i.e., the idea that women should contribute to the family income) and to being able to support themselves and their children in the event that their husbands eventually leave them. Many women in the *pueblos jóvenes* had experienced being abandoned by men emotionally, financially or physically. In the case of unplanned pregnancies, men often do not take responsibility. When married, it is not rare that a man has another woman (*amante*), possibly with children, whom he also provides for. The idea is that when you are a *profesional* you will always find a job and be able to take care of yourself and your children. The words 'fending for oneself' are also used in a more metaphorical way, in the context of conjugal conflicts. Women feel it is their lack of education that puts them at a disadvantage in relation to their husbands: *siempre te lo sacan en cara* (it will always be thrown in your face). Education for their daughters will, it is felt, put them on a more equal footing with their eventual husbands.

The girls strongly believed in their own capacities. When they were asked about the possible obstacles on the road to the future, most girls focused on elements they themselves were responsible for. When, at a later age, they reflected on eventual failures, they also tended

to stress their own roles in what went wrong. They recognised the adverse aspects of the broader socio-economic context, but thought that their will and commitment were more important causative factors. In fact, exactly because of the difficult context, the girls saw it as indispensable for individuals to make a determined effort.

The belief in one's own capacities is something that is strongly emphasised in the Peruvian educational system: individual success and ranking is very important (Ansión et al., 1998; Portocarrero and Oliart, 1986:77). Furthermore, in the *pueblos jóvenes* people necessarily rely on their own capacities, creativity and resilience. Individual effort is perhaps the most highly regarded virtue. It is something that is reflected in the demands of the girls with respect to their future partners (see chapter 4) and in the more general messages that parents transmit to their children (see chapter 6 and Mendoza García, 1995:53). It is also something girls say they admire in their parents' attitudes.

Parents-daughter relationships and parenting styles

Living in a *pueblos jóvenes* context influences the way parents raise their children and this fact has both cultural and practical ramifications. Parents emphasise, for example, certain norms and values that have connections to their rural or migrational background (Anderson, 1994:27). In practical terms, it is clear that when parents work long hours outside the house, the time and energy they can invest in their children diminish (Anderson, 1994; Ennew, 1986; Vega-Centeno, 1993). Parents told me time and again that, in comparison to the social environment that they had grown up in back in the provinces, that of the *pueblos jóvenes* was more dangerous. For the parents, this comparison was an important rationale underlying the rather authoritarian way they raise their children.

One of the first cultural anthropologists to study child-raising and parenting styles was Margaret Mead. In her last book (1970), in which she draws on many of her earlier studies, she describes how the role of parents in complex and fast-changing societies is increasingly taken over by other people, mostly peers. A casual perusal of the literature on socialisation processes in poor neighbourhoods reveals the debt owed by many of the authors of these studies to her ideas. Because of poverty and the resulting frustration and because of the fact that parents are absent from their families during a large part of the day, researchers conclude that the parental role in guiding children is at the very least problematic. In my fieldwork, I recognised these problems, but I also saw how hard parents were trying to guide their daughters and how important parents actually were in the lives of the girls.

In the socialising messages that girls receive from their parents, an explicit connection is made between *ser profesional* and decent sexual behaviour; the often heard mandate *cuidate* includes references both to sexuality and education. This connection also colours attitudes toward pregnancy, with both the girls and their parents viewing teen pregnancy as the greatest threat to the possibility of a better future. When parents speak about educational and economic failure resulting from pregnancy, they refer to both long-term and short-term problems. In the long term, the problem is that, because the girl does not have a diploma, she will not be able to get a good job; she will be unable to ever establish an independent economic foothold for herself. In the short term, the problem is that the girl and her baby will be an economic burden for the family, something that often happens despite the family's expectation that her boyfriend begin to provide for her and the new baby.

The connection that I found between sexuality and education in the narratives of the girls and their parents sheds new light on the way in which sexuality discourses in Latin America

are approached in the literature. Usually, a direct link is made between sexuality and the norms and values of the Catholic Church. Central notions in this respect are virginity and purity (Chant and Craske, 2003; Ennew, 1986; Fuller, 1993). On the basis of what I observed, I conclude that in the *pueblos jóvenes* norms with respect to sexuality have a rationale that is primarily economic and educational in nature, and that morality plays a role of decidedly secondary importance.

In the poor neighbourhoods of Lima, the Catholic Church is present in many ways in the daily lives of their inhabitants. Most people identify themselves as Catholics and the majority of people consider it ideal to get married in Church. Many young people attend church-sponsored meetings and classes where they learn about the duties of Catholicism. In spite of that, my impression is that the way in which people actually live their lives and make their decisions is not influenced directly by the Catholic Church (cf. Droogers et al., 1991; Parker, 1996; Rostas and Droogers, 1993). In the conversations with parents about the norms and values with respect to sexuality they try to inculcate in their daughters, direct references to Catholicism were absent. Instead, the link between sexuality and education was reiterated time and again and this relationship affected attitudes toward pregnancy. This does not mean that the role of Catholicism and its norms and values with respect to sexuality (e.g., virginity as a virtue in itself) has entirely disappeared. Its role, however, has taken a back seat to motivations that are primarily economic in nature.

To what extent, then, may we speak of a clearly new or more 'modern' socialisation discourse in the *pueblos jóvenes*? On the one hand, I would say that a big change has indeed taken place. During the last decade, education has gained a place of unquestioned importance in the narratives of parents and their daughters. The fact that the regnant sexuality discourse in the *pueblos jóvenes* bears explicit reference to education is clearly a reflection of this importance. To what extent has this changed sexuality discourse led to changes with respect to the position of girls and young women? To what extent does it lead, for example, to changes when it comes to the control of female sexuality? My conclusion is that not much has changed yet. The new discourse does not really challenge the old one; the old and the new discourses (or the old and new motivations) are in fact complementary rather than contradictory. The parents and grandparents of the Los Pinos girls were more likely to be encouraged by their own parents to remain chaste because failure to do so was seen as sinful. The Los Pinos girls whom we have met here are more likely to hear the same expectations communicated by their mothers and fathers mainly in terms of not sabotaging their life goals. The end result in both cases is that girls remain limited in their social spaces, are not allowed to interact freely with boys and are usually not allowed to have boyfriends. As we have seen, one inimical effect of this denial of girls' sexuality is that girls do not receive accurate information, either formally or informally, regarding birth control methods.

The fact that thus far not much has changed with respect to the sexual freedom and autonomy of girls is related to the fact that girls' sexuality is still linked to family honour, as was also the case in prior generations (Ennew, 1986; Fuller, 1993). The narrative thus still constructs girls' sexuality as a collective issue that is connected to family interests. Another factor is that as long as the prevention of pregnancy is only promoted through abstinence, the freedom of girls to decide on their sexuality is not enlarged. And, paradoxically, both the emphasis on abstinence and the more general restriction of girls' freedom together combine to make more rather than less likely the result that parents want so desperately to avoid: their daughters becoming pregnant.

The emphasis on sexual abstinence and the accompanying lack of acceptance of contraceptive use constitutes a paradox, at least from the point of view of an outsider. There seem to be a number of reasons for this seeming contradiction. First of all, it is clear that the use of contraceptives would involve granting a certain degree of general autonomy to girls, something which is not consonant with the prevalent family culture and parenting style, which is characterised by rather authoritarian structures, particularly when it comes to teenage daughters (Coronado, 1996; Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1993). As we already saw, parents legitimise this attitude in terms of the dangerous urban environment in comparison to the provinces where they grew up. Furthermore, this attitude has a link with the Catholic norms and values with respect to sexuality for, although the sexuality discourse primarily rests on maintaining sexual continence in order not to compromise girls' education and future career, religious norms are still important. Together they form the rationale for the emphasis on the prevention of pregnancy through abstinence rather than through the use of contraceptives.

When I asked the parents in Los Pinos their reasons for not including the option of contraceptives in their socialising messages to their daughters, they also repeatedly mentioned reasons directly related to the use of contraceptives itself. Contraceptives were not seen as guaranteeing that pregnancy could be prevented. In addition, they were thought to have harmful effects when used by non-adult women. Most important, however, was the idea that by promoting or mentioning the use of contraceptives, parents felt they would stimulate the sexual activity of their daughters. This would be unthinkable, because, in the end, sexual activity was something they believed was 'not for girls'.

Searching for breathing room

In the preceding section, I concluded that, despite the changes that have taken place in the sexuality discourse, not much has changed with regard to parents exercising control over girls and their sexuality. The high level of control was indeed one of the main problems girls in Los Pinos complained about (see also Mendoza, 1993; Nieves Rico, 1999; Santos Anaya, 1999o). To some extent, the girls shared their parents' ideas about sexuality and education. Particularly when it came to the emphasis on education as a vehicle for economic advancement, the girls pretty much agreed with their parents. Just like their parents, the girls also saw a connection between education and sexuality. But for the girls, these two life areas were not necessarily mutually exclusive: whereas parents saw sexuality and boyfriends as always and invariably having an adverse impact on education, girls thought that both could be accommodated.

In my fieldwork, the girls usually expressed complaints about the high level of control in terms of 'lack of *confianza*' between them and their parents. One of the problems in the process of building *confianza* was that parents and their children seemed to be living in two different worlds (Franco, 1996:120; Macassi, 2001b:29)²³³. Communications between these two worlds is difficult and for the most part not very effective. Building *confianza* was further impeded by the fact that girls and their parents seemed to each have a rather different idea of what it meant. Parents stressed the importance of emotional intimacy and open communication between them and their daughters. When they spoke about building more *confianza*, though, they did not mean they wanted to loosen the strict parentally imposed

233 This explanation is also based on personal conversations with the anthropologists Carlos Aramburú and Jeanine Anderson, both in June 2002.

behavioural guidelines. Most parents tried to combine a continuing high degree of control with an attempt to make communication between them and their daughters more open. The girls saw a certain degree of control as acceptable and necessary, because they thought they were not yet mature enough to do and decide everything on their own. They also saw it as an expression of parental love. They stressed, however, that real *confianza* would for them involve their parents giving them more autonomy and responsibility to go their own way. They wanted their voices to be heard in the family and also asked for less control of their leisure time activities. The different emphases in the meaning of *confianza* make it difficult for parents and girls to mutually understand one another. Girls oftentimes perceive that they are being asked to open up about things that their parents would probably not approve of. This type of attitude on the part of the parents often creates new barriers instead of facilitating more open communication (see also Santos Anaya, 1999; Vega-Centeno, 1996).

In his study on teenage girls in a poor popular neighbourhood, Santos describes different reaction patterns of girls who are subject to a high degree of parental control (Santos Anaya, 1999:479). These reactions include, for example, the use of silence and expressions of respect either as a way to prevent conflicts or to get permission to do something. Another way to react to the high degree of control is by undertaking hidden *salidas* (outings) or *salidas* with a double agenda. Going out to do some shopping, for example, is used as a way to meet friends. Santos also mentions a number of reactions that take place solely within the girls' internal worlds. In response to the parental control, girls often become withdrawn, with feelings of loneliness, sadness or frustration, or they carry on an interior monologue about the usefulness of further negotiating.

In my fieldwork I saw examples of all these reactions and strategies. To some extent, and as Santos also observed, the girls were often compliant with the rules. On other occasions they tried to give themselves more breathing space, either with or without the permission of their parents. One strategy used by the girls in their attempts to create more room for manoeuvre was the creative use of the category of the *amigo especial*. This label was reserved for boys who were more to them than just a friend, but with whom they did not have a steady 'love relationship'. The category of the *amigo especial* can be seen as an outcome of the girls' negotiation with their parents. As the girls were supposed to concentrate on school and thus not to have a boyfriend, having an *amigo especial* seemed something their parents were both less nervous about and more willing to accept. Having an *amigo especial* allowed the girls to tell their parents that they did not have a boyfriend while at the same time allowing them to have a special and practically unique relationship with someone of the opposite sex. The construction of the *amigo especial* was also a way to ease girls' tensions with regard to their interaction with boys. Girls could thus have a 'special' kind of a relationship with a boy, without being too serious about it.

The negotiations that take place between girls and their parents are representative of the strategies girls utilize to give themselves a greater measure of freedom in their everyday lives. By negotiating their room for manoeuvre in the way that they do, the girls in fact show that they largely respect the parental norms: they are not 'rebellious', they are simply attempting to expand the scope of their personal freedom. The problem is that the increased personal freedom gained by the girls in this way takes place within an environment that, throughout their entire lives, has provided little support for personal initiative and increased autonomy. It is this psychosocial reality that, along with the widespread ignorance and disapproval surrounding the use of contraceptives, leaves girls vulnerable to becoming pregnant, for they

find themselves, often for the first time in their lives, in a position where they are faced with making an important decision on their own that will have a profound impact on the rest of their lives and they are psychologically ill-prepared to face this challenge.

Teenage pregnancy

The issue of teenage pregnancy has been dealt with extensively in the literature (Ampuero, 1999; Macassi and Casaverde, 2003; Salaverry and Rivero, 2002; Vega-Centeno, 1994). It also turned out to be very important in the lives and narratives of the girls in my research. During my fieldwork six girls got pregnant. These were all girls who in the years before had said that they wanted to postpone having children indefinitely. Pregnancy also played an important role in the lives of those girls who had not become pregnant. Without exception, each of the non-pregnant girls told me that they saw pregnancy as the most serious potential obstacle to fulfilment of their life projects. The parents of all of the girls echoed this sentiment.

Most of the literature appears to be somewhat one-sided when it comes to explaining the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy. Authors usually focus on one or two factors, without taking into account the complex matrix of circumstances within which pregnancies occur. Another problem is that teenage pregnancy is often approached as a deviant behaviour, as a kind of illness that is not really a part of normal life (De La Cuesta, 2001:182). A useful concept that helps overcome these biases is that of 'social vulnerability', which refers to the interaction between structural and conjunctural conditions and situations, in the economic, social and cultural realms (Stern, 2004:131). In the *pueblos jóvenes*, one factor in social vulnerability for pregnancy is formed by the emotional problems caused by feelings of social isolation, school dropout or the lack of social networks. Such emotional problems make girls more vulnerable in their relationships with boys. On a practical level, factors are related to access to and knowledge about contraceptives. There are a lot of myths and taboos surrounding contraceptives and, generally speaking, the use of trustworthy contraceptives is very low. There are, however, two other highly important factors that must be examined in greater detail.

In order to understand teenage pregnancy it is very important to look at what happens between girls and their boyfriends. As we have seen in this study, most teenage pregnancies occur within the context of a steady romantic relationship. Sexual initiation is very important in this respect. In a context in which contraceptives are typically not used, sexual initiation and teenage pregnancy are obviously directly linked to each other. It is therefore important to recognise that explanations of teenage pregnancy are inextricably intertwined with explanations of sexual initiation.

A number of factors enter into girls' decisions to have sexual intercourse for the first time. One of these factors has to do with how girls view the seriousness of the relationship with their boyfriends; specifically, whether they think he is their 'true love' (De La Cuesta, 2001:184). One question girls ask themselves in this regard is how responsible and mature the boy would be in the case of pregnancy. In other words, one of the criteria that a girl uses when assessing the relationship with her boyfriend is what he will do in the case of pregnancy. In short, it seems that, rather than making a conscious decision to get pregnant, girls decide to have sexual intercourse, taking the risk of becoming pregnant into account as an important factor in making this decision.

Taking the risk of pregnancy into account when deciding on sexual initiation does not mean that when girls are in a serious relationship they actually want to get pregnant. Most

of the time this is not the case. What may happen is that when girls are in a relationship with a boy, the idea of pregnancy becomes less negative than it had previously seemed. This may be either because they begin to think that having a baby may solidify their relationship with the boy, that they can thereby assert their autonomy to their parents or just because they think it would be 'fun' or 'nice' to have a baby. In these cases, the idea that teenage pregnancy is the end of the world is not actually replaced by the new and more positive idea but rather coexists with it. At any given moment, one of these ideas may be more prevalent in the girl's thinking than the other.

Another factor that has not been sufficiently addressed in discussions of teenage pregnancy is the relationship between girls and their parents. Over the years, many authors have linked teenage pregnancy to parental authoritarianism and problems within the family. Teenage pregnancy is often presented as an act of rebellion against parents (Pimentel Sevilla, 1996; Vega-Centeno, 1993). Another idea is that a lack of attention and love from parents inevitably leads to teenage pregnancy: the girl, in search for a replacement for parental love is driven into the arms of her boyfriend and she is thus easy prey for his sexual advances (Araya Castelli et al., 1996; Salaverry and Rivero, 2002). Although I recognise the kinds of problems that these authors refer to, I think that the reality is more complex than they suggest. First of all, as Stern points out, when it comes to the parents' attitude with respect to their daughter's boyfriend, either an accepting or a rejecting attitude may lead to higher vulnerability for pregnancy. On the one hand, it seems that a girl whose relationship with her boyfriend is hidden is more vulnerable to pregnancy because the hidden nature of the relationship leads to social isolation for the girl. It is also possible that in these situations girls see pregnancy as a way to show the outer world that they want to be taken seriously by it. If the girl's relationship with her boyfriend is accepted, social vulnerability for pregnancy may also arise. In these kinds of situations girls are allowed to go out with their boyfriends relatively freely, a situation that in itself favours opportunities for sexual intercourse. Furthermore, for girls in search of 'true love', this attitude strengthens the idea that this boy is an acceptable partner. In other words, such an attitude, unintentionally, influences the way a girl values the relationship with her boyfriend and also increases the influence her boyfriend has on her (Stern, 2004:147-148).

Literature on girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* invariably states that teenage pregnancy constitutes the end of youth for girls (see, for example, Araya Castelli et al., 1996; Salaverry and Rivero, 2002). For the girls in Los Pinos who got pregnant, this was true to a large extent. When they got pregnant they all experienced this as the end of a phase in their lives. However, they also said they didn't yet feel that they were adults. Instead, they positioned themselves in an in-between category, in which they still held on to the hope that they would be able to make something of their lives. They hoped to take up their studies again and hoped they could count on their parents' support to be able to do so. In general, adolescence and youth were associated with potential and hope; adulthood, on the contrary, was looked upon as a period in which the burden of responsibilities would erase all possible hope of a better life.

The girls' emic perspectives on pregnancy showed that pregnancy and motherhood involve many different and sometimes conflicting feelings and experiences. Getting pregnant and giving birth implies for girls an enormous shift in roles, expectations and responsibilities. They have to adapt their life projects to their new situations. A useful approach to the period of pregnancy for teenage girls is to see it as a liminal stage in a rite of passage from being

adolescent to becoming an adult mother. In the liminal stage of pregnancy, the girls say goodbye (often with sadness and regret) to their former lives and prepare for their future lives. There are also many aspects of pregnancy that could be referred to as 'out-of-time elements'. During their pregnancy, the girls are at home most of the time and they are reticent about going out in public. This outside world treats them as temporary outcasts, as people who are supposed to think over their sins, and to be humble and contrite.

Girls' positions within the family change from being dependent children to being independent mothers and household members. Parents explicitly call upon their pregnant daughters to face the consequences of what happened. The general message is: 'youth is over now, this is what you wanted'. With respect to the control that is exercised upon them something interesting happens. On the one hand, we see that in their families the girls are no longer subject to the control teenage girls usually face. However, the girls may increasingly feel the (controlling) involvement of their boyfriends. There may in fact be a paradox here: girls who were in search of more autonomy may end up being more controlled and limited in their personal development than they ever were before.

From the experiences of the girls after giving birth, it became clear that in some way or other they all felt disillusioned and disappointed. Life with a baby was hard and the relationship with the boyfriend became problematic in three of the four cases. This disillusionment might seem a bit surprising, because - to put it bluntly - everybody had always told them that things would be different and difficult. The most plausible explanation is that since the pregnancy (and maybe even since the moment the relationship with her boyfriend became serious) the idea of having a baby increasingly came to be seen as something positive. We saw that, even before getting pregnant, the negative connotations attached to pregnancy at an early age were commingled with different feelings; such feelings likely grew stronger during the girls' pregnancy. Another factor that may have influenced the way girls view their future lives, is the fact that when they got pregnant, their boyfriends had stressed to them that they were going to support them and that they would be together no matter what. Another factor could have been the reactions and visions of the future the girls' parents expressed after their initial anger about the pregnancy. In contrast to what they had said before (pregnancy is the end of your life and a blow for your future), during the pregnancy they increasingly stressed that the future was not without hope. They emphasised that only one child was not such a terrible burden, that a return to school was possible and that, in any case, they were going to support their daughters. These more optimistic messages probably had an impact on the way girls viewed their own futures as mothers. For the girls it seems that all these factors lead to a slow and almost invisible modification of the negative connotation attached to the pregnancy, one that becomes visible only retrospectively, following the disillusionment that girls later typically experience.

Gender relations

In the preceding pages, I discussed changes in the sexuality discourse and related practices. What I have not touched upon thus far are the broader changes in gender patterns and gender relations. During the last decade, a number of studies have emphasised that gender relations are undergoing rapid change in Peruvian society (Cáceres et al., 2002b; Cerna, 1997; Fuller, 1993 and 1997; Kogan, 1996; Ponce, 1995). Mainly as a result of the increased participation of women in paid labour, femininity and womanhood are no longer only attached to motherhood, but also to paid work. The studies show that the relationship between men and

women is slowly becoming more equal. All studies warn that there is often a big gap between discourse and practice, meaning that people's opinions are usually more progressive than their behaviour. Furthermore, the process of changing gender patterns involves a lot of intra-family tensions. An interesting series of studies are those in which young people are asked about femininity and masculinity (Cáceres, 1999a; Quintana and Vásquez, 1999). In these studies, it becomes clear that, among young people as well, views of gender are evolving.

According to the authors discussed above, there is a significant difference between gender patterns in the middle classes and in the lower classes. In the former, the gender-related changes are most visible and it is also there that the impact of paid labour on the notions of femininity and womanhood is greatest. In the popular classes, the suggestion is that gender relations are still rather conservative and that, overall, changes have occurred more slowly than in the middle classes. In the popular classes, there is also a gap between discourse and practice.

Some of the findings in my research support this conclusion; a lot of elements in *pueblos jóvenes* family life seem to be conservative. Within families, household tasks are distributed on the basis of gender patterns in combination with other considerations such as practical availability and the idea that children learn norms and values by carrying out different types of work (see also Ennew, 1986:56; Miles, 1994:134-143). The way in which girls spend their free time is also influenced by gender-related norms and gender-based control from their parents. As we saw, the Los Pinos girls were encouraged to stay inside the house as much as possible and if they met their friends this happened directly in front of their houses, where their parents or other family members could keep an eye on them. The street, the public space, was seen as a domain more apt for boys.

The gender related practices were often the subject of complaints among the girls. One of the issues that arose referred to the greater freedom enjoyed by boys in comparison to girls. The girls saw it as not fair, for example, that boys could have many girlfriends without repercussions in terms of gossiping or parental control. They also expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that boys did not have to do anything in the household. Their expressions at other times showed that they acquiesced in certain aspects of their gender role. The girls considered it normal, for example, that they should have lunch or dinner ready when their husbands came home and thought it acceptable that their husbands became angry if they did not like the meal they had prepared. With respect to norms on loyalty in relationships, the girls stressed that these norms should be the same for men and women; they also explained that, because men are different, this would never be the case. There were, in short, both contradictory opinions and discourses and a gap between discourses and behaviour.

In the field of sexuality, discourse and action are inversely related. Virginity is, for example, still the ideal, but girls who are in a relatively stable relationship with their boyfriends almost all have sexual relations with them. The construction of new categories like the *amigo especial* should be noted in this respect as well. By this category, girls considerably push the boundaries of the prevailing norms.

One of the authors who explicitly draws the distinction between gender patterns in the middle and the lower classes is Fuller (1993 and 1997). According to Fuller, women in the popular classes adhere more to the ideal of the *madre heroica*, whereas in the middle classes the ideal for women is the *madre moderna*. In the middle classes, women are first and foremost seen as individual persons, for whom labour contributes to their personal development. The

heroic mother, to the contrary, is more family and community oriented and her work activities (paid and unpaid, inside and outside the house) are always a function of her mother role (Fuller, 1993:70-74).

The way the girls in my research formulated their life projects seemed to be a confirmation of this distinction. For the girls, the goal of *ser profesional* was more related to the wish to help their parents and to their future families than to personal development. However, this orientation should not be called 'conservative' or 'not modern'. Instead, as I already explained in the section on life projects, it is a product of another type of modernity, one that derives from their families' migrational background. When the girls in Los Pinos link their future goals to the wellbeing of their families (present and future), they make a direct reference to the fact that their parents came to the capital in the first place to provide a better life for them. It would therefore be unthinkable to pursue any economic progress that did not include and benefit their own families.

With respect to the family versus the personal development orientation of life projects, I would argue that the difference is one of degree rather than kind. Women who are entering the labour market, whether from the middle classes or from the lower classes, are necessarily motivated by a combination of factors. They are pursuing personal development as well as the economic wellbeing of their families. In a country like Peru, with so much informality and poverty and competition for jobs even among the middle classes, the main motivation for entering the labour market is always to a large degree financial, and personal development goals tend to be relegated to a secondary position. Different studies suggest that women who have a higher degree of education and/or a more stable job are more self-confident and feel more secure emotionally (Chant and Craske, 2003; Fuller, 1993). The reality for girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* however, in contradistinction to many girls raised within a middle-class milieu, is that the former *must* work in order to survive and to ensure that their families' basic needs are met. Despite this primary economic motivation underlying the life projects of the girls of the *pueblos jóvenes*, considerations of personal growth are by no means absent. Actually, the parents in Los Pinos directly made reference to such considerations when they said that *ser profesional* would strengthen their daughter's emotional and psychological position vis-à-vis her future husband.

When we compare the visions of the girls with their mother's situation within the context of the *pueblos jóvenes*, we might conclude that the changes that have taken place there are even greater than those that have occurred among the middle classes. The girls' goals show that they have ambitions far beyond those that their mothers ever had. This brings me to a more general point: it is difficult to speak about changes in terms of a continuum with traditional views on one end and more modern conceptions on the other. Yet this is the frame of reference in most of the literature that focuses on the middle classes. The current and past situations in the middle classes are taken as starting point and the situations in other contexts are analysed in relation to them. As a result, the situation of women in popular neighbourhoods is easily represented as having barely changed and as less progressive than the position of women in the middle classes. This approach is not very helpful. I would say that, generally speaking, the changes that have taken place, and that continue to take place, in the *pueblos jóvenes* with respect to gender roles and relations are impressive. This is something that is not clear when comparisons are made to changes in these areas within the middle classes. And, it is precisely these changes and shifts which form the backdrop of the very laborious negotiations that take place between girls and their parents.

A dream denied

In the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, there was a great flow of migration from the rural areas of Peru to the capital city of Lima. Many of these migrants settled in shantytowns they themselves constructed on the outskirts of the city that came to be known as *pueblos jóvenes*. They came to the city with a dream: they wanted to build a future for themselves and their families that was better than the one that awaited them *en la provincia*. Harboured these dreams, they started their new lives in the city. However, for most of them, life was hard and challenging. Despite the fact that some people managed to take the step forward that they had dreamt of, most of them could not. Despite this fact, their dreams did not fade; instead they were transferred to their children.

Because of this family background, migrant popular youth tend to be imbued with the ideal of *progreso* to a greater extent than most other youth. They have to become *profesionales*, in order to get the decent formal sector job that is thought to lead to economic and social progress. For girls, this message is particularly strong. By being a *profesional*, girls will not only be able to contribute to the family income, but will also be able to stand up for their rights within their future marriages; something that their mothers always felt they could not do. As we have seen, parents make many efforts to make these dreams come true. They stress the importance of school and try to prevent their daughters from becoming pregnant, as that is seen as one of the most important obstacles to fulfilling the dream.

The dreams constructed by the parents become in turn those of the girls. For them too, striving for economic betterment is the number one goal in life. It is a goal that is related to both their own individual futures and to the fate of their families. However, just as was the case with their parent's original dreams, reality seems to present insurmountable obstacles. In this study we saw that, despite all the efforts of girls and parents, the chance that the girls could indeed make significant progress in their lives is small. Their growing awareness that they will probably not be able to fulfil their life goals often leaves these girls feeling bitterly disappointed. This is most clearly so for the girls who get pregnant. They are the ones who are suddenly confronted with the idea that everything they had ever dreamt of seems to be slipping away. Teenage pregnancy can in fact be seen as the symbol of 'the dream denied'.

When it comes to explaining the background of the fading of these dreams, this study primarily emphasised the causes within the direct environment of the girls. The lack of financial means to continue or resume their studies, the need to earn money, and the occurrence of an unplanned pregnancy are just three of these causes. Parenting styles, dynamics of the social interaction between girls and their parents, poor education and sexism are other contributing factors. In addition to all of these factors, there is also the malfunctioning and discriminating labour market and a Peruvian economy that has been stagnant for years.

Dreams not coming true lead to disillusionment, not only for the girls, but for their parents as well. Rather than coming into closer reach, the goal that brought parents to Lima in the first place seems to be increasingly receding from their view. Or to put it differently, the norms and values they tried to convey to their daughters in order to ensure this better future did not seem to have led to the desired result. For both generations, in other words, a dream has been denied.

The title of this study can be read as a rather sombre conclusion: the dreams of the girls and their parents have not come true. It can, however, also be read as containing hope. That is, despite all the drawbacks experienced by the girls and their parents, their dreams have

never entirely disappeared. Dreams and disillusionment are in fact related to each other. For, unrealistic dreams irrevocably lead to disillusionment, but this disillusionment is immediately followed by the construction of new dreams. Dreaming can, in fact, be looked upon as one of the survival strategies that the former migrants in the popular neighbourhoods in Metropolitan Lima teach their children. This survival strategy may perhaps not lead to a large step forward in the longer run; however, it does provide consolation and, more importantly, a motivation to keep struggling, no matter what happens.

The hope and yearning for a better future that spurred a previous generation to leave their provincial villages in search of a better life continue to burn like glowing embers within the hearts and minds of their children and grandchildren who often seem to all appearances resigned to a life of utter marginalisation. And as long as these fires continue to burn, however dimly, there will always be the possibility that a dream long denied may yet one day be realised.

Appendix I. Characteristics of the girls who participated in the research

Girls	Date of birth (age on 1/1/2002)	Highest school grade completed (of secondary education, as of January 2004)	Number of siblings	Father's region of origin	Mother's region of origin
Angelica	26/8/1984 (17)	5 th grade	8	Cuzco	Cuzco
Britney	11/10/1983 (18)	5 th grade	4	[Unknown]	Trujillo
Carina	20/2/1983 (18)	4 th grade [dropped out]	4	Cajamarca*	Apurimac
Carolina	16/4/1985 (16)	5 th grade	3	Cajamarca	Puno
Celeste	20/9/1986 (15)	5 th grade	3	Cajamarca	Puno
Claudia	16/1/1987 (14)	5 th grade	4	Lima	Lima
Consuela	31/12/1985 (16)	5 th grade	4	Ancash	Huaraz
Elena	21/6/1985 (16)	5 th grade	2	Ayacucho	Ayacucho
Erica	8/5/1986 (15)	3 rd grade sec. educ. [dropped out]	2	Huancavelica	Huancavelica
Joanna	31/3/1987 (14)	5 th grade	4	Ica	Huancavelica
Julia	1/6/1984 (17)	5 th grade	2	Lima	La Libertad
Lilia	16/4/1985 (16)	5 th grade	3	Cajamarca	Puno
Mariela	18/11/1983 (18)	5 th grade	2	Ayacucho	Arequipa
Marisol	2/7/1983 (18)	5 th grade	2	Huanuco	Huanuco
Marta	(18)	5 th grade + 4 months of <i>academia pre-universitaria</i>	2	Ayacucho	Ayacucho
Nancy	25/11/1985 (16)	5 th grade	2	Madre de Dios	Lima
Silvia	31/12/1986 (15)	3 rd grade [dropped out]	2	Huanuco	Amazonas
Victoria	16/12/1986 (15)	5 th grade	5	Puno	Puno
Yosara	23/6/1983 (18)	5 th grade	6	Ayacucho	Ayacucho

* Region of origin of Carina's stepfather. Mother remarried when Carina was a baby.

Appendix 2. Glossary

Academia	Private institute designed to prepare students for the university entrance exams
Amigo especial	Special [male] friend, close friend
Anticuchada (parillada, pollada)	Communal barbecues and fund-raising events, organised for a specific goal in which food (respectively, beef kebab, meat or chicken) is prepared and sold to neighbours
Ayni	Mutual help (<i>Quechua language</i>)
Barrio	Popular neighbourhood
Canasta básica alimentaria	Index used by economists to measure extreme poverty; this figure represents the purchasing power necessary in order to acquire the minimum amount of food that a person or family needs to survive
Canasta básica de consumo	Index used by economists to represent the purchasing power necessary for acquiring a certain minimum number of basic goods and services
Chica de su casa	Serious and quiet <i>señorita</i>
Chicha culture	Mixed culture prevalent in the <i>pueblos jóvenes</i>
Cholo(a)	Person with indigenous physical traits and family background
Combi	Minibus used for public transport
Confianza	Trust; open communication
Cuidate:	Literally: 'be careful'; message to girls that stresses that they guard against bad influences of any kind
Defenderse	To fend for oneself
Dinámica	Dynamic exercise
Empleada	Domestic servant
Empleado(a)	Formal employee for private-sector company or a government office
Enamorados	Two persons who are in love with each other; a couple
Error	Mistake, error
Invasión	Overnight settlement of land
Limeño(a)	Native to Lima; not rural-to-urban migrant
Local comunal	Communal building
Madre heroica	Heroic mother
Madre moderna	Modern mother (models used by Fuller to analyse femininity and motherhood; see Chapter 3)
Madrina	Godmother
Manzana	Block of houses, usually 100 by 100 metres
Marido	Husband, male partner
Mestizaje	Process of interchange and synthesis of different cultural influences (within an individual or a society)
Mostrando mi vida	Showing my life (title of a series of girls' <i>talleres</i>)
Mundo joven, mundo adulto	World of youth, world of adults
Olla comun	Communal kitchen
Padrinazgo	Godparentship

Padrino(s)	Godfather (godparents)
Pandillaje	Youth violence
Pandillas	Youth gangs, street gangs
Pareja	Partner
Parillada	See: <i>anticuchada</i>
Pollada	See: <i>anticuchada</i>
Profesional (ser profesional)	Literally: 'professional'; in practice referring to a certain level of education (higher than secondary, preferably university) and a specific type of job (employee in the formal sector)
Progreso	Progress
Promoción	High school graduation
Provincia	Province (refers in this study to a rural area of Peru outside of Lima)
Provinciano(a)	(Person) from the provinces
Pueblo joven	Literally: 'young village'; migrant popular neighbourhood located on the outskirts of Metropolitan Lima
Quince años (quince)	A girl's 15 th birthday
Quinceañera	Girl turning 15 years old
Recuerdo	Souvenir
Retiro	Retreat
Ruca	'Easy' girl, slut
Salida	Outing
Salir adelante	To get ahead [i.e., in life]
Selva	Peruvian jungle area
Selvatico(a)	From the selva; from the Peruvian jungle area
Señorita	Young woman
Serrano(a)	From the sierra, from the Peruvian highlands
Sierra	Peruvian highlands
Taller	Workshop
Telenovela	Soap opera
Yunza	Traditional Peruvian harvest festival (<i>Quechua language</i>)

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Summary

This study focused on the lives, preoccupations and dreams of teenage girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* (migrant popular neighbourhoods) of Metropolitan Lima, with a special focus on the interaction between them and their parents. This research consisted of a case study conducted in Los Pinos, a small *pueblo joven* in San Juan de Miraflores, in the southern cone of Lima. The central concerns of this study could be divided into three sets of questions. The first one referred to the prospects for the lives and futures of the girls themselves, the present reality of the girls in the *pueblos jóvenes* and their experience of that reality, and the girls' future dreams and life projects. The second set of questions related the lives and life projects of the girls to the context of the migrant popular neighbourhoods. What is the relationship between their constructs, experiences and dreams on the one hand and poverty and marginalisation on the other hand, and to what extent does the *pueblos jóvenes* culture (the so-called *cultura chicha*) play a role? The third set of questions dealt more specifically with the girls' interaction with their parents and the role of this interaction in the girls' lives and life projects. What are the main norms and values that parents convey to their daughters and how do these relate to the *pueblos jóvenes* context? And, secondly, how do the girls respond to the messages their parents send out and how do they, in interaction with the parental messages, construct and reconstruct their own ideas about their lives and futures?

The study focused on the second generation of rural-to-urban migrants, the children of those who migrated in the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. Over the years the theme of popular youth has received a lot of attention in the social sciences. However, studies often started from the idea of youth as a subculture, as a group that stands relatively isolated from the rest of society. In recent years, there has been also some work on the social networks and socialisation processes of popular youth. These studies pay more attention to the relations between generations, but their focus still seems to be on the extent to which the (presumed) pioneer mentality of the migrant parents is transmitted to their children. Much less attention is devoted to the question of how the context of poverty, informality and the migrational background of parents influence the process of youth. Furthermore, hardly any attention is devoted specifically to girls. In the *pueblos jóvenes*, girls form a rather invisible group. They spend most of their time inside their houses and do not generally display the extreme kinds of problematic behaviour that tend to draw the attention of researchers and policy-makers

The girls featured in this study were between 14 and 18 years old, and they all lived in the neighbourhood of Los Pinos. This neighbourhood, created in 1984 by an *invasión* (i.e., an overnight illegal settlement of land), is built on the slopes of a hill on chalky soil and now contains about 120 households. At the time of my fieldwork some of the houses still consisted of wood, corrugated iron and reed mats; the majority had some stone walls. Most of the houses in the neighbourhood had direct or indirect access to water and electricity. The girls I worked with were all born in Metropolitan Lima; many of them were the oldest daughters in their families. They generally lived in nuclear families consisting of a father, a mother and

between three and six children. Of the 19 girls most actively involved in the case study, two came from female-headed households.

After Chapter 1, which gives an introduction to the study by highlighting what just has been said, Chapter 2 discusses the geographical context of this research, namely the *pueblos jóvenes*, and, more specifically, Los Pinos. This is done both from a theoretical perspective and from the viewpoints of its inhabitants. It describes how the neighbourhoods emerged as a result of enormous waves of rural-to-urban migration, and how these neighbourhoods became the locus of poverty and marginalisation. It also analyses the survival strategies of the inhabitants of the *pueblos jóvenes*, emphasising the agency of the neighbourhood's inhabitants. Theoretically, the concept of a culture of poverty, originally introduced by Lewis (1965), is critically discussed. The conclusion is that, although not all elements of this concept are applicable to the present context, the idea that people are to a large extent caught in a vicious circle of poverty and marginalisation is still largely valid. This marginalisation not only refers to economic misery, but also includes difficulties in accessing good healthcare and proper security. The poverty and other problems in the *pueblos jóvenes* are recognised by the neighbourhood inhabitants, although such issues tended to be discussed in relative terms. The girls in Los Pinos emphasised it could always be worse, and adults stressed that, even though they are poor, they still have their pride. This pride was also one of the constituent elements of the so-called *pueblos jóvenes* culture.

The third chapter discusses the family unit in the migrant popular neighbourhoods. Over the past decades, family structures and patterns have changed a lot. Overall, families have become smaller and more nuclear. However, at the same time, there are a number of elements that challenge this nuclearity, such as the custom of family members from the rural areas moving in temporarily, and daughters with their own children who still live with their parents. Within the families, gender patterns are on the move. Because of the increased participation of women in the labour market and other changes in the broader society, gender relations are increasingly under pressure, and multiple models seem to co-exist. The notion of motherhood as defining femininity is still very strong, though. When it comes to child raising, it seems that family culture is rather authoritarian, particularly with regard to teenage girls. Norms and values are transmitted in a vertical way, without much attention paid to the girls' own preferences. This is particularly the case in the areas of sexuality, interaction with boys and education. The authoritarianism in families coexists with a *laissez faire* attitude that is evidenced under other circumstances and with respect to other issues. Parenting styles generally conform to the more authoritarian child-rearing practices that were common in the parents' own regions of origin. They are furthermore the result of the relatively large socio-cultural distance that exists between them and the generation of their children. An important factor brought up by parents themselves was their feeling of insecurity in the city and, more particularly, the fear that their daughters would be victims of some sort of violence. Practically, parents' long working hours also play a role. The final section of Chapter 3 was dedicated to a reflection on domestic violence in *pueblos jóvenes* families. Also here it is clear that shifts are taking place: people in Peru increasingly see violence as unacceptable, and more women report cases of domestic violence. At the same time, though, domestic violence is still a pressing problem in Peru, resulting in the direct or indirect victimisation of many women and children.

Chapter 4 presents the girls who were the main subjects in this research. First, school is discussed, as this was one of the spaces where most girls spend a great deal of their time. In

Los Pinos, most girls (and boys) attend school on a regular basis. Pregnant girls constitute an exception to this general trend: they usually leave school either when they get pregnant or when their pregnancy becomes visible. Although overall school attendance rates are high, at least in urban Peru, the general quality of education is rather poor. This goes particularly for public education, the form of schooling that virtually all *pueblos jóvenes* children receive. Problems discussed in relation to education include the lack of sufficient school materials, the high degree of school delays and repetition and the overall financial burden that parents have to bear in order to send their children to school. In addition, there is also a high level of school desertion, particularly among youth age 15 and older.

Apart from school, the girls in Los Pinos are very much occupied with household-related activities. Particularly when their parents are away for work, girls are responsible for cleaning and cooking and for the care of their younger siblings. Some of the girls are also engaged in labour activities outside of the house, usually in relation to the work of their parents. Although the girls sometimes complained about the high number of hours that these chores involve, they all saw these responsibilities as normal for girls their age. The third section of the chapter looks at the hobbies and leisure time activities of the girls. It appeared that these take place close to their homes and generally within same-sex groups. The activities girls engage in most are hanging out with friends, watching television or listening to the radio.

The *quince años* (15th birthday) and the *promoción* (high school graduation) are two important events in the lives of the girls. Each of these life span markers indicates that childhood is coming to a close, and that a new phase, the phase of adulthood, is approaching. The *quince años* especially is a celebration of certain gender-related virtues, such as decency and responsibility. The girls endorse these meanings to a large extent, but also stress that, despite having celebrated these rites of passage, adulthood still seems relatively far away for them. With respect to the place of religion in the girls' lives, it is clear that, just as for most adults in Peru, Catholicism is important for them. Most visible in this respect is the girls' participation in the preparatory classes for First Communion and Confirmation. At the same time, though, it seems that the norms and values that are taught in Church are often not followed when it comes to practical decisions in daily life. In this respect, the term 'popular Catholicism' (in contrast to 'doctrinal Catholicism') is a useful construct.

Chapter 4 concludes with the girls' dreams and expectations for the future. These emphasised the ideal of becoming a *profesional*, which practically referred to the ideal of getting a diploma from a vocational training program, such as in secretarial studies or cosmetology. The girls thought that, in this way, their future lives would be better than those of their parents. Apart from an emphasis on education and on *ser profesional*, the girls also envisioned a future as wives and mothers. The two parts of the future dreams were equally important in the girls' life projects; however, perhaps because of the newness of the concept of *ser profesional*, it was this latter idea that seemed to be stressed the most.

Chapter 5 continues where the previous chapter left off; dealing with sex and sexuality, issues that the girls did not talk about a lot in public. As the chapter is partly based on fictitious stories created by the girls on subjects like sexuality and the interaction with boys, it begins with a brief methodological discussion on the use of stories as a research method. The chapter proceeds with discussions on how girls view their relationships with boys, and how they conduct themselves within those relationships. In this respect, the constructs of the '*amigo especial*' ('special friend') and the 'true love' were both crucial. The former refers to those boys who, though not their boyfriends, were more to them than just a friend. This

construct could be seen as an outcome of girls' negotiations with their parents: it allows them to maintain a special relationship with someone of the other sex, while at the same time stressing to their parents they did not yet have a boyfriend. Furthermore, the construct creates manoeuvring space in the interaction with boys: this way, the girls are able to experiment with love and sexuality without being in too serious of a relationship yet.

When girls come to see their *amigos especiales* as their 'true love', the relationship becomes more serious. This is usually also the moment when sexual initiation may be considered. For a girl in the *pueblos jóvenes*, it seems that, more than anything else, sexual initiation is regarded as sealing an eternal bond with the boy she considers to be her true love. It is something she only does if she is convinced that this is the man she will stay with in the future. When girls (and boys) in the *pueblos jóvenes* are sexually active, they usually do not use trustworthy contraceptives, even less so when they are in relatively stable love relationships. Most often, couples rely on the rhythm method and early withdrawal, methods at times complemented by condom use. The girls are very aware of the risk of pregnancy, but they do not consider this risk a reason to refrain from sexual relations. Instead, what is more important is the assumption regarding what a boy would do in case she becomes pregnant. The chapter ended with a discussion of abortion, which, though apparently frequent in Peru, is hardly ever talked about.

In Chapter 6, the girls' perspective is set aside and the attention shifts back to the family level, more specifically to the parents and the way they try to educate their daughters. The chapter argues that the parental messages can be divided into two components. First of all, they comprise the element of (formal) education: girls are encouraged to do their best at school, in order to 'become someone' in life. This emphasis is combined with a call for moral sexual behaviour ('being a *señorita*'). The two components are combined in the short admonition 'cuídate' (be careful), which is a call to guard against harmful influences of any kind. Both of these elements are directly and indirectly related to the migrant popular neighbourhood context. They are first of all a reflection of the dreams that parents brought with them to Lima: through education, they themselves, or at least their children, would be able to climb the socio-economic ladder. The emphasis on sexual continence directly connects to this dream, as teenage pregnancy, which is thought to follow naturally from sexual initiation, is seen as something that ruins the dream of progress by means of education. Sexual activity and failure in socio-economic terms are thus intrinsically related. Together the two messages form a rather prescriptive socialising framework for the girls. Parents stress the precept of hard work and decency verbally and they also try to control the girls' lives in a physical way. The girls' reactions to these confining contexts stress the lack of *confianza*, or openness, between them and their parents. Parents in turn recognise the limitations of their approach, but are also unsure about alternative approaches.

Chapter 7 looks at teenage pregnancy. The chapter deals with the issue in a chronological way, paying attention to the backgrounds of teenage pregnancy, the moment that girls find out that they are pregnant, the moment that they tell their boyfriend and parents, the period of pregnancy itself and, finally, the first months or years of motherhood. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the future prospects of the girls who became mothers. What becomes clear in this chapter is that, in order to understand the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the *pueblos jóvenes*, a set of different explanatory factors, summed up in the concept of social vulnerability, have to be considered. Relevant factors are, for example, social isolation, school dropout or the lack of social networks. Particular attention should be paid

to what happens within the relationship between a girl and her boyfriend: it is here that the inextricable relationship between sexual initiation and teenage pregnancy is embedded. Teenage pregnancy should also be analysed in the context of parent-daughter relationships. In this respect, either an accepting or a rejecting attitude towards the girl's relationship with a boy may lead to higher vulnerability for pregnancy.

Getting pregnant changes the lives of girls enormously. They usually leave school, sometimes join their partners in a separate household and have to prepare for a life as mothers. The concepts of rites of passage and liminality proved to be useful in highlighting both the social isolation and the tumultuous emotional changes associated with teenage pregnancy.

Chapter 8 draws together the most important points raised throughout the preceding chapters. Here, I reiterate that Lewis' idea of a culture of poverty, despite certain flaws, is still valid for understanding the situation of teenage girls in the migrant popular neighbourhoods of Peru. A focus on short-term survival makes progress in the longer term not very likely. Thus, the girls' prospects for climbing out of poverty in the years to come are not very good. This does not mean that nothing has changed. Today, the popular youth culture in the *pueblos jóvenes* is different from that of their parents; it is, however, also still distinct from the one of their peers in other areas of Lima. The dream of progress, so central to the migration of their parents, still plays a crucial role in their lives. This dream also partly explains the rather optimistic goals and expectations the girls had for the future.

In Chapter 8, I reiterate the dilemmas and tensions embedded in the interaction between parents and their daughters. One conclusion is that the socialising discourses, in which education and sexuality are so inextricably linked, constitute an important break with the past. Sexual decency and abstinence are no longer primarily tied to the Catholic Church norms and values. Instead, these ideas are increasingly grounded in a rationale that is economic and educational in nature. On the one hand, this change reflects the increased importance that is attached to education by parents in the *pueblos jóvenes*. The changing rationale behind the discourses on sexuality, however, has thus far not led to less control of girls' sexuality.

The girls subscribe to a certain extent to the norms and values regarding education and sexuality that have been set forth by their parents. In the girls' views, however, these two life areas are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Girls generally tend to think that school and boyfriends can be combined. In order to put this idea into practice in the confining family and neighbourhood context, the girls had to resort to creative means; the creation of the *amigo especial* can be seen as a good example of this. However, this creation of manoeuvring space takes place within an environment that, throughout their entire lives, has provided little support for personal initiative and increased autonomy. It is in this context that teenage pregnancy should also be analysed.

The final part of Chapter 8 focuses on the gender relations within families and neighbourhoods. The main conclusion is that the distinction that is often made in the literature between gender-related changes in the middle classes and the lower classes is less clear-cut than often realised. In both groups, there is a co-existence of more and less progressive discourses and practices and, in both cases women's employment has led to women's self-development. Perhaps, the conclusion is warranted that changes concerning gender relations have been more impressive in the *pueblos jóvenes* than in the middle classes, since the girls' ambitions go far beyond those that their mothers ever had.

Both the girls and their parents harbour the dream of progress and of achieving a good life. Despite the fact that thus far, these dreams have not come true for many of them, they continue to harbour the hope for a better future.

Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek richtte zich op het leven, de problemen en dromen van tienermeisjes in de *pueblos jóvenes* (migrantenvolkswijken) van Lima Metropolitana. Bijzondere aandacht ging uit naar de interactie tussen deze meisjes en hun ouders. Het onderzoek behelsde een casestudie uitgevoerd in Los Pinos, een kleine *pueblo joven* in San Juan de Miraflores, in het zuidelijke deel van Lima. De centrale vragen van deze studie kunnen worden onderverdeeld in drie sets van vragen. De eerste refereerde aan het leven en de toekomst van de meisjes zelf, de huidige situatie van meisjes in de *pueblos jóvenes*, hun ervaring van die realiteit en de manier waarop de meisjes aankeken tegen en omgingen met de toekomst. De tweede set van vragen ging over de relatie tussen het leven en de toekomstplannen van de meisjes en de context van de migranten volkswijken. Wat is de relatie tussen de constructies, ervaringen en dromen aan de ene kant en armoede, marginalisering aan de andere kant en in welke mate speelt de *pueblos jóvenes* cultuur (de zgn. *cultura chicha*) een rol? De derde set van vragen focuste meer specifiek op de interactie tussen de meisjes en hun ouders en de rol die deze interactie speelde in hun leven en toekomstplannen. Wat zijn de belangrijkste normen en waarden die ouders proberen over te brengen en hoe hangt dit samen met de *pueblos jóvenes* context? En, ten tweede, hoe gaan de meisjes om met de boodschappen van hun ouders en hoe construeren en reconstrueren ze in interactie met deze ouderlijke boodschappen hun eigen ideeën over hun leven en toekomst?

De focus van dit onderzoek lag bij de tweede generatie van ruraal-urbane migranten, met andere woorden bij de kinderen van diegenen die in de jaren 70 en het begin van de jaren 80 van de vorige eeuw naar Lima Metropolitana zijn gemigreerd. In de loop der tijd heeft het thema jeugd in volkswijken vrij veel aandacht gekregen in de sociale wetenschappen. Veel van deze studies gingen echter uit van het idee van jeugd als een subcultuur, als een groep die relatief geïsoleerd staat van de rest van de samenleving. In de afgelopen jaren zijn er ook verschillende studies verschenen over de sociale netwerken en socialiseringsprocessen van volksjeugd. Dergelijke studies besteden meer aandacht aan de relaties tussen generaties, maar de nadruk ligt nog steeds erg sterk op de mate waarin de (veronderstelde) pioniersmentaliteit van de migrantenouders wordt overgebracht op hun kinderen. Veel minder aandacht wordt er besteed aan de vraag hoe de context van armoede, informaliteit en de migratieachtergrond van de ouders opgroeien en jong zijn beïnvloedt. Verder is er nauwelijks specifieke aandacht voor meisjes. In de *pueblos jóvenes* vormen meisjes een nogal onzichtbare groep. Ze brengen veel van hun tijd binnenshuis door en vertonen geen problematisch gedrag waarmee de aandacht van onderzoekers en beleidsmakers getrokken wordt.

De meisjes die centraal stonden in dit onderzoek waren allen tussen de 14 en de 18 jaar oud en afkomstig uit de buurt Los Pinos. Deze buurt, ontstaan in 1984 door een *invasión* (d.w.z. een illegale nachtelijke landbezetting), is gebouwd tegen de hellingen van een heuvel op zanderige rotsgrond. De buurt herbergt nu 120 huishoudens. In de tijd van mijn veldwerk, waren sommige huizen nog van hout, golfplaten en rietmatten; de meerderheid had echter al een aantal stenen muren en soms een stenen dak. De meeste huizen in de wijk hadden directe

of indirecte toegang tot water en elektriciteit. De meisjes met wie ik gewerkt heb waren allen geboren in Lima Metropolitana; de meesten waren de oudste dochter in hun gezin. Over het algemeen leefden ze in nucleaire gezinnen bestaande uit een vader, moeder en tussen de drie en zes kinderen. Van de 19 meisjes die het meest actief betrokken waren in deze studie, waren er twee afkomstig uit 'female headed households'.

Na hoofdstuk 1, een introductie waarin het voorgaande uitgebreider wordt weergegeven, gaat hoofdstuk 2 verder in op de geografische context van het onderzoek, namelijk op de *pueblos jóvenes*, en meer specifiek Los Pinos. Dit wordt gedaan zowel vanuit een meer theoretisch perspectief als vanuit het oogpunt van de inwoners. Beschreven wordt hoe de wijken ontstonden ten gevolge van grote ruraal-urbane migratie golven en hoe deze wijken een plek werden waar armoede en marginalisering geconcentreerd was. Ook de overlevingsstrategieën van de *pueblos jóvenes* bewoners komen aan bod en daarmee de 'agency' van de wijkbewoners. Theoretisch wordt het concept armoedecultuur, oorspronkelijk geïntroduceerd door Lewis (1965), kritisch tegen het licht gehouden. De conclusie is dat hoewel lang niet alle elementen van het concept toepasbaar zijn in de huidige context, het idee dat mensen in grote mate vastzitten in een vicieuze cirkel van armoede en marginalisering nog steeds grote geldigheid heeft. Deze marginalisering is niet alleen economisch van aard, maar behelst ook problemen m.b.t. de toegang tot kwalitatief goede gezondheidszorg en veiligheid. De armoede en de andere problemen in de *pueblos jóvenes* worden erkend door de wijkbewoners, hoewel dergelijke issues vaak wel in meer relatieve termen benaderd werden. De meisjes in Los Pinos benadrukten altijd dat er ook armere mensen waren en volwassenen benadrukten vooral dat, hoewel ze arm waren, ze nog steeds hun trots hadden. Deze trots was ook één van de belangrijkste elementen van de zogenaamde *pueblos jóvenes* cultuur.

Het derde hoofdstuk bediscussieert de familie in de migrantenvolkswijken. In de afgelopen decennia zijn familiestructuren en -patronen ingrijpend veranderd. Gezinnen zijn kleiner geworden en meer nucleair van aard. Tegelijkertijd zijn er ook een aantal elementen die de aard van de kerngezinnen aantasten, zoals de gewoonte van familieleden vanuit de rurale gebieden om tijdelijk in te trekken bij familie in de stad en het feit dat dochters met hun eigen kinderen vaak nog bij hun ouders wonen. Binnen de gezinnen zijn de genderverhoudingen aan het schuiven. Door de toegenomen arbeidsmarktparticipatie van vrouwen en andere veranderingen in de rest van de maatschappij, komen genderrelaties steeds meer onder druk te staan; verschillende modellen lijken naast elkaar te bestaan. De notie van moederschap is echter nog steeds sterk bij het definiëren van vrouwelijkheid. Met betrekking tot het opvoeden van kinderen blijkt dat de gezinscultuur nog steeds vrij autoritair is, vooral als het gaat om tienermeisjes. Normen en waarden worden op een verticale manier overgebracht, zonder veel aandacht voor de eigen ideeën en voorkeuren van de meisjes. Dit geldt met name op het gebied van seksualiteit, de interactie met jongens en onderwijs. De autoritaire opvoedingscultuur in gezinnen bestaat naast een meer *laissez faire* houding, die naar voren komt in andere situaties en met betrekking tot andere issues. De opvoedingsstijlen gaan terug op de meer autoritaire opvoedingspraktijken die gewoon waren in de gebieden waar de ouders vandaan komen. Ook zijn ze het resultaat van de relatief grote sociaal-culturele afstand die er bestaat tussen hen en de generatie van hun kinderen. Een belangrijke factor die door de ouders zelf naar voren werd gebracht was hun gevoel van onveiligheid in de stad, en meer specifiek de angst dat hun dochters het slachtoffer zouden worden van enige vorm van geweld. In praktische zin speelden ook de lange werkdagen van de ouders een rol. Het laatste deel van hoofdstuk 3 bevat een reflectie over huiselijk geweld in *pueblos jóvenes*

gezinnen. Ook hier blijken verschuivingen plaats te vinden: mensen in Peru beschouwen huiselijk geweld steeds meer als onacceptabel; meer vrouwen doen aangifte van huiselijk geweld. Tegelijkertijd leidt huiselijk geweld echter nog steeds tot veel directe en indirecte slachtoffers onder vrouwen en kinderen en is het daarmee een belangrijke probleem in Peru.

Hoofdstuk 4 presenteert de meisjes, de belangrijkste subjecten in dit onderzoek. Het eerste thema in dit hoofdstuk is school, aangezien dit één van de plekken was waar de meeste meisjes veel tijd doorbrachten. Over het algemeen is de onderwijsparticipatiegraad in de urbane gebieden in Peru behoorlijk hoog. In Los Pinos gaan de meeste meisjes (en jongens) op regelmatige basis naar school. Zwangere meisjes zijn hierop een uitzondering. Zij verlaten meestal de school op het moment dat ze zwanger raken of als hun zwangerschap zichtbaar wordt. Hoewel de cijfers voor schoolparticipatie over het algemeen hoog zijn, laat de kwaliteit van het onderwijs vaak te wensen over. Dit geldt met name voor het publieke onderwijs, waar vrijwel alle kinderen uit de *pueblos jóvenes* naar toe gaan. Problemen die naar voren kwamen met betrekking tot onderwijs zijn het gebrek aan voldoende schoolmaterialen, de hoge graad van schoolachterstand en zittenblijven en de grote financiële last die ouders moeten dragen als ze hun kinderen naar school sturen. Verder is er sprake van een grote mate van voortijdig school verlaten, met name onder jeugd van 15 jaar en ouder.

Naast school, zijn de meisjes in Los Pinos veel bezig met aan huishouden gerelateerde activiteiten. Vooral wanneer hun ouders buitenshuis werken, zijn de meisjes verantwoordelijk voor schoonmaken, koken en de zorg voor jongere broertjes en zusjes. Een aantal meisjes zijn ook actief in arbeid buitenshuis, vaak in relatie tot het werk van hun ouders. Hoewel de meisjes soms klaagden over de vele uren die deze activiteiten opslokten, zagen ze allemaal hun verantwoordelijkheden als normaal voor meisjes van hun leeftijd. Het derde deel van het hoofdstuk gaat over de hobby's en vrijetijdsactiviteiten van de meisjes. Deze vinden plaats dicht bij huis en over het algemeen met meisjes onderling. De meisjes besteden hun vrije tijd vooral aan het kletsen met vriendinnen, het kijken van televisie en radio luisteren.

De *quince años* (15de verjaardag) en de *promoción* (middelbare school diplomaceremonie) zijn twee belangrijke momenten in het leven van de meisjes. Beide momenten geven aan dat hun jeugd ten einde aan het lopen is en dat een nieuwe fase, de fase van volwassenheid dichterbij komt. Met name de *quince años* is ook een viering van gendergerelateerde waarden, zoals fatsoen en verantwoordelijkheid. De meisjes onderstrepen deze betekenissen in grote mate, maar benadrukken ook dat ondanks dat ze deze 'rites de passage' doormaken, volwassenheid nog steeds relatief ver weg lijkt. Met betrekking tot de plaats van religie in het leven van de meisjes is het duidelijk dat net als dat voor veel mensen in Peru geldt, het katholicisme belangrijk voor hen is. Dit is het meest zichtbaar in de deelname van veel meisjes in de voorbereidende bijeenkomsten voor de Eerste Communie en Belijdenis. Tegelijkertijd lijken de normen en waarden die in de katholieke kerk onderwezen worden echter lang niet altijd gevolgd te worden als het gaat om het nemen van praktische beslissingen in het dagelijks leven. In deze context, is 'volkskatholicisme' (tegenover 'doctrinair katholicisme') een zinvol construct.

Hoofdstuk 4 sluit af met de dromen en verwachtingen van de meisjes voor de toekomst. Hierin werd vooral nadruk gelegd op het ideaal van *ser profesional*, iets wat in de praktijk refereerde aan het halen van een beroepsdiploma, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van administratie of lichaamsverzorging. Via deze weg verwachtten de meisjes een beter leven te kunnen opbouwen dan hun ouders hadden. Naast een nadruk op onderwijs en *ser profesional*, zagen de meisjes hun toekomst ook in het moederschap en als echtgenote. De twee nadrukken

binnen de dromen en verwachtingen voor de toekomst werden door de meisjes gezien als even belangrijk. Misschien vanwege het nieuwere karakter van het idee van *ser profesional*, werd dit laatste echter vaak het sterkst benadrukt.

Hoofdstuk 5 gaat verder waar het vorige hoofdstuk ophoudt; het gaat over thema's rondom seks en seksualiteit, thema's waarover de meisjes niet veel in publiek praten. Het hoofdstuk is gedeeltelijk gebaseerd op fictieve verhalen geschreven door de meisjes over onderwerpen als seksualiteit en de interactie met jongens; het hoofdstuk begint dan ook met een korte methodologische discussie over verhalen als onderzoeksmethode. Het hoofdstuk gaat dan verder met discussies over hoe meisjes de relatie met jongens zien en hoe zij zelf in die relatie bewegen. Met name de constructen '*amigo especial*' ('speciale vriend') en de 'echte liefde' zijn cruciaal. De eerste term refereert aan jongens die, hoewel niet hun vaste vriend meer voor hen waren dan gewoon vrienden. Dit construct kan gezien worden als een uitkomst van de onderhandelingen die meisjes met hun ouders voeren: het geeft hen de mogelijkheid om een speciale relatie met iemand van de andere sekse te onderhouden, terwijl ze naar hun ouders kunnen volhouden dat ze geen verkering hebben. Het construct creëert ook manoeuvreerruimte voor henzelf in de interactie met jongens: het stelt hen in staat om te experimenteren met liefde en seksualiteit zonder een te serieuze relatie aan te gaan.

Op het moment dat meisjes hun *amigo especial* gaan zien als hun echte liefde wordt de relatie serieuzer. Dit is vaak ook het moment waarop de eerste keer geslachtsverkeer overwogen wordt. Het lijkt er op dat een meisje in de *pueblos jóvenes* geslachtsverkeer vooral ziet als het bezegelen van een eeuwige band met de jongen die zij ziet als haar echte liefde. Het is iets wat ze alleen doet als ze ervan overtuigd is dat hij de man is met wie ze zal blijven in de toekomst. Als meisjes (en jongens) in de *pueblos jóvenes* seksueel actief zijn, gebruiken ze vaak geen betrouwbare voorbehoedsmiddelen. Nog veel minder is dit het geval als dit gebeurt in een relatief stabiele liefdesrelatie. Stellen vertrouwen vaak op de 'ritmemethode' en op 'coitus interruptus', soms afgewisseld met het gebruik van een condoom. De meisjes zijn zich sterk bewust van het risico van zwangerschap, maar zien dit risico niet als een reden om af te zien van seksueel verkeer. Veel belangrijker is de vraag wat de jongen in kwestie zou doen als ze inderdaad zwanger wordt. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met een discussie over abortus. Hoewel het veel voorkomt in Peru, is het ook iets waar nauwelijks over wordt gepraat.

In hoofdstuk 6 verlaten we tijdelijk het perspectief van de meisjes en verlegt de aandacht zich weer naar het niveau van het gezin, meer specifiek naar de ouders, en de manier waarop zij hun dochters proberen op te voeden. De opvoedingsboodschappen van ouders blijken uiteen te vallen in twee delen. In de eerste plaats is er het belang dat gehecht wordt aan (formeel) onderwijs: meisjes worden aangemoedigd om hun best te doen op school zodat ze later iets kunnen bereiken. Deze nadruk wordt gecombineerd met een tweede boodschap die de nadruk legt op moreel seksueel gedrag, meer specifiek op seksuele onthouding. De twee elementen worden gecombineerd in de korte waarschuwing 'cuídate', een oproep om je te beschermen tegen welke slechte invloed dan ook. De boodschappen kunnen direct en indirect in verband worden gebracht met de context van de migrantenvolkswijk. In de eerste plaats zijn ze een reflectie van de dromen waarmee ouders ooit naar Lima zijn gekomen: door onderwijs zouden zij of in ieder geval hun kinderen vooruit kunnen komen op de sociaal-economische ladder. De nadruk op seksuele onthouding hangt direct met deze droom samen: tienerzwangerschap - iets wat onherroepelijk voortvloeit uit geslachtsverkeer - wordt gezien als iets dat de droom van vooruitgang door onderwijs ruïneert. Seksuele activiteit en falen in sociaal-economisch opzicht zijn dus onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden. Samen vormen

de twee boodschappen een nogal prescriptief socialiserings-framework voor de meisjes. De ouders benadrukken de voorschriften van je best doen en van fatsoenlijk gedrag zowel verbaal als door concrete pogingen het leven van de meisjes op een fysieke manier te controleren. De reactie van de meisjes op deze beperkende context legt de nadruk op het gebrek aan *confianza*, of openheid tussen hen en hun ouders. Ouders, op hun beurt, zijn zich bewust van de beperkingen van hun benadering maar zijn ook onzeker over alternatieve benaderingen.

Hoofdstuk 7 gaat over tienerzwangerschap. Het hoofdstuk bespreekt het onderwerp in een chronologische volgorde, met aandacht voor de achtergronden van tienerzwangerschap, het moment waarop de meisjes erachter komen dat ze zwanger zijn, het moment waarop ze hun ouders en vriend vertellen over de zwangerschap, de periode van zwangerschap zelf en uiteindelijk de eerste maanden/ jaren van moederschap. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met een discussie over de toekomst van de meisjes die moeder werden. Het wordt duidelijk in dit hoofdstuk dat voor het begrijpen van de hoge cijfers van tienerzwangerschap in de *pueblos jóvenes*, verschillende verklarende factoren moeten worden meegenomen. Deze factoren zijn samen te vatten in het concept van 'sociale kwetsbaarheid'. Relevante factoren zijn bijvoorbeeld sociale isolatie, school drop-out of het gebrek aan sociale netwerken. Bijzondere aandacht zou moeten worden besteed aan wat er gebeurt binnen de relatie tussen een meisje en haar vriend: het is immers hier dat de onlosmakelijke relatie tussen geslachtsverkeer en tienerzwangerschap is ingebed. Tienerzwangerschap zou ook geanalyseerd moeten worden in de context van de relatie van ouders met hun dochters. Wat dat betreft, kan zowel een meer accepterende als een afwijzende houding ten opzichte van de relatie van hun dochter met een jongen leiden tot een grotere kwetsbaarheid voor zwangerschap.

Zwanger worden betekent een ingrijpende verandering in het leven van meisjes. Ze verlaten school, gaan soms samenwonen met hun partner en moeten zich voorbereiden op een leven als moeder. De concepten 'rites de passage' en 'liminaliteit' bleken nuttige termen bij het beschrijven van zowel de sociale isolatie als de tumultueuze emotionele veranderingen die samenhangen met tienerzwangerschap.

In hoofdstuk 8 komen de belangrijkste punten uit de voorgaande hoofdstukken bij elkaar. Ik herhaal hier mijn stelling dat ondanks bepaalde tekortkomingen Lewis' idee van de armoedecultuur in grote lijnen geldig is voor het begrijpen van de situatie van tienermeisjes in de migrantenvolkswijken in Peru. Een focus op korte-termijn overleven maakt vooruitgang op de langere duur niet erg waarschijnlijk. De vooruitzichten voor de meisjes om in de komende jaren uit de armoede te komen zijn dan ook klein. Dit betekent niet dat er niets veranderd is. De cultuur van jeugd in volkswijken vandaag de dag is duidelijk verschillend van die van hun ouders; zij is echter ook nog steeds verschillend van die van hun leeftijdsgenoten in andere delen van Lima. De droom van vooruitgang, zo centraal in de migratie van hun ouders, speelt nog steeds een belangrijke rol in hun leven. Deze droom verklaart ook voor een deel de vrij optimistische doelen en verwachtingen die de meisjes hadden met betrekking tot de toekomst.

In hoofdstuk 8 kom ik ook terug op de dilemma's en spanningen gelegen in de interactie tussen ouders en dochters. Een conclusie is dat de socialiseringsboodschappen, waarin onderwijs en seksualiteit zo sterk met elkaar worden verbonden, een belangrijke verandering ten opzichte van het verleden betekenen. Seksueel fatsoen en seksuele abstinentie zijn niet langer in de eerste plaats verbonden met de normen en waarden van de katholieke kerk. In plaats daarvan zijn deze idealen steeds meer gebaseerd op een redenering die economisch en onderwijsgericht van aard is. Aan de ene kant reflecteert deze verandering het sterk

toegenomen belang dat ouders in de *pueblos jóvenes* hechten aan onderwijs. Aan de andere kant hebben de veranderende redeneringen achter de discourses over seksualiteit tot nu toe niet echt geleid tot het uitoefenen van minder controle over de seksualiteit van meisjes.

De meisjes onderschrijven tot op zekere hoogte de waarden en normen met betrekking tot onderwijs en seksualiteit zoals die door hun ouders naar voren worden gebracht. In de ogen van de meisjes sluiten de twee levensgebieden elkaar echter niet noodzakelijkerwijs uit. De meisjes gingen er over het algemeen van uit dat school en vriendjes gecombineerd konden worden. Om deze ideeën in de praktijk te brengen in de sterk beperkende context van gezin en buurt, maakten de meisjes gebruik van creatieve middelen; het creëren van *amigo especial* kan worden gezien als een goed voorbeeld. Het creëren van manoeuvreerruimte vindt echter plaats in een omgeving waarin reeds gedurende hun hele leven maar weinig steun was voor persoonlijk initiatief en groeiende autonomie. Het is mede tegen deze achtergrond dat ook tienerzwangerschap kan worden begrepen.

Het laatste deel van hoofdstuk 8 focust op genderrelaties binnen het gezin en de wijk. De belangrijkste conclusie is dat het onderscheid dat vaak gemaakt wordt in de literatuur tussen gender-gerelateerde veranderingen in de middenklassen en de lagere klassen veel minder scherp is dan vaak wordt verondersteld. In beide klassen is er sprake van een samengaan van meer en minder progressieve discourses en praktijken en in beide gevallen heeft arbeidsmarktparticipatie van vrouwen geleid tot een groeiend zelfbewustzijn en ontwikkeling. Misschien is de conclusie gerechtvaardigd dat veranderingen op het gebied van genderrelaties zelfs groter zijn in de *pueblos jóvenes* dan in de middenklassen; de doelen en ambities van de meisjes gaan hier immers duidelijk veel verder dan die van hun eigen moeders.

Zowel de meisjes als hun ouders koesteren de droom van vooruitgang en van het opbouwen van een goed leven. Ondanks het feit dat deze dromen voor de meesten van hen tot nu toe niet zijn uitgekomen, blijven ze hopen op een betere toekomst.

Resumen

Este estudio se centró en las vidas, las preocupaciones y los sueños de muchachas adolescentes de los pueblos jóvenes (barrios populares de gente proveniente de las zonas rurales) de Lima Metropolitana, con un enfoque especial en la interacción entre ellas y sus padres. Esta investigación consistió en un caso práctico llevado a cabo en Los Pinos, un pequeño pueblo joven en San Juan de Miraflores, en el cono sur de Lima. Los puntos principales de interés de este estudio pueden dividirse en tres series de preguntas. La primera se refiere a las expectativas para las vidas y futuros de las muchachas mismas, su realidad actual en los pueblos jóvenes así como también su experiencia de esa realidad, y sus sueños a futuro y proyectos de vida. La segunda serie de preguntas trata sobre las vidas y proyectos de vida de las muchachas en el contexto de los barrios populares. ¿Cuál es la relación entre sus construcciones teóricas, experiencias y sueños por un lado, y la pobreza y marginalización por el otro, y hasta qué punto la cultura de los pueblos jóvenes (la llamada ‘cultura chicha’) cumple un papel? La tercera serie de preguntas aborda más específicamente el tema de la interacción de las muchachas con sus padres y el rol de esta interacción en las vidas y proyectos de vida de las mismas. ¿Cuáles son las principales normas y valores que los padres transmiten a sus hijas y cómo éstos se relacionan con el contexto de los pueblos jóvenes? Y, en segundo lugar, ¿cómo responden las muchachas a los mensajes enviados por sus padres y cómo, interactuando con esos mensajes, construyen y reconstruyen sus propias ideas sobre sus vidas y su futuro?

El estudio se centró en la segunda generación de emigrantes del campo a la ciudad, los hijos de aquellos que migraron en los años 70 y principios de los 80. A través de los años el tema de la juventud popular ha recibido mucha atención en el ámbito de las ciencias sociales. Sin embargo, los estudios a menudo parten de la idea de la juventud como una subcultura, como un grupo que se halla relativamente aislado del resto de la sociedad. En los últimos años, se ha trabajado también sobre las redes sociales y los procesos de socialización de la juventud popular. Estos estudios prestan mayor atención a las relaciones entre generaciones, pero su enfoque parece seguir estando en la medida en la que la (supuesta) mentalidad pionera de los padres emigrantes es transmitida a sus hijos. Mucha menos atención se le dedica a la cuestión de cómo el contexto de pobreza, informalidad y el origen migratorio de los padres influyen en el proceso de la juventud. Aún más, casi no se les presta atención a las muchachas específicamente. En los pueblos jóvenes, las muchachas componen un grupo más bien invisible. Pasan la mayor parte de su tiempo dentro de sus casas y generalmente no manifiestan los tipos extremos de comportamiento problemático que tienden a llamar la atención de los investigadores y de los responsables de tomar decisiones.

Las muchachas que formaron parte de este estudio tenían entre 14 y 18 años y todas vivían en el barrio de Los Pinos. Este barrio, creado en 1984 por una ‘invasión’ (es decir, un asentamiento ilegal ocurrido de la noche a la mañana), está construido sobre los declives de una colina en terreno calizo y hoy alberga a unas 120 familias. En el momento de mi trabajo de campo algunas de las casas todavía estaban hechas de madera, hierro corrugado y esterillas de caña. La mayoría tenía algunas paredes de piedra. La mayor parte de las casas en el barrio

tenían acceso directo o indirecto al agua y a la electricidad. Las muchachas con las que trabajé habían nacido todas en Lima Metropolitana; muchas de ellas eran las hijas mayores de sus familias. Generalmente vivían en familias nucleares que consistían de un padre, una madre y entre tres y seis hijos. De las 19 muchachas más activamente involucradas en el caso práctico, dos provenían de hogares monoparentales encabezados por mujeres.

A continuación del Capítulo 1, que da una introducción al estudio resaltando lo que se dijo recientemente, el Capítulo 2 discute el contexto geográfico de esta investigación, a saber, los pueblos jóvenes, y, más específicamente, Los Pinos. Esto se lleva a cabo desde una perspectiva teórica y desde los puntos de vista de sus habitantes. Describe como los barrios surgieron como resultado de enormes olas de migración del campo a la ciudad, y como estos barrios se convirtieron en el lugar de la pobreza y la marginalización. También analiza las estrategias de supervivencia de los habitantes de los pueblos jóvenes, enfatizando la actuación de los habitantes del barrio. Teóricamente, el concepto de una cultura de la pobreza, originalmente introducido por Lewis (1965), se discute críticamente. La conclusión es que, a pesar de que no todos los elementos de este concepto son aplicables al contexto actual, la idea de que la gente está en gran medida atrapada dentro de un círculo vicioso de pobreza y marginalización es todavía, en gran parte, válida. Esta marginalización no sólo se refiere a la desgracia económica, sino que también incluye las dificultades para acceder a buenos cuidados de salud y a una seguridad apropiada. La pobreza y otros problemas en los pueblos jóvenes son reconocidos por los habitantes de los barrios, a pesar de que dichos problemas tendían a ser discutidos en términos relativos. Las muchachas en Los Pinos enfatizaban que siempre podría ser peor, y los adultos subrayaban que, si bien son pobres, todavía tienen su orgullo. Este orgullo fue también uno de los elementos constitutivos de la llamada cultura de los pueblos jóvenes.

El tercer capítulo discute la unidad familiar en los pueblos jóvenes. Durante las décadas pasadas, las estructuras y modelos familiares han cambiado considerablemente. En general, las familias se han vuelto más pequeñas y más nucleares. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, existe una cantidad de elementos que desafían esta nuclearidad, como por ejemplo la costumbre de los miembros de las familias de áreas rurales de mudarse temporalmente, y las hijas con sus propios niños que todavía viven con sus padres. Dentro de las familias, los roles de género están en movimiento. Debido a la creciente participación de las mujeres en el mercado laboral y a otros cambios en la sociedad más amplia, las relaciones de género 'tradicionales' están cada vez más bajo presión, y los modelos múltiples parecen coexistir. No obstante, la noción de maternidad como determinante de la feminidad todavía es muy fuerte. Cuando se refiere a la crianza del niño, parece que la cultura familiar es más bien autoritaria, particularmente en lo que respecta a las muchachas adolescentes. Las normas y valores se transmiten en forma vertical, sin prestar mucha atención a las preferencias propias de las muchachas. Esto es lo que sucede especialmente en lo que respecta a la sexualidad, la interacción con los muchachos y la educación. El autoritarismo en las familias coexiste con una actitud *laissez faire* que se evidencia bajo otras circunstancias y con respecto a otras cuestiones. Los estilos de paternidad generalmente concuerdan con las prácticas de crianza más autoritarias que eran comunes en las regiones de origen de los padres. Son además el resultado de una distancia sociocultural relativamente grande que existe entre ellos y las generaciones de sus hijos. Un factor importante mencionado por los padres mismos fue su sentimiento de inseguridad en la ciudad y, más particularmente, el miedo de que sus hijas fueran víctimas de algún tipo de violencia. Prácticamente, las largas horas de trabajo de los padres también cumplen un papel. La sección final del Capítulo 3 se dedicó a una reflexión sobre la violencia doméstica en las

familias de los pueblos jóvenes. También queda claro aquí que están ocurriendo cambios: la gente en Perú ve cada vez más a la violencia como inaceptable y más mujeres reportan casos de violencia doméstica. Al mismo tiempo, sin embargo, la violencia doméstica es todavía un problema apremiante en Perú, que resulta en la victimización directa o indirecta de muchas mujeres y niños.

El Capítulo 4 presenta a las muchachas que fueron los principales sujetos de esta investigación. Primero se discute sobre la escuela, ya que éste fue uno de los espacios en donde la mayoría de las muchachas pasan la mayor parte de su tiempo. En Los Pinos, como en otros barrios populares, la mayoría de las muchachas (y muchachos) asisten a la escuela regularmente. Las muchachas embarazadas constituyen una excepción a esta tendencia general: comúnmente, dejan la escuela cuando quedan embarazadas o bien cuando su embarazo se hace visible. A pesar de que, en general, los índices de asistencia a la escuela son altos en Perú urbano, la calidad general de la educación es bastante pobre. Esto ocurre particularmente con la educación pública, la forma de enseñanza que prácticamente todos los niños de los pueblos jóvenes reciben. Los problemas que se tratan en relación con la educación incluyen la falta de materiales escolares adecuados, el alto grado de retrasos escolares y repeticiones y la carga financiera total que los padres tienen que soportar para poder enviar a sus hijos a la escuela. Además, también hay un alto nivel de deserción escolar, particularmente entre los jóvenes de 15 años en adelante.

Aparte de la escuela, las muchachas de Los Pinos están muy ocupadas con las tareas del hogar. Especialmente cuando sus padres están trabajando, ellas son responsables de limpiar y cocinar y del cuidado de sus hermanos menores. Algunas de las muchachas también están involucradas en actividades laborales fuera de la casa, generalmente relacionadas con el trabajo de sus padres. A pesar de que muchas veces se quejaban de la cantidad de horas que estas tareas le demandan, todas veían este tipo de responsabilidades como normales para muchachas de su edad. La tercera sección del capítulo considera los pasatiempos y las actividades que realizan las muchachas en sus ratos libres. Pareciera que éstos ocurren cerca de sus hogares y generalmente dentro de grupos del mismo sexo. Las actividades a las cuales las muchachas más se dedican son pasar el tiempo con amigos, mirar televisión o escuchar la radio.

Los ‘quince años’ (el cumpleaños de quince) y la ‘promoción’ (la graduación de la escuela secundaria) son dos eventos importantes en sus vidas. Cada uno de estos marcadores de ciertos períodos de la vida indica que la niñez se está terminando, y que una nueva fase, la fase de la adultez, se está acercando. Los ‘quince años’ especialmente es una celebración de ciertas virtudes relacionadas con el género, tales como la decencia y la responsabilidad. Las muchachas respaldan estos significados en gran medida, pero también subrayan que, a pesar de haber celebrado estos ritos de pasaje, la adultez todavía parece relativamente lejana para ellas. Con respecto al lugar que la religión ocupa en sus vidas, está claro que, así como para la mayoría de los adultos en Perú, el Catolicismo es importante para ellas. Lo más visible en este aspecto es la participación de las muchachas en las clases preparatorias para la Primera Comunión y la Confirmación. Al mismo tiempo, no obstante, pareciera que las normas y valores que se enseñan en la Iglesia no se siguen cuando hay que tomar decisiones prácticas en la vida diaria. En este aspecto, el término ‘Catolicismo popular’ (en contraste con ‘Catolicismo doctrinal’) es una construcción teórica útil.

El Capítulo 4 concluye con los sueños de las muchachas y sus expectativas para el futuro. Estos enfatizan el ideal de convertirse en una ‘profesional’, que prácticamente se refiere al

ideal de obtener un diploma de un programa de entrenamiento vocacional, como por ejemplo en estudios secretariales o cosmetología. Las muchachas creían que, de esta forma, sus vidas futuras serían mejores que las de sus padres. Aparte de un énfasis en la educación y en ‘ser profesional’, las muchachas también imaginaban un futuro como esposas y madres. Las dos partes de los sueños del futuro eran igualmente importantes en sus proyectos de vida. Sin embargo, tal vez debido a la novedad del concepto de ‘ser profesional’, fue esta última idea la que parecía estar más enfatizada.

El Capítulo 5 continúa donde el capítulo anterior termina, abordando el sexo y la sexualidad, temas sobre los cuales las muchachas no hablaban mucho en público. Como el capítulo está en parte basado en historias ficticias creadas por las muchachas sobre temas como la sexualidad y la interacción con los muchachos, comienza con una breve discusión metodológica sobre el uso de historias como un método de investigación. El capítulo prosigue con discusiones acerca de cómo las muchachas ven sus relaciones con los muchachos, y cómo se conducen dentro de esas relaciones. En este aspecto, las construcciones de ‘amigo especial’ y de ‘amor verdadero’ eran las dos cruciales. La primera se refiere a aquellos muchachos que, si bien no eran sus novios, eran más que sólo amigos para ellas. Esta construcción puede ser vista como una consecuencia de las negociaciones de las muchachas con sus padres: les permite mantener una relación especial con alguien del otro sexo, mientras que al mismo tiempo les recalca a sus padres que ellas todavía no tienen novio. Además, la construcción crea un espacio de práctica en la interacción con los muchachos: de esta forma, las niñas son capaces de experimentar con el amor y la sexualidad sin estar todavía en una relación demasiado seria.

Cuando las muchachas comienzan a ver a sus ‘amigos especiales’ como su ‘verdadero amor’, la relación se hace más seria. Por lo general, este también es el momento en que la iniciación sexual puede considerarse. Para una chica de los pueblos jóvenes, pareciera que, más que cualquier otra cosa, la iniciación sexual se toma como una manera de sellar un lazo eterno con el chico que ella considera su amor verdadero. Es algo que sólo hace si está convencida de que ese es el hombre con el que va a estar en el futuro. Cuando las muchachas (y muchachos) en los pueblos jóvenes son sexualmente activos, por lo general no utilizan anticonceptivos confiables, mucho menos cuando están en relaciones amorosas relativamente estables. Más a menudo, las parejas confían en la abstinencia periódica y el coito interrumpido, métodos que a veces complementan con el uso de condones. Las muchachas son muy conscientes del riesgo de embarazo, pero no consideran este riesgo como una razón para abstenerse de las relaciones sexuales. En cambio, lo que es más importante es la suposición en cuanto a qué haría un muchacho en caso de que ella quedara embarazada. El capítulo termina con una discusión sobre el aborto, que si bien es, por lo visto, frecuente en Perú, casi nunca se habla de ello.

En el Capítulo 6, la perspectiva de las muchachas se hace a un lado y la atención se vuelve a centrar en el nivel familiar, más específicamente en los padres y en la forma en que tratan de educar a sus hijas. El capítulo argumenta que los mensajes de los padres pueden dividirse en dos componentes. En primer lugar, comprenden el elemento de la educación (formal): las muchachas son alentadas a hacer lo mejor que puedan en la escuela, para poder ‘ser alguien’ en la vida. Este énfasis se combina con un llamado al comportamiento sexual moral. Los dos se combinan en la advertencia corta ‘cúdate’, la cual es una llamada de protegerse de cualquier influencia nociva. Ambos elementos se relacionan directa y indirectamente con el contexto de los pueblos jóvenes. Son antes que nada un reflejo de los sueños que los padres trajeron con ellos a Lima: por medio de la educación, ellos mismos, o al menos sus hijos, serían capaces de ascender en la escala socio-económica. El énfasis en la abstinencia sexual

se conecta directamente con este sueño, ya que el embarazo adolescente, que se piensa sigue naturalmente a la iniciación sexual, es visto como algo que arruina el sueño de progreso por medio de la educación. La actividad sexual y el fracaso en términos socio-económicos están de este modo intrínsecamente relacionados. Juntos, los dos mensajes forman una estructura socializante un tanto normativa para las muchachas. Los padres ponen énfasis en el precepto de trabajar duro y de la decencia verbalmente y además tratan de controlar las vidas de las muchachas de manera física. Las reacciones de las muchachas frente a estos contextos que las limitan acentúan la falta de confianza y sinceridad entre ellas y sus padres. Por su parte, los padres reconocen las limitaciones de su forma de acercamiento, pero no están seguros sobre los acercamientos alternativos.

El Capítulo 7 trata sobre el embarazo adolescente. El capítulo aborda el tema en una forma cronológica, prestando atención a los antecedentes de embarazo adolescente, el momento en que las muchachas descubren que están embarazadas, el momento en que se lo dicen a su novio y a sus padres, el período de embarazo en sí y, finalmente, los primeros meses o años de maternidad. El capítulo concluye con una discusión sobre el futuro panorama de las muchachas que se convirtieron en madres. Lo que resulta claro en este capítulo es que, para entender la elevada prevalencia de los embarazos adolescentes en los pueblos jóvenes, debe considerarse una serie de distintos factores explicativos, resumidos en el concepto de vulnerabilidad social. El aislamiento social, la deserción escolar o la falta de redes sociales, por ejemplo, son factores relevantes. Se le debe prestar particular atención a lo que ocurre dentro de la relación entre una muchacha y su novio: es aquí donde está incrustada la inextricable relación entre la iniciación sexual y el embarazo adolescente. Éste también debe analizarse en el contexto de las relaciones padres-hija. En este aspecto, tanto una actitud de aceptación como de rechazo puede llevar a una vulnerabilidad más elevada para el embarazo.

Quedar embarazadas, cambia enormemente las vidas de las muchachas. Por lo general dejan la escuela, a veces se juntan con sus parejas en una casa separada y se tienen que preparar para una vida como madres. Los conceptos de 'ritos de pasaje' y 'liminalidad' resultaron ser útiles para destacar tanto el aislamiento social como los alborotados cambios emocionales asociados con el embarazo adolescente.

El Capítulo 8 une los puntos más importantes que fueron planteados a lo largo de los capítulos anteriores. Aquí, reitero que la idea de Lewis de cultura de la pobreza, a pesar de tener ciertas fallas, es todavía válida para comprender la situación de las muchachas adolescentes en los barrios populares de Lima Metropolitana. Un enfoque en la supervivencia a corto plazo hace que el progreso a largo plazo no sea muy probable. De este modo, las posibilidades de las muchachas de salir de la pobreza en los años venideros no son muy buenas. Esto no significa que no ha cambiado nada. Hoy en día, la cultura joven popular de los pueblos jóvenes es diferente a aquella de sus padres. Sin embargo, aún es también distinta a la de sus pares en otras áreas de Lima. El sueño de progreso, tan importante para la migración de sus padres, todavía juega un papel crucial en sus vidas. Este sueño también explica en parte las metas y expectativas un tanto optimistas que las muchachas tenían para el futuro.

En el Capítulo 8, reitero los dilemas y tensiones incrustados en la interacción entre los padres y sus hijas. Una conclusión es que los discursos socializadores, en los que la educación y la sexualidad están intrincadamente unidos, constituyen un quiebre importante con el pasado. La decencia y abstinencia sexual ya no están ligadas principalmente a las normas y valores de la Iglesia Católica. En cambio, estas ideas están cada vez más cimentadas en una razón fundamental que es de naturaleza económica y educativa. Por un lado, este cambio

refleja la creciente importancia que los padres de los pueblos jóvenes le dan a la educación. Sin embargo, la cambiante razón fundamental detrás de los discursos sobre sexualidad, no han llevado a la disminución en el control de la sexualidad de las muchachas.

Las muchachas están de acuerdo hasta cierto punto con las normas y valores que sus padres han impuesto con respecto a la educación y la sexualidad. Sin embargo, según las muchachas, estas dos áreas de la vida no necesariamente se excluyen mutuamente. Tienden a pensar que la escuela y los novios pueden combinarse. Para poner esta idea en práctica en el contexto que las limita de la familia y el barrio, las muchachas tuvieron que valerse de medios creativos. La creación del 'amigo especial' puede ser vista como un buen ejemplo de esto. Sin embargo, esta creación de un espacio de práctica ocurre dentro de un ambiente que, durante todas sus vidas, les ha proporcionado poco apoyo para la iniciativa personal y la creciente autonomía. Es en este contexto donde también se debe analizar el embarazo adolescente.

La parte final del Capítulo 8 se centra en las relaciones de género dentro de las familias y los barrios. La conclusión principal es que la distinción que generalmente se hace en la bibliografía entre los cambios relacionados al género en las clases medias y bajas está menos definida de lo que usualmente se cree. En ambos grupos, hay una coexistencia de discursos y prácticas más o menos progresivas y, en ambos casos, el trabajo ha llevado al autodesarrollo de la mujer. Tal vez, la conclusión está justificada por el hecho de que los cambios acerca de las relaciones de género han sido más impresionantes en los pueblos jóvenes que en las clases medias, ya que las ambiciones de las muchachas van mas allá de las que sus madres alguna vez tuvieron.

Tanto las muchachas como sus padres albergan el sueño de progreso y de lograr una buena vida. A pesar de que hasta ahora estos sueños no se han hecho realidad para muchas, ellas siguen albergando la esperanza de un futuro mejor.

Curriculum Vitae

Jacobijn Olthoff was born on 12 July 1972 in Rockanje, The Netherlands. She completed her secondary school at the RSG Erasmus in Almelo, in 1990. After a propaedeutical exam in Policy Sciences, she earned a Master's degree in Development Studies at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1996. Her curriculum included a series of courses at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague as part of the program 'Politics of Alternative Development Strategies'. During her studies, she developed a particular interest in Latin America, and more particularly in the struggles of its most vulnerable social groups. Her Master thesis was on popular participation in AIDS education in Valdivia, Chile.

In 2000, she started her PhD research at the Department of Cultural Anthropology of Utrecht University, on teenage girls and their parents in the migrant popular neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Lima, Peru. She has also been involved in teaching, both at the department of Cultural Anthropology and, since 2005, at the University College of Utrecht University.

