

Sexto Sentido.

Empowerment through the Media.

Project in International Communication,

Module 2

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Spring 2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Grassroots as agents of social change

Rapid economic growth and importation of industry do not have a direct effect on the wellbeing of country's population unless equality in human rights and distribution of wealth is achieved. Furthermore, countries which can not be considered as a part of the Third world, due to their relatively high level of industrialization, such as Latin American or Asiatic countries, experience an increasing growth of relative poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and inequalities that affect largely women, young people and children. Naturally, the drawback of thinking development only in economical terms is testified by the gap between rich and poor that we see in Latin American countries. Thus, despite the fact that these countries have managed to foster a relative economic growth over the last two decades, the equal distribution of material goods and respect for human rights has not improved (Cubitt 1995: 14). In globalized contexts of transnational capital flows, migration movements, industrial relocation and information flows through electronic networks, the emergence of new "placeless spaces" and invisible driving forces of economy has contributed to limiting the power of traditional state institutions to control and implement policies for private corporations (Huesca 2002: 418). Ironically, the described above penetration and destabilization of traditional societies caused by globalization has on the other hand also given possibilities for new social and grassroots movements to create fruitful networks in order to address manifold social issues more effectively. The Nicaraguan grassroots organization Puntos de Encuentro can be considered as an example of new social movement with potential to articulate awareness-raising, dialogue and social mobilization.

During the Sandinista revolutionary government (1979-1990), attempts to realize a bottom-up social transformation of a devastated Nicaragua after forty years of dictatorship resulted in hopeful series of projects that demanded the participation of popular classes. As the result of this revolution a large number of grassroots organizations and community groups were created, which marked a peak in the Nicaraguan history of social movements. Being active participants in the overthrowing of

the dictator and later in the social and economic reconstruction of Nicaragua, women were struggling to build a supporting framework that would allow them to fight for equal rights. However, although the Sandinista project was founded on democratic visions of social organization and participatory democracy, their project of social change would only be achieved on a rather limited scale (Prevost 1999:10-14). Thus, women organizations never attained enough independency to introduce considerable cultural changes into the traditional macho-culture deeply rooted in the Nicaraguan society, neither during the dictatorship nor during the revolutionary government. (Barton 199:154-157).

Grassroots organizations endured the transition in 1990 to the Chamorro's government and the introduction of a neo liberalist economic system that undermined governmental support to these organizations. Some of the organizations were formerly linked to the Sandinista Party that broke its relations with the ruling party, just as the Community Movements and several women's organizations did. From nineties onward what characterized grassroots organizations was decentralization, fragmentation and emergence of local associations and non governmental organizations that were specifically goal-oriented rather than being coordinated and centralized as during the Sandinista rule.

In the beginning of the 1990's a Nicaraguan feminist non-governmental organization, Puntos de Encuentro, launched *La Boletina*, a newsletter about women's organizations activities with a broad distribution supported by grassroots organizations and community groups that were intended to reach Nicaraguan women and young people both in urban and rural areas. The aim was to challenge the social status quo, to offer and promote different alternatives in order to start a debate on issues that affected women (such as gender-based violence and oppression, sexuality, reproductive health and education perspectives, etc.) and secondly, to operate transformations in the social fabric that demanded not only changes in attitude and behaviour but also radical revisions of long-accepted and internalized power oppressions that operated as obstacles for the development all social strata could benefit from. One of the main principles held by Puntos was and is the transformation of the society by problem posing and by offering new cultural articulations as alternatives to the established "reality". (Rodríguez 2001:15)

In February 2001, Puntos witnessed how the first episode of their ultimate communication product, a conceptually new TV series intended for young people, broke through in the Nicaraguan media panorama. Just as grassroots organizations that aim at challenging traditional perceptions, deeply rooted in the Nicaraguan culture and society, *Sexto Sentido TV* represents a step further in Puntos de Encuentro's explorative endeavour towards the communication of social change. Intended as a "counter attacking" communication device against the social status quo, *Sexto Sentido* portrays situations in which sexuality, love and family relationships, friendship, human rights, discrimination and stigma are analysed through young people and adolescents' dilemmas and conflicts. The overall approach to these issues is thus to explore the influence of social norms that affect gender and generational relationships and therefore individual/collective decision making processes. (Bank & Hernandez 2005:4)

1.2 Problem Field

In this project I want to explore how the Nicaraguan NGO Puntos de Encuentro articulates notions of empowerment and social change in their communication campaign "Somos Diferentes Somos Iguales", initiated in 2000 as an on-going multimedia strategy, intended to promote participation/leadership among adolescents and young people in their communities and organizations. The overall objective is to make young people active social agents, conscious of their citizenship, to defend their rights and raise their voice on issues like sexuality, violence, HIV/AIDS, racism and discrimination (Bank & Hernandez 2005: 2)

The role of this campaign represents a countercultural flow of ideas and concepts that can not influence social and political changes unless they are supported by the rest of the society. In order to gain not only acceptance of these ideas but also support in the Nicaraguan society, Puntos de Encuentro aims at reaching broader public by deploying multiple communicative strategies as well as by cooperating with diverse social agents at the grassroots level. These include local and regional organizations, diverse social groups working for the defence of human, women, workers, and young people's rights, regional coordinators of collective action against gender violence, regional coordinators and organizations working on sexual reproductive health rights and HIV/AIDS, Centres of

health and sexual reproductive health, governmental and non governmental organizations, national and regional mass media, etc. Through an alliance with social movements and networking, Puntos' alternative flow of countercultural values aims at becoming a part of the social agenda and ultimately to become one of the driving forces of social mobilization towards social change (Idem p. 3).

The background problematic that has driven Puntos de Encuentro to appeal to Nicaraguan grassroots movements for social mobilization and collective action can be summarized in the following four points:

- **Global Economy**

Neo-liberalist economic policies together with global demographic movements have repercussions on Nicaraguan impoverished social groups, particularly on women and young people' access to wealth, employment and resources. Relative poverty, impossibility to have education and therefore access to the labour market make women and young people particularly vulnerable; their voice on issues like control over their own sexuality and right to decide is unheard. Up to date the government's respond to development and poverty reduction has been lacking gender and generational perspectives which has led to further perpetuation of women's identity based on traditional motherhood and wifehood roles and thereby veiling their and young people's particular needs and (Bank & Hernandez 2005: 20).

- **General insecurity and conservative social order**

While macro economical and global changes, migration movements, poverty and unemployment bring general insecurity, conservative groups and their attempts to establish social order based on traditional moralistic views on family, religion, education and politics, contribute to creating and maintaining symbolic violence, authoritarianism and hierarchically unequal power relations where women and young people play always the subordinate role.

- **Human rights and Citizenship Realisation of Women and Young People**

On the one hand the factors mentioned above can be said to undermine significantly the possibilities of women and young people to overcome subordination and gain power to participate in the society's decision making. On

the other, efforts to promote Human rights have been centred mainly on legal and formal aspects that have overlooked the need to support long-term empowerment processes of investment in people as citizens and subjects of Human Rights.

- **Lack of Gender Approaches to Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and HIV/AIDS**

Until now approaches to SRHR and HIV/AIDS have ignored the relevance of gender attitudes in relationships, male domination and female subordination in negotiating sexual relations and general power relations that shape and influence sexual partnership in Nicaragua. Attempts to approach HIV/AIDS from an expert knowledge perspective, i.e. by delivering technical information about transmission forms and condom use are insufficient when dealing with causes and consequences of the problem. Encouraging responsibility in sexual relationships is not enough if there is not awareness of one's right to decide and negotiate upon issues like contraception.

Sexto Sentido subscribes to drama theories deployed in Edutainment in order to facilitate the engagement of the audiences with problems and conflicts in question. Opposite to the traditional views on the role of soap operas as a tool for communication for social change that should stress their role as vehicles of pro social messages, this telenovela points towards the intrinsic power of the media to construct and deconstruct social knowledge and its potential to

“[...] emphasize the meaning of identities of different groups and the resources of these groups through discourses about development” (White 2004: 8)

Puntos' irruption into the mainstream media production and entertainment represents their efforts to open new spaces of citizenship and facilitate empowerment of the different social groups as recipients of Human Rights and as active social agents who are capable to decide for themselves and upon the reality around them and who are at the same time also participants in mediated processes of meaning creation. However, concepts of empowerment, citizenship and power have become blurred and need to be translated into specific contexts and actions. This leads me to the following problem formulation:

1.3 Problem Formulation and Limitations

Cardinal question

What concept of empowerment does Nicaraguan NGO Puntos de Encuentro use in Sexto Sentido TV series?

Sub-question

- What are the features that make Sexto Sentido an empowering media product?

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The dominant paradigm in development communication, (Modernization paradigm) was subject to criticisms and reviews during 1970's. The input of Latin American scholars to this trend of criticism was significant. Their alternative search for more appropriated, contextualized and ethical communicative approaches to development reflected upon the necessity to include popular classes not only as beneficiaries of initiatives, but as co-partners and co-producers of knowledge. This demanded people's participation in their own development processes under an inclusive frame of collective decision-making and knowledge production. In this chapter I will first introduce Freire's Pedagogy of Liberation and some of the issues he underlined as vital for social transformation. Subsequently I will present participatory theories of social change; Citizens' Media and Telenovelas' research that apply to development communication and to mass media theory, Freireian concepts of empowerment, horizontal dialogue and processes of struggling to gain power in order to attain "another development"(Huesca 2002: 7-10).

2.1 Freire and the Pedagogy of Liberation

Humanity

In his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire defines humans as reflexive subjects, capable to interact and reflect upon their own actions. Being able to separate themselves from the physical limits imposed by the reality of here and now, men can objectify the world and change it (Freire 1968: 26)

When people are subjects to dehumanizing processes, their consciousness about their relationship with the world as active meaning creators is annihilated. Oppression is a dehumanizing process that veils people's awareness of their status as oppressed and

undermines their struggle to become more human, creators of reality and able to actively name the world. (Idem p. 27-32)

Changing the World

Humans' fate in the world is that of reflection and action (Idem p.120) a two-folded humanizing process through which people transform the world by naming it. Once the world has been named,

(...) it reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming (Idem p. 76).

As people begin to name the world around them, they make sense of their context, giving meaning to their actions. To name the world requires power to hold the word which ultimately would account as one of the driving forces of change.

When Freire refers to the oppressed in opposition to the elite, he depicts the last as abusers of power. Their naming of the world does not occur under human commitment with others, but rather as an imposition.

Dialogue

Dialogue is a human encounter by which men name the world. It imposes itself as a human commitment for liberation in which they become aware of their human nature of world creators and re-creators, determined to engage themselves in the common task of changing the world. Dialogue is maintained between equals who share and exchange their views, opinions and impressions as result of their relation with the world. These are the objects upon which a dialogue has to be built and shared, where the emerging themes will work as objects of reflection and subsequently as objects of action, transforming action.

Problem Posing Education

Liberation education is based on a dialogue as problem-posing. People's views and opinions emerging from the dialogue depict their situation in the world and the reality in which they are immersed. Critical thinking created and realized within dialogue allows analysing those views as issues. The objective of a problem-posing education is thus to present the significant dimensions of an individual's context reality and through its analysis to acknowledge causes of individual problems and their consequences on a broader scale. Out of this process, named by Freire "conscientização", people can acquire

critical knowledge about the limit-situations that prevent them to achieve their liberation (Idem p. 90-97)

Empowerment

“(…) as reality is transformed and these situations (limit situations) are superseded, new ones will appear which in turn will evoke new limit-acts.” (Idem p. 90)

Limit acts are for Freire transforming responses to the boundaries that prevent people to overcome oppression. These responses entail a revolutionary cultural change that can be only achieved when people assume roles of agents of transformation and participate actively in changing reality through human praxis of reflection-action. The process of conscientização or critical awareness-raising leads to cultural transformation (world transformation) where social structures, practices and meanings are revised and recreated. Liberating revision, creation and recreation of reality can only be achieved by establishing constant dialogue between transformation agents: those who initiate liberation processes and those who join them. (Idem p.90)

Empowerment means for Freire struggle of the working class to gain political power through transformation of their reality. It does not represent an event by which they (oppressed, dominated, popular or working class) are invested with power, but rather a political process of liberation on which education plays one of the main “counterattacking” functions.

“The question of empowerment involves how popular classes, through their own experiences, their own construction of culture, engage themselves in getting political power” (Freire 1987: 112).

1.1.1 Summing up

Popular classes’ power that seeks to defeat the Power that is in the dominating position can not succeed unless they (dominated, oppressed, popular or working classes people) find out what the domains of struggle are and in which ways they can create new forms of power. Oppressed people’s capacity building to create and recreate symbolic power demands an understanding of what is the social reality within which they are struggling. It also demands recognition of dominant social structures that perpetuate power

inequalities. Cultural transformation of the reality is for Freire revolutionary recreation of the world and creation of new forms of power relations between the world and people (Idem p. 78-83).

2.2 Participatory Theories of Social change and New Social Movements

Within Development communication, participatory theories perceive social change as the ultimate goal of communication (Waisbord 2000: 9). Development communication is not only seen as a strategic intervention to accomplish social change but also as an exercise of reflection upon development discourses and practices understood through grassroots movements (Wilkins and Bella 2001: 385). This critical approach to development communication considers communities and grassroots movements of central significance as producers and partakers of social change; not only as mediators between different intervention programs but also as co-workers, co-producers of knowledge achieved through their work with people, implementers of communication initiatives and those responsible for evaluation research, that is, research that is closely related with context evaluation, both in urban and rural settings (Idem p. 392).

Participatory theory scholars take as a point of departure development as a political area where unequal power relationships are involved. Social change, intended as the ultimate goal of development communication is the process where these inequalities are confronted and challenged and the status quo (social structures) that maintains unequal relationships is changed (Idem p. 389). Different scholars have conceptualized this process in different ways:

2.2.1 Jan Servaes and multiplicity in one world

Jan Servaes' view of participatory communication calls for multiplicity of approaches to solve different problems and for countries and communities' own determination to invest resources and knowledge in their own communication initiatives. He stresses the importance of giving opportunity to different cultures, groups and sub-communities in a society, to participate and unfold their different and unique interests and perspectives

(Huesca 2002: 8). The most advanced form of development communication is communities' self-managed and owned communication initiatives (Servaes 1995: 1) The underlying idea here is that in order to achieve proper development, each country, each society and each community must conceive their own development processes as multidimensional, participatory and dialectical processes, adopting different perspectives on what the right premises and conditions to carry out those processes are. The ultimate goal of participatory communication is to struggle against dominant ideologies by giving people chances to partake in deconstructing ideological and symbolic power domination and to participate in processes of identity and culture formation (Idem p. 1-8)

2.2.2 "Power-centred" Social Change Theories

Karin Wilkins underlines the importance of revision of the role of power in development, how it is produced and under what circumstances inequalities take place. Power inequalities are pervasive in society and culture, they are embedded in gender, ethnic and generational relationships, and not the least in development agendas. To eradicate development initiatives which perpetuate power inequalities by ignoring deep-rooted cultural and social constraints, a dialogue between development practitioners and the groups affected by power inequalities must be established. This dialogue must work as an ongoing process intended to challenge those inequalities on the one hand, and on the other, to challenge dominant gender, generational and ethnocentric-biased development communication practices (Wilkins & Bella 2001:12).

Summing up:

Powerless' social agents are marginalized individuals or groups that currently can not participate in an active and constructive way in society's decision-making processes. They do not have any influence or control over other people's decisions affecting them. However, since power can not be simply defined in dichotomic terms (i.e. powerless vs. absolute power), power inequalities must then be identified and recognized through exhaustive social inclusion in development dialogues.

Empowerment is the process by which these individuals or communities gain spaces to overcome their lack of freedom to choose and decide. It can be unravelled in four main features:

- Access to meaningful information. It must occur in a dialogical relationship with other communities and institutions where exchange of particular meanings and interests can continuously take place. *Participation in meaning and identity creation.* → Participation in creating symbolic power.
- Inclusion and participation of individuals and groups who lack opportunities to be heard and to decide. Participation can be realized directly or through representation at local and regional and institutional levels, through information-based representation carried out by development practitioners or creating and managing own development initiatives (Servaes 1995). *Participation in transforming social reality and its structures* → Overcoming power inequalities.
- Accountability. People's empowerment must consider building up the capability to demand and require from institutions socio-political commitment and responsibility for their acts. → Dialogical relationship between powerless social agents and social institutions.
- Emphasis on communities' capacity building to organize and mobilize themselves, but underlining the importance of recognizing social norms within communities as vehicles of power inequality.
- Local organizational capability. This feature refers to communities' capacity-building for organizing and articulating social mobilization in order to achieve common goals. *Social action for transforming social structures.* → Collective participation in power creation.
- Emphasis on small and local media. (Cadiz 2001:5-6)

2.2.3 New Social Movements. Bridging the Gap

However, the issue about participatory communication and power structures, be it political, economical or cultural is problematic. It does not seem clear how marginalized groups in the society can participate actively in dialogical development processes or how

they can participate in democratic decision-making processes bound by social and cultural constraints that development practitioners may not be able to comprehend and overcome. It is at this stage of participatory theory discourse that grassroots movements gain significance as social agents that are able to bridge the gap and realize the task of empowerment. (Huesca 2002: 9). The relevance of new social movements in development communication lies in the changing contexts of globalization: whereas institutional and governments' centralized attempts to realize development have lost effectiveness in economic and social shifting contexts, multiple and diverse grassroots movements pursuing social mobilization have achieved considerable number of gains through networking and alliance, proving their potential to become major actors of development (White 2004: 13).

Grassroots or new social movements share common features of being small, decentralized and democratic in their structure. They generally search for building up communal identities and meanings in order to direct social mobilization. Collective identity formation is closely related with how people become involved in action (social mobilization). Grassroots' participation, intervention and deconstruction of gender-biased social norms, occur within interactions and relationships with people. Identities and perceptions of future emerge from these interactions, facilitating and encouraging people's participation in social mobilization to attain social change. Power in new social movements' literature is defined as not binary, but rather asymmetrical and multidimensional. It is described as a relationship diffused through the social system and reproduced subjectively; it can not be solely reproduced, but created and reinvented, open possibilities to create new ways of social change (Huesca p.423). Grassroots movements can take advantage of their role as social generators of power, this is, instigators of social action and mobilization to reshape power relationships that lead to situations of subordination (Idem. 427).

2.3 Mass Media theories

2.3.1 Citizenship and Citizens' Media

Citizens have to legitimize their citizenship in everyday practices by participating in every-day political practices. The notion of citizenship is not a legal status people are

endowed with externally, but rather an ongoing exercise of constructing political and social identities (Rodriguez 2001:17).

Citizenship is regarded as the common arena where people are able not only to participate “physically” in democratic processes but also to influence and change culturally constructed identities, roles and social relations (Idem p.17). Citizens are agents who produce and share power and are able to identify and influence circumstances, social codes and practices that embody oppression and its continuity. Behind this concept of citizenship lies the notion of participatory democracy, which evolves a “politization” of the everyday. As citizens, people struggle in their everyday lives to resist against domination, whether this is symbolic, economic or physical (Idem p. 17-18). The small quotidian struggles, in which power domination is involved become part of the realm of politics. Democracy reaches further than formal decision-making and accounts for people’s ability to gather forces that shape their symbolic and material world. This concept of citizenship breaks with binary conceptions of power: powerless/powerful as static instances that are in opposition to each and rather subscribes to a description of power as being intrinsic to relationships and that is fragmented in multiple contexts and spheres (Idem p.19).

Citizens’ media accounts for processes of empowerment, concientization and fragmentation of power, attained by people when they gain access and re-claim their own media. In words of Clemencia Rodríguez, Citizens’ media articulates people’s participation in changing material and symbolic realities:

“As they (Citizens’ Media) disrupt established power relationships and cultural codes, citizens’ media participants also exercise their own agency in re-shaping their own lives, futures and cultures.” (Rodriguez 2001:3-4)

Media power is not only created and maintained through institutional ownership of media production (Television stations, community radio and video productions, among others) but also, and not less significantly, through cultural appropriation of media processes which contribute to bringing into life alternative discourses (Couldry 2000:194).

People’s ability to participate in shared media processes of fiction creation and information exchange, intended to shape their identities and together with communities’ institutional ownership and media production are the major outlines of citizens’ media concept of empowerment.

2.3.2 Telenovelas and Soap Operas

Research on the role of soap operas in social development has demonstrated the genre's influence on raising debates and on social mobilization leading to policy changes and legal initiatives in Latin America (Tufte 2003: 2). Recent attempts to deepen the understanding of the interrelation between audiences and telenovelas have focused on identification and appropriation of telenovelas as everyday "spaces" of meaning-making and identity construction.

The use of melodrama in Latin America as a popular entertainment genre reflects social structures and in words of Jesús Martín Barbero are structures of feeling that are part of the popular cultural imaginary. In melodrama narratives present in a wide range of Latin Telenovelas, the protagonists struggle to be recognized and simultaneously recognize others by gaining awareness of entangled family ties. Viewers' identification with Telenovelas hinges not only on recognition of settings and conflicts, but more so on the social dimension of family-neighbourhood in which protagonists are agents of action, the action of disentangling the intricate connexion bonds between characters. Telenovelas play a role in individuals' recognition of their significance as social agents, providing representations of their sphere of relationships (family, neighbourhood) as social realms where they and their actions can be recognized as meaningful (Martín-Barbero 1993:19-22).

Mary Ellen Brown in his book *Soap Opera and Women's Talk*, stresses that cultural hegemony is one factor involved in maintaining oppression and power inequalities. Hegemony is defined by Brown as processes of "naturalization" and normalization of power unequal relationships internalized and assumed by people through shared cultural practices and social norms. Thus, patriarchal social order, male domination, class or ethnic discriminations are assumed as normal by people (Brown 1994: 4). However Brown states that there can not be any hegemonic system without leaks. It is from those leaks that counter hegemonic meaning creation struggles to irrupt into the established cultural flow. Soap operas' audiences can be emotionally engaged with protagonists and dramatic narratives, but they can also reflect critically and oppose resistance when they recognize their social and political situation depicted as problematic in the screen. Understanding one's subordination depicted in the series can trigger discussions among

the audience about their perceptions and discomfort. Individual watching at home is only one of the aspects of watching and enjoying soap operas. Informal gossiping and small talking among members of the audience facilitates the intended exchange of interpreted meanings, this also becoming a pleasure: the pleasure of resistance (Brown 1994: 154).

The open endings that characterize the soap opera narrative formats allow audiences to incorporate their own mediated (mediated by audiences' gossiping and small talks) interpretations into the soaps' narrative, making sense of their particular reading and elaborating new meanings. These meanings can challenge hegemonic discourses of cultural codes and gender relationships, family or motherhood (Idem p. 132). An exchange of interpreted meanings of popular culture and dialogue among audiences, politically identified as subordinated social groups can trigger further collective resistance against hegemonic orders, not only cultural but social and political. In this manner soap opera audiences' pleasure and consumption become empowering. This kind of empowerment does not bring social change as a revolutionary action, but rather as a slow-paced formation of subordinated social groups' identity, critical reflection and alternative meaning making (Idem p. 19).

Nevertheless there is not a fixed formula to describe empowering soap operas. Some of the features underlined by Brown are:

- Concerns of subordinated social groups taken seriously.
- Serial form that resists narrative closure.
- Abrupt segmentation between parts in the narrative without cause-and-effect relation between the segments.
- Local and recognizable settings.
- Centrality of marginalized/subordinated/oppressed characters.
- Emphasis on problem solving (Idem p. 48)

3. SEXTO SENTIDO TV CASE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Contemporary Nicaraguan Grassroots Movements

Grassroots organizations endured the transition in 1990 to the Chamorro's government and the introduction of a neo liberalist economic system that ruptured the government's control and support of grassroots institutions. Some of the organizations formerly linked to the FSLN, broke relations with the party. This process of transition, as mentioned in the introduction, has led to decentralization, fragmentation, and emergence of local associations and non governmental organizations with specific goal-oriented agendas.

Since 1990s there has been an increasing mushrooming of women's organizations that although are not linked with any political party, nor supported economically by any of them or the government, still aim at realizing the legacy of the revolution and its principles. Social mobilization during the first years of the Sandinista project laid the seeds of achievable social change. Women were involved in a range of actions that despite being subordinated to the interests and plans of the Sandinista party, still operated substantial changes. During seventies and eighties women rejected traditional roles of passive victims and receivers which has entailed their active contribution to the foundation of a democracy in the country.

Ideals of struggle against oppression in the form of empowerment, bottom-up operated social change and social awareness-raising of the popular classes are still present in the visions of current grassroots and women organizations. In the current Nicaraguan society women's organizations work in rural and urban areas on the issues like health, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, working life, family relationships and violence, racism, homophobia, etc. With little or no state support they run training workshops, media initiatives and activities aimed at fulfilling needs and at bridging gaps in the society.

During Chamorro's leadership, as a consequence of adjustment plans to equilibrate economy inflation, unemployment rates in the public affected significantly women, who accounted for 60% of the total government employees. Women, in many cases family heads, registered greater incidences of underemployment than men. The "feminization" of poverty and its consequences for health, also sexual reproductive health, gender and family violence and underemployment were recognized as new-old forms of oppression which steered women's organizations towards mobilization, not only to create pressure on the government and so to change existing policies and social reforms but also to review the existing social patterns, gender construction and gender division of roles that

contributed actively to perpetuating oppression and its different aspects: poverty, illiteracy, underemployment, authoritarianism, symbolic and physical abuse, etc.

3.2 Debate on reproducing forms of power domination through gender relations.

Gender consciousness has remained unexplored as gender-biased perspectives on labour, family responsibilities and political decision-making have persisted in the cultural and socio-political Nicaraguan landscape (Prevost1999: 33).

“(...) male-centred understanding and experiences of state and class have traditionally been presented as the “true” understanding and experience.(...) Women’s understandings and experiences that do not fit into this male defined pattern are ignored and the validity of women’s understandings and experiences are denied.”

(Idem p. 116)

Gender division of labour has persisted through Sandinista and Chamorro’s governments. During the Sandinista period, changes in the social fabric were achieved, but not with revolutionary changes on gender consciousness. Since 1990s neo-liberalist economic adjustments and reforms, intended to generate economic revenue, together with conservative agendas on class and gender issues have had negative outcomes for the most impoverished sectors of society in which women are an important part. Women are expected to “naturally” assume activities within the household as children and elderly caretakers and at the same time take work outside the formal labour market in order to contribute to the maintenance of the family. These activities that men usually do not consider their responsibilities as well as conservative approaches to gender problems, contribute to legitimizing production and reproduction of asymmetric role of women.

Marianismo/Machismo

The concepts of machismo and marianismo lie at the core of gender debates about identity construction and the influence of power inequalities on gender construction in Latin American societies. Gender identity in Latin America has been influenced through history by patriarchal social structures, traditional religious perceptions of womanhood and authoritarianism features of male roles in politics, social and family realms.

Machismo is a stereotype of masculinity that refers to men as dominant, breadwinners, family heads and decision-makers. Marianismo responds to Machismo as its counterpart.

As stereotype for womanhood, Marianismo refers to women as carers, eager to sacrifice for their family and men's sake and willing to accept what fate brings to them. This stereotype draws on the Virgin Mary virtues of sacrifice, motherhood, humility and acceptance of god's will. In this way men should be dominant, strong and in control of decisive situations, family and women included. Women should be obeying, humble, subordinate to men's will and they should accept their roles of wives and mothers above all.

These binary stereotyped gender conceptions, deeply rooted in patriarchal societies as the Nicaraguan, lead to power inequalities in the family, in the communities and in other social and public areas and thereby denying women access to private, public and political decision-making (Bartron 1997: 156). But it is not only gender that is culturally constructed and persisting in patriarchal societies; the creation of domestic, social and public spaces is also influenced by gendered power relationships. Men are associated with the control and decision-making of shared public spheres, where more power is exercised, whereas women, as mentioned above, are regarded as responsible for private domestic spaces.

In Nicaragua, the high indicators of women unemployment and underemployment reflect the feminization of poverty. The formal labour market dominated not only by men but also by male-biased policies has left out women, who are not able to compete at the same level as their male counterparts. Besides, women are more probable to perform activities outside the formal labour market that permits flexibility enough to take care of family and children (Parker 1998: 107).

As cultural constructs, Machismo and Marianismo are not solely forms of articulating power relationships between men and woman. They are also social codes between men and men and between women and women that shape attitudes and practices in order to affirm oneself and to be accepted by others. These codes set "ideals" that men and women have to live up to in order not to lose social status and in order to be recognized. In this way "deviated" practices and behaviours that do not correspond with Machismo/Marianismo social codes are stigmatized and rejected. These may include homosexuality, women's initiatives to pursue professional career and not become mothers, etc (Idem p.109)

3.3 Puntos de Encuentro. Identity and Objectives

Puntos de Encuentro was born as a twofold consequence of the Sandinista Revolution. On the one hand the founders of Puntos are linked with the cultural and social revolution the FSLN intended to realize during their eleven years of leadership. Principles of social mobilization as a means to assure continuous and regenerating democratic processes, visions of participatory democracy where popular classes and civil society are not solely beneficiaries but supporters are the idealistic part of Puntos's legacy of the revolution. On the other hand, Puntos de Encuentro is a response to the conservatism. The Sandinista project did not succeed in achieving women's emancipation, nor did it support their struggle towards cultural and social liberation which not solely involved fighting against external and visible oppression but more subtle forms of domination (Rodriguez 2001: 4).

Cultural constructions of gender, historically present in multiple beliefs and practices, like male domination within the family or women's limited control over their own sexual and reproductive life, were pervasive during the Sandinista era and (are) embedded nowadays in relations between men and women.

Although the FSLN aimed to fight power inequalities, these were not contemplated or approached structurally. The contra war, the embargo and the subsequent crisis during 1980s aborted the realization of government plans to fight against gender inequalities in education, labour, participation, family, etc. These plans were in fact on their way but they could never be realized with success.

Born in late 80s and founded as a feminist non governmental organization in 1991, with a gender-sensitive approach towards development problems and social change, Puntos' professionals and workers are engaged in a social network including men, women, young people and a wide array of civil society groups. In its origins its overall objective was stated to create and promote social change by influencing everyday practices by facilitating and collaborating to achieve women and young people's empowerment and autonomy (Rodríguez 2001: 4). In 2005, their vision of social problematic related with different forms of oppression has deepened and directed their attention to new challenges like the HIV/AIDS pandemic or the impact of neo-liberalism on the impoverished sectors of the Nicaraguan society (Bank & Hernandez 2005: 2- 6). In their definition as institution, Puntos' network identifies itself as a multidisciplinary and multicultural group of men and women, young and adult people coming from different social strata

and having different sexual tendencies. (Puntos, Identity document, p.1 see also <http://www.puntos.org.ni/institucion/somos.php>).

Puntos de Encuentro perceives their organization as a multicultural and multidisciplinary social network that attempts to host a counterculture in the Nicaraguan society, capable to challenge traditional pervasive conceptions which affect undermined social groups' autonomy at different levels: physical, spiritual, social, political and economical. Lack of autonomy of certain groups of the society implies domination by others.

In calling to awareness about power inequalities, Puntos try to direct attention towards women and young people. Their perception of social change is tightly related with their perception of society as a continuous process: construction and deconstruction of abstract concepts like gender, motherhood, woman and manhood, etc, occur within the society and are shared collectively (Rodriguez 2001: 9). Gender construction and women's oppression are addressed in Punto's work, aimed at raising awareness about the widespread of "machismo" (male chauvinism) and "marianismo" aspects in Nicaraguans' everyday life. "Machismo-marianismo" culture perpetuates men domination of women, undermining their capacity and the factual possibilities to carry out control over their own lives. In addition, "marianismo" presence in gender relations endures/legitimizes women passivity, devotion, sacrifice and acceptance of fate/status quo (Barton 1997:156).

Another social construct Puntos de Encuentro tries to challenge is adult and young people's identities built on authoritarian relations where the elders hold irrevocable authority, ownership and control of the younger. "Adultismo" refers to notions of authoritarianism, acceptance of orders by young people and respect to the authority. In relation with social change and development, "adultismo" undermines young people's initiatives and collective self-esteem to participate in social processes. This eventually amounts to devaluation and censure of young people's voices, discrimination and oppression (Bank & Hernandez 2005: 23).

From an extensive human rights approach and their advocacy for equality when dealing with social change issues, Puntos attempt to step into the cultural flow of the society and influence identity formation and gender inequalities through a two-fold strategy. In the first place their presence in the mainstream media creates debates, dialogues and encourages dialogue participants to identify domination in everyday practices and

analyze the influence of cultural constructs on individual and collective decision-making (Puntos, Informacion Institucional 2004: 1). Secondly, together with awareness-raising the aim is to support young people and women's struggle against power inequalities and domination. This demands social and structural changes which can only be achieved by social mobilization and by strengthening the social fabric through partnership and institutional support (Rodriguez 2001: 7). In order to carry out this two-folded strategic approach, Puntos have set an overall action framework. It can be summarized as it follows:

- a) Create a favourable public opinion on the social changes Puntos de Encuentro aim to accomplish.
- b) Strengthen grassroots movements' capacity to influence policy-making.
- c) Develop social support for social change by promoting alliances and networking between different social agents, giving a especial emphasis on grassroots movements and social groups (Abaunza 2000: roundtable).

3.4 Puntos de Encuentro Communicative Approach to Social Change

3.4.1. Somos Diferentes Somos Iguales campaign

Somos Diferentes Somos Iguales was launched in 2000 as a communication strategy that sought to combine edutainment as a tool in order to draw audiences' attention and raise debate on a range of different issues with social mobilization. SDSI, following the creation and production of *Sexto Sentido* TV was intended to broaden and deepen the dialogue between Puntos, SSTV's audience and youth and women groups and organizations on the issues addressed in the TV series. The media products are combined with workshops that make use of interpersonal communication and seek for capacity

building. Puntos de Encuentro assist in informing and capacity building of other Nicaraguan youth and women's groups to organize and articulate their actions

The SDIs communicative products are:

- Sexto Sentido TV: 30 minutes' telenovela weekly broadcasted.
- Sexto Sentido Radio: Talk-show is on the air from Monday to Friday. Its producers and co-producers are young people. The program is broadcasted in 60% of the national territory and offers an open phone line.
- La Boletina magazine.
- Printed materials: booklets, pamphlets, and workshop material.
- Educational Packs: Each set of tapes includes: nine cassettes with 4 episodes per cassette; a discussion guide; and a booklet with summaries of the stories and the themes contained in the episodes. Thematic DVD special editions on HIV/AIDS, gender violence, etc.
- Puntos de Encuentro and La Boletina Web sites.
- Workshops and yearly youth encounters
- SSTV and Sexto Sentido radio teams' visits to different parts of the country.

3.4.2. Objectives

Practical Objectives:

- To achieve generalized national audience's exposure to Sexto Sentido TV, SS Radio, La Boletina and other SDSIs educational and information materials.
- To establish partnerships and alliances with different grassroots and community groups coming from different parts of Nicaragua.
- To integrate a multidisciplinary approach in SDSI's ongoing project, informed by CommDev, Edutainment, social and clinic Psychology, social pedagogy and behavioural and social change theories.
- To establish alliances and networking between different social groups and movements and local and regional media.
- To regionalize SDSI's strategy in other Central American countries

Communication Objectives:

- To promote Human Rights among the young Nicaraguans and to show their application in everyday lives instead of focusing on their legal aspects.
- To promote debate and analysis of gendered social norms and structures that contribute to violation of certain human rights like the right to live without violence, not be discriminated etc.
- To promote gender equality in social norms.
- To promote community participation, self-esteem and autonomy of young people and women.
- To create a “faithful” audience among people who are not engaged in any grassroots or community group and that remain unaware of Puntos de Encuentro’s work.
- To make use of interpersonal communication through local and community organizations to complement awareness-raising initiated by the media. The goal is that people internalize and appropriate the need to defend and exercise their rights at the individual and collective level.

Strategic Objectives:

- Create communities that are aware of their rights and possibilities to exercise them. This leads to building up a collective capacity to support and generate social mobilization.
- Strengthen youth and women through social organization and networking in order to facilitate them in formulating their own demands and thus be able to participate in dialogue with the state and “fight” for their rights.
- Create social support for social change on issues like violence, SRH and poverty.
- To inform social mobilization for social change with feminists and popular education approaches.

3.4.3. Sexto Sentido TV and Related Media Products’ Overview

Sexto Sentido TV (SSTV) and the radio program Sexto Sentido Radio are the ultimate media products of the Puntos de Encuentro campaign *Somos Diferentes Somos Iguales* (SDSI), *We Are Different We Are Equal*, aimed to reach young Nicaraguans and intended

to promote open debate about a range of issues. This campaign unfolds a multimedia communication strategy combining mass media products like SSTV and Radio with yearly sub campaigns, timed according to specific SSTV episodes, which include youth camps and training workshops with local media and diverse Nicaraguan grassroots groups. *We Are Different We Are Equal* has been an ongoing project since 2000, with a strategic communication approach that has been evolved in biannual (2000-2002) and triennial (2002-2005) phases since its beginning. The ultimate phase, 2006-2008 is pending of planning. The objective of SDSI is to promote leadership and participation of young and adolescent Nicaraguans in their communities and nearby organizations and thereby train them to exercise and defend their rights. The campaign focuses especially on young peoples' sexual reproductive health rights and issues of discrimination, stigma and violence. Another of its main goals is to create social support in order to foster young peoples' initiatives and facilitate their individual and collective efficacy about self-determination, decision-making and responsibility on issues like sexuality, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, etc.(Bank & Hernandez 2005: 2- 3).

Sexto Sentido Radio, formerly known as A Young Program without a Name (UPJSN) was born in the beginning of nineties but became later an important counterpart to back up and to develop issues addressed in Sexto Sentido TV. It encourages participation via an open phone line as well as makes possible collaborations between young people from all over the country. It is estimated that today more than 15% of the population listens to the radio program (<http://www.ciet.org/www/image/Spanish/nicaragua-sp.html#4>).

The modus operandi of Sexto Sentido TV points towards different approaches and perspectives when portraying problems and conflicts. Rather than focusing on factual content, the stress is placed on decision processes and the influence of social norms on their articulation.

The central themes of debate are tackled from a broad Human Rights approach that interconnects sexuality, HIV/AIDS, emotionality, generational encounters, etc.¹

The themes developed in the episodes are, among others, sexual reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STIs, family and gender violence, sexual abuse, poverty, migration, discrimination, drug use etc. (Bank & Hernandez 2005: 4).

¹ (http://www.kit.nl/frameset.asp?ils/exchange_content/html/communication_nicaragua_-_sexu.asp&fnr=1&).

Since its first broadcasting in February 2001, the Nicaraguan Sexto Sentido TV has become one of the most successful entertainment projects intended to reach young Nicaraguan people aged 13-24.² It is broadcasted in national television and cable stations and in Mexico, Guatemala and in the cable USA station and it is estimated that 70% of the Nicaraguan audience watch regularly the program.

Sexto Sentido TV portrays in weekly episodes of thirty minutes, the lives of a group of adolescents and young adults living in Managua (Nicaragua). The problems and challenges that the protagonists and the secondary characters go through are presented in a long narrative form that develops through several episodes with different possible options and perspectives that are subsequently developed and connected with new themes.

“Entre jóvenes” Camps and Workshops.

These encounters are intended to promote and to facilitate youth and women organizations’ capacity building and supporting leadership to deal with issues like gender violence, sexuality, human rights, among others.

The participants of these yearly celebrated encounters are Nicaraguan grassroots coming from different parts of the country. During twelve days, participants share their experiences from working on issues like discrimination and stigmatization. The objective is to build alliances between different social groups and set the ground for future partnership and networking. The conductors of the encounters are young people who simultaneously have been trained by Puntos de Encuentro (Puntos de Encuentro, 1998: 5-7).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. Empowerment in Puntos de Encuentro

If we adopt a “power inequalities” focus to make an interpretive reading of what Puntos de Encuentro intends with their overall strategic framework, we can assert hypothetically

² (http://www.kit.nl/frame.asp?ils/exchange_content/html/communication_nicaragua_-_sexu.asp&fnr=1&)

that their manner to empower Nicaraguan young people, adolescents and women through the SDSI campaign is a two folded modus operandi:

A) Reflection/Awareness-raising

- Making young people's and women's aware of their subordinate –powerless- situations as problematic.
- Providing people with spaces where cultural constructs and social norms can be criticised, revised and re-created (reformulated).
- Promoting identity affirmation among women and young people as individuals, subjects of human rights but also as members of communities affected with the same problems of power inequalities and sharing common purposes to steer political and social change.

B) Action

- To inform grassroots' social mobilization with Puntos de Encuentro's research on power inequalities affecting women, youth and social minorities and including these groups' problematic subordinate situations in grassroots' mobilization agendas.
- To assist grassroots groups' capacity-building so they can influence institutional decision-making and realize structural social change.

The Freireian concepts of conscientização/awareness raising and world transformation can be applied to this overall framework. Conscientização occurs when people engage in dialogical processes where they acknowledge their status of oppression, gaining awareness of their capacity to name the world and their fate to transform it. Puntos de Encuentro's two-folded modus operandi reflects attempts, as awareness raising feature, to irrupt in the Nicaraguan cultural flow of meaning exchange involved in the formation of the public opinion and as a Freireian world transformation feature, to facilitate social movements' mobilization –action-, considered by Puntos, central for social change.

The awareness raising or conscientização concept identified in Puntos' overall framework works simultaneously through two differentiated channels: mass media-entertainment oriented TV Series *Sexto Sentido*, and interpersonal communication supported by grassroots networking.

In words of M. E. Brown, social consciousness-change becomes one step to break up with hegemonic forms of cultural domination (Brown 1994:179-183). Critical viewing of soap operas can become a subjective act of resistance to hegemonic cultural forms of oppression by recognizing internal oppression forms and its causes and by breaking with social and cultural structures that make oppressed groups feel attached to conditions of subordination, e.g. stereotypes of femininity that do not contemplate women's sexual liberation or professional activity out of the family. In this way *Sexto Sentido*'s role as communication product can be interpreted not as vehicle of pro-social messages, but rather as an open stage where social norms, gender relations and their influence in the young Nicaraguans are presented from different perspectives, all of them depicting the conflict between individual decision-making and social norms constraining the realization of the first. Simultaneously these TV series represent an attempt to provide audiences with resources to act according their development of critical analysis of their context. These resources can be classified as two types:

- Critical analysis of the social reality, social norms and their relation with individual decision making and
- Factual information on social and legal facilities/services, human and works rights, unions, grassroots organizations and groups' work to defend women and young people's rights, etc.

In this way and having in mind the Freireian concept of empowerment as reflection/action, *Sexto Sentido*' consciousness-raising does not represent a step prior to social transformation –action-, but rather a resource for social change at the subjective level. *Sexto Sentido* does not solely intend to depict power inequalities affecting young people and women from a problem-posing perspective, so audiences can acknowledge their oppression state, but to provide audiences with an immediate space where the open-ended stories' meaning portrayed in each episode, can be object of interpretation and negotiation by the audience, both as individuals and as communities. To engage in critical revisions of reality calls for dialogue exchange of impressions and interpretations and again, negotiation of values and significance of the object of dialogue by audiences-communities. Dialogue becomes a form of action that rouses people from their subordinate consciousness state, to critical appraisal of their situation and to dialogue engagement within communities.

In the following part of the analysis, I will try to deepen my understanding on how these consciousness- raising and action concepts are articulated in *Sexto Sentido* TV stories and features.

4.2 *Sexto Sentido* TV. Two stories

4.2.1. Sofía. Struggling for Determination

Context

Sofía belongs to the Nicaraguan working class' young generation that has had an opportunity to join university studies and thereby place herself between the traditional society, characterized by patriarchal conceptions of the family on the one hand and the globalized world, the space where these conceptions are challenged. Sofía comes from a single-parent family, her mother being the family-head who has brought up two children: Sofía and her brother.

One of Sofía's most remarkable features is her ambition to become an attorney with a specialization in the field of human rights. When she finds the possibility to apply her theoretical knowledge to the reality as a trainee in the Managua office of Human Rights, she becomes aware of her potential to grow as a professional, while at the same time being happy to work with something that really matters for her. Sofía's individual decision to develop herself further professionally contrasts, however, with her powerlessness to decide in her relationship with Tomás, her boyfriend.

As a female, determined to become a professional, Sofía's mode of life breaks with the traditional conceptions of young women, for whom the domestic sphere is a proper place to be in.

Consciousness-raising

Sofía does not lack motivation and capacity to plan her own life and to find out on what premises and in what ways she wants to realize herself. That being said she still can not raise her voice to make Tomás understand that she does not want to become his wife, something that he has already planned for her. Nevertheless Sofía tries to act upon what she, as a woman, is expected to do regarding her situation as Tomás' girlfriend. The lack of an open dialogue between them makes her on the one hand compromise her wishes as an attempt to satisfy him, while at the same time she becomes aware of the incompatibility of her interests and projects with her boyfriends' plans. Sofía's attempt to raise her voice and make herself heard becomes a transgression of tacit social norms and

marks itself as a problem-posing to us, viewers. When Sofía breaks up with her boyfriend, she does not only liberate herself from an authoritarian boyfriend, but by affirming her will to pursue a professional career, she also undertakes a “limit-act”, described by Freire as a transforming response to the social reality.

Sofía’s transgression of tacit norms according to which women regarded as humble and subordinated to men’s will, does not intend to inform audiences about “what is the right thing to do”, but rather to trigger debate among the seers about what makes Sofía to take the decision to end the relationship with her boyfriend. Thus, Sofía’s decision to take control of her life as a result of subordination, even if this can mean instability and insecurity for her future, represents a revision of and a challenge to the accepted social norms that violate women’s decision-making and introduces an alternative balance of gender roles within relationships.

Power Inequalities

In their relationship Tomás represents values of paternalism and male-chauvinism that are taken for granted in the traditional Nicaraguan society. As his girlfriend, Sofía is deemed to become first, his wife and ultimately the mother of his children. Tomás recognizes and imposes his responsibility as “a man” to plan the future of both and to provide Sofía with a comfortable home and family. Sofía has to struggle first against long-exercised oppression masked under the soft paternalism with which Tomás leads the relationship and second, against the social boundaries e.g. social norms and gender stereotypes, that prevent her from overcoming oppression and from becoming a self-determined individual. In this way, her powerless status becomes double-edged: not only her efforts to object her boyfriend are doomed to failure, but also the society regards her resolution as something unacceptable and even bizarre?

Social Transformation

Sofía’s character does not only characterize herself as a transgressor of social norms that prevent women to liberate themselves from oppression. Her struggle depicted in the series as a struggle for an individual right to decide upon her future, engenders a new conception of women’s roles in the society. Sofía decides to become a lawyer and by doing it she breaks with social stereotypes that otherwise would not allow her to transgress the domestic realm as a wife and child bearer. When she becomes mother of Melissa, the traditional concept of motherhood is deconstructed, questioned and an

alternative perspective on being mother is offered: Sofía decides to have her baby without getting married with Tomás and not to interrupt her studies at the university. This unusual decision in the fictive reality triggers alternative cultural perceptions of women through the screen: mothers and professionals, not wives but aiming at becoming independent.

4.2.3. Alejandra and the Right to Decide

Context

Alejandra comes from a working class family that has a small family business. Her parents want her to dedicate her future to working in their small shop, to continue the work they have built up over the last many years. It is very difficult for Alejandra to revoke the will of her parents. As Sofía, she wants to decide upon her future, because she considers that she has something to say about that. To join studies at the university is something incompatible with views and values her family holds. Facing the impossibility to choose what she wants to do in her future and to decide independently from the authority of the family, Alejandra embarks on different endeavours in order to liberate herself and to become self-determined. In her endeavours she will explore sexuality, relationships and the power to be able to decide.

Consciousness-raising

Before the impossibility to choose upon her immediate and far future, Alejandra becomes self-determined to explore upon what areas of her individuality she has the right and the power to decide. She will initiate her sexual life motivated by her quest for freedom and determination. Her parents can decide what she will do the rest of her life, but what they can not decide is what she does with her body and her mind; realms that only belong to her. Throughout her different relationships with boys, Alejandra will realize of her capacity to decide and to negotiate, to reject and to accept whenever she considers it necessary.

Sofía, witness of how Alejandra struggles to liberate herself from the family's authoritarianism, reveals her doubts about Alejandra's way towards liberation through sexuality and relationships with boys. Sofía's judgement about sexuality as a way to achieve liberation differs from that of Alejandra. Both characters go through similar processes of individual determination, but whereas Sofía transgresses implicit social

codes to open her own space where she can decide, Alejandra intends to escape from her family's oppression by attaching herself to another authority that can bring down the one of her parents, that is, men's authority within marriage. Alejandra decides to get married to get control of her life. Consciousness-raising emerges here from Alejandra's struggle to cope with the conflict between her individual determination to achieve independence and the social boundaries that prevent her from realizing her decisions. The problem formulation prevailing in this conflict underlines the influence of traditionally accepted institutions, focal points of social order, like family and marriage, over individual decision-making, particularly, on young women's decision-making. Besides, Alejandra's case shows how the subordination of women and young people within these social realms is related with patriarchal conceptions of women's dependence and autonomy.

Power Inequalities

Alejandra's character depicts two different forms of power inequalities and oppression faced by Nicaraguan young women: one of them is the authoritarianism within the family; together with marriage, the family is one of the most influential references for Alejandra when she undertakes her particular endeavour towards liberation. Within her family she does not hold power enough to negotiate her right to study and to decide about her future. As a young person, her authority to decide is undervalued and undermined.

The other facet of power inequalities that Alejandra faces is gender inequality within relationships. In this case, Alejandra tries to undermine her parents' oppression by appealing to men's authority, which she considers the only way to overthrow the family's authority and therefore to liberate herself.

Alejandra does not realize in principle that she, as individual and woman, has the capability and the right to decide upon her future.

Social Transformation

In this feature, social transformation emerges from critical revision of young people's position in the society as decision-makers on the one hand. And on the other Sexto Sentido follows Alejandra's sex exploration process, providing the audience with perspectives on sexuality that underlines multiple facets as love, friendship, responsibility, HIV/AIDS testing information and negotiation within sexual partnerships.

4.2.3 Summing Up

The concept of empowerment as reflection/action that emerges from Puntos' overall working method, especially regarding their approach to communication for social change, resembles Freireian perspectives on world transformation. For Freire, revolutionary world transformation carried out by the oppressed is a pedagogical process of liberation that can not be realized unless they take over the task of naming the world and making sense of their reality. This entails people's own construction of culture (creation and partaking on symbolic forms of power) and creation of new forms of not dominant power relations. Consciousness-raising is not only a stage where individuals become aware of their status of subordination, but an act of social transformation itself carried out actively by individuals engaged in and committed to liberation processes.

The two stories of Sofía and Alejandra resemble oppressed struggles to transform the reality; in the first case, the reality is Sofía's immediate everyday life and not the least, her not-yet-realized future. Even though Tomás does not hold total domination over his girlfriend's will, the Nicaraguan socio-economic context places Sofía in a subordinated position in their relationship.

In Alejandra's case, the reality to be transformed is not only external social norms preventing women from realizing their projects, but the internalization and assumption of those gender-biased social norms by women and young people in their problem-solving. Powerlessness is depicted here as the impossibility to decide upon issues like motherhood or socio-economic independence, issues that belong to the male sphere of influence. Sofía calls us to focus our attention on power inequalities within gender relationships and at the same time she gives us hints at how conflicts derived from powerlessness in decision making can be overcome and changed.

These two features are representative of Sexto Sentido's way to challenge social norms and traditional concepts like family, social order and gender roles. Besides, identity affirmation of social and ethnic minorities is tackled in similar ways, facing individual protagonists with conflicts which require some kind of attempt to struggle against oppression. Oppression is illustrated as social constraining of individual decision-making, male domination, symbolic and physical violence and stigmatization of social minorities, among others. Sexto Sentido represents in its essence, an attempt to articulate awareness-raising on different modes of power inequalities affecting women and young people and involving men as both exercisers of oppression and oppressed. At the same time, Sexto Sentido is an open stage where the social norms, both external and internal to

the individuals, are deconstructed and exposed to the audiences as object of questioning and analysis.

The social transgressions that protagonists commit through their actions in order to affirm their identities as individuals and to open their way to realize their decisions, constitute alternative cultural and social responses to oppression and therefore represent attempts to realize social change, at the subjective level first, and at the collective level in the second place. As mentioned in the theory chapter, watching telenovelas and soap operas involves not only individual viewing at home, but also critical appraisal and meaning exchange among audiences that are far from being passive and that can elaborate their own interpretations and meanings out of their shared telenovelas' experiences.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Empowerment

In this chapter I will discuss Sexto Sentido's concept of empowerment, relating my analysis' findings with broader perspectives on social change, its connection with mass media's ownership by grassroots movements and finally, I will discuss citizens' media features identified on Sexto Sentido TV and the potential of those to make and edutainment product like SSTV an effective way to challenge hegemonic cultural forms of oppression and subordination.

We have identified empowerment in Puntos as a two-folded strategy to trigger social transformation in the Nicaraguan society: Consciousness-raising on power inequalities in the first place and action (social mobilization) at the grassroots level. In its premises, this concept resembles Freire's human praxis to change the world, constituted by reflection and action. Freire's notion of consciousness-raising, carried out through horizontal dialogue between equals, leads to people's critical appraisal of the reality and to their investment with symbolic power to change the world with.

Awareness-raising and Cultural Transformation

The background problematic that has impelled Puntos de Encuentro' initiative to work for social change originates from the increasing rates of relative poverty and generalized social instability; however, political conservative responses to those problems appealing

to traditional forms of social order constitute another level of the problematic that maintains power inequalities among women and young people. To challenge traditional forms of social order embodied in social norms and gender stereotypes, represents a challenge to established cultural perceptions of life and reality, firmly rooted in communities' and individuals' everyday practices and views. In order to be able to challenge the established cultural and social order, it is necessary to create what Freire referred to as symbolic power.

Subsequent to awareness-raising, cultural transformation and creation of symbolic power are fundamental premises to move into action by generating new forms of social order, inclusive of all social groups, including minorities and marginalized people.

Sexto Sentido TV series represent Puntos de Encuentro appropriation of the mass media to carry out consciousness-raising in a wide scale, unveiling social inequalities affecting Nicaraguan women and young people. Simultaneously, SSTV intends to challenge symbolic forms of oppression responsible of those social groups' attachment to subordination positions. Symbolic forms of oppression are both source and consequence of cultural constructs that transmit values of "machismo" and "marianismo", discrimination and stigmatization of social minorities, like homosexuals or people living with HIV/AIDS, among others.

Sexto Sentido, enhancing the concept of empowerment emerging from Puntos de Encuentro approach to social change, intends to deconstruct patriarchal social norms and relationships, unveiling different forms of power inequalities that generate oppression, and to provide audiences with countercultural alternatives to the established social order, challenging the status quo. From this perspective, the use of Edutainment by Puntos does not solely fulfil their objectives of awareness-raising on power inequalities, but it also pursues objectives of consciousness-change at the subjective level and cultural transformation of social constructs. These two last outcomes can be identified as forms of action that can lead to social change.

Action and Social Mobilization

Puntos de Encuentro, as grassroots organization promoting initiatives for social change possesses a privileged position to realize on-going social transformation at different levels of the society and through different ways of exploiting communication resources. As exposed by Robert Huesca (Huesca: 2001) and Robert White (White: 2004) the capacity of new social movements to organize social mobilization through participatory

and democratic processes assures the establishment of dialogue among members of the community and inclusive participation of the different subgroups and social minorities.

The concept of empowerment applied to *Sexto Sentido* (awareness-raising about power inequalities, consciousness-change at the individual and community level and action) finds its continuation in Puntos approach to social mobilization at the grassroots level.

Puntos' development and support to grassroots partnership and networking, together with capacity building of emerging social groups working on young people's and women's rights, family and gender violence, workers rights, etc., represents a continuation of the two-folded social change process described by Freire as reflection and action. In this case, the cultural transformation created through the use of mass media (Edutainment) contributes to create the ground on which social movements can find support to move further in stirring and achieving structural and political changes.

6. Abbreviations

-**AMNLAE**: Asociación de Mujeres Nicaraguenses Luisa Amanda Espinosa.

Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaraguan Women's Association

-**CDS**: Comités de defensa civil.

Civil Defence Comitees.

-**CFSC**: Communication for Social Change

-**CommDev**: Development Communication

-**EE**: Entertainment-education or Edutainment

-**FSLN** : Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional.

Sandinista Front of National Liberation

-**GHCV**: Grupo de Hombres contra la Violencia.

Group (network) of men against violence

-**HIV/AIDS**: Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

-**PLWH/A**: People living with HIV/AIDS.

-**SDSI**: Somos Diferentes Somos Iguales.

We Are Different We Are Equal

-**SRHR**: Sexual reproductive health rights

-**SSTV**: Sexto Sentido TV

-**SS Radio**: Sexto Sentido Radio

-**STIs**: Sexually transmitted diseases

-**UPJSN**: Un programa joven sin nombre.

A youth program without a name

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8. Appendix

8.1. Historical and Political Background of Nicaragua

Nicaragua, officially known as the Republic of Nicaragua, is the largest republic of Central America, bordered on the north by Honduras, on the east by the Caribbean Sea, on the south by Costa Rica, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. The area of Nicaragua is 129,494 sq km, including inland water. The country is divided into fifteen departments and two autonomous regions.

Nicaragua has a population (up to 2002) of 5,071,700. 42% of the population is under 15 years old; 21% is young people between 15 and 24 years old. The growth rate is approximately 3% every year. The mortality rate is of 5.6 per year, being life expectancy for men 67.15 years and for women 71.92 years.

Fecundity rates reached 4.4 children per woman in 2000. In the rural areas the number of children per women is 5.4, while in urban settings the average is of 3.1 children. Rural women in fertile age are responsible for 55% of all the children born every year. The differences of birth rates between rural and urban areas respond to multiple socioeconomic and cultural factors that hinder women from having access to sexual reproductive health information and to family planning services.

There are not significant differences between urban and rural women about initiation to sexual life. 14.4% of Nicaraguan women begin to have sexual relations before they are 15 years old. 45% of the Nicaraguan adolescents (girls) are mothers before they are 20 years old. 30% of the births registered every year are children born from this group of women. Fecundity rates are nevertheless higher in the countryside than in big cities. Departments like Jinotega (North East) and the Atlantic Coast have rates of six children per women, while Managuan women have an average of three children.

White people are less than 18% of the total population. The Mestizo ethnic group accounts for 69%; black people are 9% and Native American people account for less than 5%. (Insert reference The economist). The majority of the population, 85%, is catholic, whereas the rest is protestant or do not have any religion belief. The official language is Spanish but there are minorities in the Atlantic coast that speak English and Native American languages like Miskito, Garifuna, Sumo and Rama.

The neoliberal programme of economic stabilization that began in nineties with Victoria Chamorro's leadership has led to privatization, credit restriction and loss of public jobs. Nevertheless current economy policies have brought up certain economic growth, rates of unemployment, rural conflict, malnourishment, together with shortcuts in supporting public health and education, show that development achievements have not reached everybody. Total unemployment is 53.6 per cent of Nicaragua's active population. The external debt accounts for 11.695 million American dollars, while Nicaragua spends more in importing goods than obtains exporting. Liberalization of production and limited governmental control on market forces has ignored differences in social classes that impede equal market competition, production and demand of goods. Privatization policies, cut backs of public jobs, land distribution and rural agriculture credits have resulted in negative outcomes for women, who represent 56 % of the unemployed and underemployed. Privatization policies benefited retired army personnel, who are men in its majority; cut backs of public jobs effect mainly women, who are believed to hold "less important" roles as breadwinners and whose unemployment represent less relevance for house and family maintenance compared with male roles of family heads and purveyors; land concessions during 1990s benefited 63 per cent of demobilized contra soldiers, 32 per cent small land workers, 5 per cent repatriated citizens and only 5 per cent women; loan criteria for grants and rural credits concentrates in ownership and income factors as conditions to allocate credits and assistance. Women producing subsistence crops and having no land properties can not therefore benefit of state support to develop their production activities further than mere subsistence. (The undermining, page 132)

8.2. Social Change Trends, Grassroots Movements and Popular Mobilization during the Sandinista Government

Women's organizations during the Sandinista leadership aimed at struggle for equal rights between men and women and to facilitate an appropriate legislation framework that would support further achievements in areas like work, family, children care, etc. As organization, it had the same link with the FSLN as the CDS; it was centrally controlled subordinate to the FSLN which never considered facilitating a higher leadership and independence to it. Organizations like the Sandinista AMNLAE followed the same line of action as the rest of the mass organizations, supporting the party during the Contra war despite the FSLN's conservatism regarding women, gender relationships and women's roles in the society. The revolution raised women's social awareness and impelled their participation as social and change agents during the overthrow of Somoza and the Contra war, but they still were expected to be in charge of house holding, children and elderly care, to be wives and mothers. Any revision of the relationships between men and women was overtaken by AMNLAE or any other mass organization. Created by and for the party as a sole national centralized organ, women's organizations failed in representing the interests and problematic of the ethnic and social diversity of Nicaraguan women.

8.2.1. Articulating social change through media. Antecedents

Latin America's popular culture reflection on the media uses and its effects on the people took place after relevant cultural currents on education like the Pedagogy of Liberation which was developed by the Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire. The pedagogy of Paulo Freire during 1960's can not be disassociated from the rise of the theology of Liberation and its joint forces in countries like Nicaragua with left-side oriented governments to bring social justice to countries devastated by authoritarian regimes. This joint of forces favoured the mushrooming of a multiplicity of grassroots movements whose common goal was to identify and criticise authoritarian political systems, reproduced in their communication models which ruled relations between authorities and the population. (Idem)

The arriving of the FSLN to the power in 1979 was a point of departure of radical experimentation with participatory democratic processes, impelled by popular

movements and grassroots organizations that in many cases had had previous experiences with participatory processes at local and regional level. (The undermining page 47). This could be initially appreciated in a generalized attitude both in rural and urban areas to adult learning projects which became in many cases endeavours of how to implicate and to give voice to the people communication efforts were made for. The role of the communities as in-force agents in learning processes gained importance in literacy projects that attempted to give a step aside of a mediated communication models, exclusively represented by radio, television and press enhancing the possibilities of social participation in communication processes for which pedagogy of liberation stood for. (Comm in popular Nicaragua page 23)

Nevertheless this radical view on participatory democracy would become more and more moderated with time due to the clash between popular groups who wanted to assure their active participation in decision-making processes, conservative and liberal parties and the FSLN, all with different views of what democracy meant and how participation should be applied. The Sandinistas principal aim was to assure a participatory democracy in which all social classes could actively contribute and guarantee ongoing decision-making and economic redistribution. During 80s original idealistic views of democracy as an end become more and more blurred, Nicaraguan democratic processes shifted from ideally intended participatory to factual traditional representative. Besides, the war against the Contras and the pressure originated by the U.S weakened social and economic resources to achieve success in bringing into life participatory democracy and justice projects. (The undermining of the Sandinista, page 49)

8.3. Puntos de Encuentro's Work on Gender-Based Violence

In its early stages Puntos de Encuentro worked in research and communication about gender-focused issues and gender violence with limited manifestation in the public sphere. Research activities included conducting studies about gender and intergenerational relations, whereas communication activities consisted of a semi-monthly newsletter (La Boletina) and annual media campaigns. Research and Communication teams were not organically integrated. (Clemencia Rodríguez page 10)

Since 1992 Puntos de Encuentro has worked actively in campaigns about gender violence and violence within the family. Puntos was one of the co-founders of the Nicaraguan Women against Violence's Network (Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia en Nicaragua) and still nowadays Puntos' members collaborate actively in its management by designing and implementing mass communication campaigns, creation of educative and informative material. Up to date, it has designed and implemented six mass communication campaigns on gender and family violence.

Puntos de Encuentro is also the co-founder of Group of Men against Violence (Grupo de Hombres Contra la Violencia). The first collective was created in 1993 in Managua, and since then, other collectives have joined GHCV in different Nicaraguan regions.

The period 1992-2000 meant for Puntos giving a step further in their organizational development. Communication and research teams were integrated and both contributed to elaborate media campaigns, in this case, about, family and gender violence. Grassroots groups, advertisement professionals and other social movements were progressively involved in campaigning processes. One of the results of this period is the 1996 campaign on family violence (footnote: "Next time someone raises his hand to you, it should be to greet you"). Iterative research process on the violence as issue was followed, pre-testing and designing of messages, establishing partnership and collaboration with other Nicaraguan social movements and groups who collaborated in materials distribution and at last, conducting an evaluation survey which showed the impact of the campaign on the population. Previous to the 1996' campaign, research on gender violence showed that a big deal of violent features present in Nicaraguan male identity

and behaviours were not identified as such. A campaign was designed in 1994 according to these findings but it was never launched to the public as a result of lack of funding. (Clemencia Rodríguez page 11)

The next campaign slogan was “Violence against Women: A disaster we can avoid”. It was targeted to men, being the secondary target group women, communities’ opinion leaders, educators, communicators, health workers, etc. It was launched in 1999. Few months earlier the Mitch hurricane devastated the country creating an atmosphere of unavoidable disaster. Before the campaign a study on gender violence and its relation with Nicaraguan male identity was undertaken, showing that among violent men there were accepted behaviours denoting patriarchal expectations from female companions, wives, mothers and daughters. Non violent men demonstrated also to have patriarchal notions of family but were more open about peaceful negotiation of life in common. Violent men shared common view of women as servants, eager to sacrifice, passive receivers and dependents on men and meant to have children and take care of the house. If any of the expectations fails men understood that using violence (physical, psychological, verbal, etc) was a mean to educate or discipline women. (Humberto, Violencia, page 2)

Puntos in partnership with GHCV, 250 grassroots organizations, communicators and advertisement professionals, local government institutions and NGOs introduced a multimedia campaign which involved delivering of print media materials like brochures, television and radio ads. Print materials like brochures and booklets were designed to be adapted and used at the local level in workshops and forums. (Idem page 14). Alliances and partnerships with different organizations and groups were not established to assure the broad distribution of materials, but its use, further development and enhancement with different and new perspectives of the people who participate in those workshops and activities. Partnership and open dialogue with local organizations and grassroots movements make possible to “localize” and adapt to people’s needs an initiative such as gender violence campaigns. (Humberto Abaunza, Puntos violencia contra las Mujeres page 5)

Puntos’s communication approach has followed since this campaign a “chain-reaction” strategy, promoting social mobilization and participation of multiple grassroots groups and organizations from their communication campaigns, taken as points of reference. (Clemencia Rodríguez From the Sandinista Rev page 14). One of Puntos’ ultimate

projects, “Necesitamos Hablar” (We need to Talk) aims at underlying the influence of gender relationships and gender social norms that affect the spread of HIV/AIDS. The campaign also aims at presenting and analyzing related issues like stigma, discrimination, sexual reproductive health rights, gender violence, responsibility, decision making and machismo. (Projecto Ford page 5)

La Boletina

La Boletina represented the first media initiative framed in Puntos de Encuentro overall communication strategy intended to create a multimedia environment to support open debate and in-depth analysis of society from a critical (deconstructive?) perspective. Today it has a distribution of 26 thousand issues three-monthly and an estimated number of 150 thousand readers. The distribution network is supported voluntarily by one thousand groups of women that deliver the magazine in places where communication infrastructures are poor or inexistent.

Along with gender-based research on social relations in Nicaragua, with an especial focus on youth and women and issues like family violence and masculine violence against women, Puntos began in 1996 to develop systematically organized campaigns combining national mass media messages with interpersonal communication, supported by community and grassroots organizations and reinforced by establishing partnerships with other Nicaraguan NGOs (idem, Clemencia Rodríguez).

8.4. Sexto Sentido Stories' Outline

Story 1. - Sofía has a long-term relationship with her boyfriend. She studies law at the University and is accepted as trainee in the office of HHRR. Within the relationship it seems she does not hold control of future plans. She struggle everyday in small encounters with her boyfriend to gain comprehension and acceptance of her professional aspirations. Her capacity to negotiate is reduced. (Her boyfriend dominance is neither violent nor aggressive, he is nice, he takes care, he is “caballeroso” but he decides what has to be done. When Tomás, her boyfriend, ask her to get married, she decides to split up. She loves him, but she does not want to be part of his plans for future. She wants to be author of her own life-story.

Short time after she realized she is pregnant. When she tells this to Tomás, he starts to plan things again. They will get married, have the baby and live together. He will work meanwhile she takes care of the baby and (maybe) the rest of the children they will have together. But Sofía does not want this. She wants to share the responsibilities with Tomás, take in consideration his opinion, but she will not get married with him. They are not together any more; she will continue her studies and have the baby. After Melissa is born, Sofía's mother takes over the responsibility. Tomás collaborates bringing up the child and staying close to her. Sofía faces the conflict of being single mother, without economical resources to have the child with her and maybe without maturity enough to take care of her. She wants to have Melissa with her, but she can't.

Story 2. - Alejandra lives with her mother and her mother's husband. Right after she applies to start her studies at the University, she has to drop her plans. Her mother does not allow nor support her to join the University. In this way she is expected to work in the familiar business. Suddenly she sees how her future is being planned without her consent, like if she could not say a word about what she wants or needs. This is going to be one of the main reasons why Alejandra will try to find “alternative” ways to take control of her life. One of them will be to have relationships with boys, realm where nobody apart from her can say a word. She will also try to liberate herself from her parent's authority by getting married with a boy.

However she will face challenges like love uncertainty, the relation between love and sex, the right to say no; the mutual responsibility of having safe sexual relationships and the consequences of not being responsible. Alejandra goes through is having sexual

relations without protection. Due to this and her uncertainty about being infected of HIV/AIDS, she will tackle the problem. First, talking about it with one of her best friends, and after, going to a VIH-testing centre to have their test taken. There she will find the boy she had relations with, who is there for the same reasons.

Story 3. - Elena is a 15 year old girl who lives with her parents. She has talent doing things with her hands and sells bracelets and necklace made by her. She attends courses at the school and works in the free trade zone, in a maquila. She dreams to go to Costa Rica and make money there, setting her own business. Elena's father is violent and beats both her and her mother. She is confused, since she can see the violence and the abuses, but at the same time she loves her father and she thinks she needs him. But Elena will realize that the situation must have an end. She and her mother are being undermined by psychological and physical violence. She will encourage and support her mother to denounce her father to authorities and set distance between them. Elena will realize how important is to have support to bring about necessary changes. Love and support from those one loves and is loved by.

Story 4. - Without possibilities to join studies at the university and after big struggles to find a job, Eddie finds a modest position in a local radio station. There he meets Frankie. They start a relationship that is challenged when Frankie becomes victim of a sexual aggression. She gets pregnant and decides to have an abortion. Eddie will face his doubts about what is the right thing to do, Frankie's right to decide and his own feelings and principles. He will appeal the listeners of the radio station to call and give their opinion about the issue of abortion. Frankie will persist in his decision and will finally have an abortion. Eddie will support her even though he does not fully agree with her.

Story 5. - Ángel is a self-demanding medicine student at the university. He is homosexual and even though most of his friends accept him and recognize him as equal, some of them do not feel the same. He experiences how Gabriel makes fun of him, calling him "Chochón", because he does house-work. Ángel makes clear that he is a man who likes men and that housework is a responsibility everybody can/should assume. Eddie, having significant prejudices against homosexuals insists in making offensive comments without realizing that his best friend, Ángel, is affected by his attitude. This will create a barrier between the two friends, also present in the relation Ángel has with

his parents. They do not know that he is homosexual and he is afraid of their attitude if one day they get to know his homosexuality.

Ángel searches for a stable relationship, when he talks about his love perspective; he stresses concepts as partnership, commitment and mutual confidence. But it is not difficult to find the right person if others do not give you their support and acceptance.

8.5. Analysis Tables: Puntos's Background Problematic and SSTV Stories' Features

Table 1

General Insecurity and Conservadurism					
	Existential insecurity	Symbolic /physical violence	Traditional views on family/partnership roles	Hierarchical relations; authoritarianism/ subordination ³	Conceptualization of sexuality
1	<u>Sofia</u> is afraid when she faces the emptiness in front of her after breaking with T. + pregnancy. How is she going to live, to support Melissa, to finish studies?	T. exercises symbolic violence when he does not allow S. set her plans for future	S is deemed to be a wife/mother. When she is pregnant, T reminds her, their obligations as parents to be together. Alejandra thinks =. S challenges concept of family/motherhood	T opinion counts more in their relation than S's. She challenges his authoritarianism. Encounter with traditionalism	
2	<u>Alejandra</u> faces the uncertainty of being voiceless/without chances to take decisions.		Alejandra has to continue the tradition in her family. She will try to escape it by getting married. (it's the = principle)	Alejandra's decision is subordinated to her parent's. Their decision has not been democratically negotiated.	Sexuality is a facet individual-partner that right to decide and negotiate pleasure, enjoyment, obligation, not step motherhood or men's satisfaction
3	<u>Elena</u> does not know what the right thing to do is: to accept her father's behaviour and mother's suffering, or help her mother to overcome the problem?	Elena's father exercises physical and psychological violence on his wife and daughter	At the beginning Elena regards her father's violent attitude as sth normal. He is the man and the head of the family.	Elena helps her mom to overcome fear and dominance. She has been subordinated to her husband's violence and authoritarianism.	
4	<u>Eddie and Frankie</u> face insecurity when she gets pregnant by her aggressor. One hand: what should be done. On the other: What's best 4 Frankie	Frankie is violently attacked and raped. Because she is a woman?	Eddie thinks Frankie should have the baby. He can be a father for him.	Frankie does not accept sexual subordination. She has been raped, but she is goes to court to denounce her aggressor.	
5	<u>Ángel</u> faces insecurity. He is afraid of deceiving his parents if they got to know he is homosexual/fails studies	Eddie exercises symbolic violence on Ángel	Gabriel regards Ángel as « soft » feminine because he is homosexual and does house job.		Ángel contemplates his sexuality closely related with his love, confidence, complicity

³ Generational clash: what you are supposed to do- imposed social norms and what you are. Men are men. Women can not get pregnant without being married.

Table 2

Global economy effects					
	Poverty. Access education/underemployment	Raising voice Right to decide (women and young people)	Women's identities as mothers and wives. Young people's identities	Women's and young- people's sexuality	
1	<u>Sofia</u> can not find a job to keep Melissa with her.	S. decides to break with T. and pursuing professional career. Decides to be single mother.	Tomás regards Sof. as wife/mother, not as a woman with her own interests/projects. He plans, he decides. Girlfriend=wife=mother		
2	<u>Alejandra</u> is not allowed to join the Uni. She has to work in the family business	She can not negotiate her possibilities to go to school at home. She can not make her voice heard	In order to become independent, she aims at getting married. Man's authority is + than parent's. (imposed role of man-> woman)	Alejandra has relationships but does not want to have any commitment. Sex is not love. Sex as an individual realm where being able to decide	
3	<u>Elena</u> sells hand-made jewels and is employee in one maquilas /underemployment. She dreams to go to C.Rica to make money	Witness and victim of violence. She can't raise her voice til she gets legal support to do it (Law112)	Elena feels she is not worth of being loved. Her friends show her that she is. Self-esteem. (Her father subordinates continuously.)		
4	<u>Eddie</u> can not find a job. He does not have neither resources nor support to have studies	<u>Frankie</u> denounces her aggressor and decides to have an abortion. Eddie does not agree though.	Frankie rejects to be a mother under her situation.		
5			<u>Angel</u> struggles to be accepted as a man who is homosexual. Not a girl, not affected by something abnormal.	Ángel stresses the importance of love and confidence to initiate a relationship, whether is sexual or not	

Table 3

Human Rights and Citizenship realization					
	Raising awareness of HHRR: women and the youth	HHRR awareness of specific social minorities	HHRR of individuals	Moving into action!!!	
1			<u>Sofia</u> : Right to decide and to plan her career, her studies and her motherhood		
2					
3				<u>Elena</u> supports her mom to denounce her father. Law 112. What it is and how it works	
4				<u>Frankie</u> goes to court. It's made clear that rape is a criminal action and that women can denounce and defend their rights and dignity. <u>Eddie</u> makes use of the radio to raise debate and get informed.	
5		As individual <u>Angel</u> has the right to be respected and accepted. Homosexuality is not a deviation			

Table 4

Gender approach to SRH and SRHR					
	Raising risk-awareness	Negotiating within sex.relationships	Contraception	Abortion	
1	<u>Sofia</u> gets pregnant having non safe sexual relationships with Tomás.		Sofia talks openly about condom protection with Alejandra		
2	<u>Alejandra</u> has sex without protection. She is afraid of have been infected of HIV/AIDS and decides to have her test made	Alejandra feel that to say no to relationships when she does not feel like is a way to decide and have control over herself	Alejandra gets a lot of condoms before she decides to loose her virginity		
3					
4				<u>Frankie</u> decides to have an abortion: it is illegal and risky	
5					