Young Men Initiative

Young Men's and Women's Attitudes and Beliefs towards

Gender Roles and Household Labor

in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Contents

Acronyms

BiH   Bosnia and Herzegovina

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

GEM   Gender Equitable Men (scale)

MICS   Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MOU   Memorandum of Understanding

YMI   Young Men Initiative

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Introduction

Fathers' roles in child care and the division of unpaid labor in the home have recently gained global attention. Advocates state that men's engagement in housework and childcare has important implications for women, children, men, and society as a whole.

The Young Men Initiative (YMI) strives for equitable, non-violent societies in the Balkans in which young people can engage in healthy, productive lifestyles. The program, coordinated by CARE International and implemented by local organizations, seeks to engage adolescent boys as allies against peer and gender-based violence. Workshops in vocational secondary schools explore and challenge norms related to gender, violence, and masculinity. Within Bosnia and Herzegovina, YMI workshops were conducted in 13 cities and towns during the 2015-2016 school year.[i]

Prior to the introduction of the program in select secondary schools in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka, baseline surveys were conducted with male and female students. These surveys, completed in early 2015, found that the majority of respondents supported traditional gender roles in which the man served as the breadwinner and the woman assumed responsibility for housework and childcare. In order to better understand these responses within the baseline surveys, qualitative research was conducted among a small group of young men and women. This research sought to examine the current attitudes and beliefs of young men and women in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka on gender roles and divisions of household labor.

Methods

Focus group discussions were held with young men and women in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka. Questions focused on attitudes and beliefs regarding male and female gender roles in social settings (cafes, clubs) and the anticipated division of unpaid household labor (cooking, cleaning, caring for children) in the future. Between June and July 2015, seven single-sex focus groups were held. Thirty-two young men and women participated. The majority had previously attended YMI workshops. The Columbia University Medical Center Institutional Review Board approved the protocol. Memorandums of Understanding with Ministries of Education served as the local approval.

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[i] These locations include: Mostar, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Gradiska, Mrkonjic Grad, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Jablanica, Visoko, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Posusje and Novi Travnik.

Results

Focus group participants' views on the division of household tasks differed from the baseline survey respondents. Overall, young men and women expected to share household and childcare tasks in the future. A sense of fairness motivated young people. For young women, sharing tasks was especially important if women worked outside the home. Young people were also motivated by their family and a belief in the value of men's participation in childcare. Participants stated that more traditional arrangements often continued in their communities. Abandoning traditional divisions of labor often led to negative attention from others; participants stated that men who carried out many household tasks could be labeled as feminine.

In discussing appropriate behavior for cafes and clubs, young men and women expressed different definitions of appropriate alcohol consumption. Young women distinguished between drinking alcohol moderately for enjoyment and drinking to become drunk. Young men viewed alcohol consumption as acceptable as long as a peer remained non-violent after drinking. Safety was a frequent concern for young women and influenced their behavior. While young men's and women's behaviors were described differently, several external and internal factors influenced all adolescents. Focus group participants stated that peer pressure and a desire for popularity often led their peers to drink alcohol, dress in certain ways, and visit clubs. A strong sense of self and family relationships helped young people avoid peer pressure by allowing them to develop their own opinions and stand up for their beliefs.

Focus group participants were also concerned with the lack of economic opportunities in Bosnia, corruption and prejudice, the lack of cultural outlets, and adolescents' dangerous and risky behavior.

Discussion

In the focus groups, both young men and women expected to be involved in unpaid housework and childcare in the future. A sense of fairness and an obligation to one's children and family influenced men's involvement. However, the conversation suggested that it was men's choice, rather than obligation, to assist their wives. Negative attention from society, tradition, and women's perceived skills in housework and childcare limited men's participation.

While the focus groups are not representative of all Bosnian adolescents, they provide an in-depth examination of young people's opinions on gender roles and household responsibilities.

I. Introduction

The division of unpaid labor in the home and fathers' roles in child care and child development have recently gained global attention. Unpaid household labor, or housework, may include cleaning, cooking, clothes washing, and other household tasks. Care work typically refers to childcare but may also include caring for family members who are elderly, disabled, or in poor health.[1] It is estimated that, around the world, women and girls perform two and a half times as much carework and unpaid household labor as men and boys.[1]

Within Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), recent research has measured men's involvement in household labor and childcare. In 2011, a nationwide, representative survey was conducted among adult men and women in BiH. Participants were drawn from the three administrative entities of the country, the three national groups, and urban and rural areas. The goal of the survey was to understand men's attitudes towards gender equality; topics included the division of household labor, parenting, gender-based violence, and relationship satisfaction. When asked about tasks in which they participated equally or greater, 21% of men reported washing clothes, 36% reported cleaning the bathroom, and 31% reported preparing food.[2] Men were more likely to report repairing the home and paying bills. Overall, 54% of male respondents reported caring for their children on a daily basis. The most commonly reported activity was playing with young children (69% of male respondents), while 21% and 31% of men reported cooking and changing diapers for their children, respectively.[2]

Advocates have begun to draw connections between men's engagement in these activities and topics such as child development, gender-based violence, and gender equality. Recent publications, such as the State of the World's Fathers, assert that men's involvement in housework and childcare has important implications for women, children, men, and society as a whole.[1]

The Young Men Initiative

The Young Men Initiative (YMI), coordinated by CARE International and implemented by local partners, seeks to reduce interpersonal violence and prevent gender-based violence by promoting healthy lifestyles, gender equality and a positive, non-violent model of masculinity.

The program has been carried out throughout the Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania.

Across the Balkans, dominant forms of masculinity emphasize the use of violence and intimation to settle disputes, show strength, and demonstrate dominance.[3,4] Young men in this region can be both the perpetrators and victims of violence. In a recent survey, young men in Sarajevo reported high levels of violence; in their lifetime, 46% had punched, kicked, or beaten another young man, 44% had humiliated a peer, and 46% had participated in a group fight.[5] The IMAGES survey in Croatia found that 71% of men ages 18-24 reported ever experiencing harassment or bullying within their school or neighborhood as a child.[3] Research has shown a relationship between rigid gender norms, childhood violence, and men's use of violence against others.[1] Children exposed to violence may normalize these actions and learn to use these techniques themselves as adults.[6] Violence is frequently directed against women in physical, emotional, and sexual forms.[2,6]

The Young Men Initiative seeks to engage adolescent boys as agents of change in advancing a non-violent, equitable society. A series of interactive workshops, based upon Promundo's Program H, allows young men to critically explore and challenge norms related to gender and violence.[7,8] After examining these topics and practicing new skills, participants are better equipped to challenge conventional norms and engage in more equitable, non-violent lifestyles.

Workshops are held with young men ages 14 to 18 in vocational secondary schools. Over the course of a school year, facilitators hold between eight and ten one-hour sessions. The main topics of these workshops are: 1) gender attitudes; 2) violence; 3) sex, health, and wellbeing; and 4) alcohol and drug use.[8]

Beyond the classroom workshops, the Young Men Initiative has launched *Budi Muško* (Be a Man) clubs. *Budi Muško* members plan awareness campaigns to correspond to YMI workshop topics and host public events. *Budi Muško* members may also train to become peer educators and help to deliver workshops to other young people.

YMI in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Within Bosnia and Herzegovina, YMI workshops were initially held in secondary schools in Sarajevo, Mostar, and Banja Luka. Beginning in September 2015, the program was launched in ten additional locations around the country.[ii] Local youth organizations in each location supervise facilitators, implement workshops, and host *Budi Muško* clubs. As a component of the program, YMI conducts quantitative assessments of students' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs concerning gender roles, violence, sexual and reproductive health, and alcohol and drug use.[iii] Assessments, in the form of self-administered surveys, are conducted prior to the program (baseline) and after its completion (end line). Comparing responses between the baseline and end line surveys allows program staff to observe changes that occur in participants' knowledge, attitude, and beliefs. The qualitative study discussed in this report was designed to further investigate the views captured in quantitative baseline surveys conducted in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka.

Baseline YMI Surveys

Prior to the introduction of YMI workshops, baseline surveys were conducted in a series of vocational schools in Sarajevo, Mostar, and Banja Luka. Self-administered surveys were completed by 559 young men and 475 young women between February 23 and March 6, 2015.

Respondents to the baseline survey expressed strong support for traditional gender roles and divisions of household labor. The majority of young men (between 81 and 85%) agreed with the statement "A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family." Between 64 and 75% of young women also agreed or partially agreed with the statement.[9] Furthermore, most young men (between 76 and 85%) supported the statement "Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility." Between 73 and 84% of young women also agreed or partially agreed.[9]

[ii] These locations include: Gradiska, Mrkonjic Grad, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Jablanica, Visoko, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Posusje and Novi Travnik.

[iii] Gender role beliefs and attitudes are measured with the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale, a series of questions measuring opinions towards traditional household responsibilities, violence against women, and homophobia. The GEM scale has been used in a variety of cultural contexts and has been shown to be a reliable tool for determining equitable or inequitable attitudes.[19]

In order to better understand the responses within the baseline surveys, qualitative research was conducted among a small group of young men and women. This research sought to examine the current attitudes and beliefs of young men and women in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka on gender roles and traditional divisions of household labor.

II. Methods

In order to further examine the attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of young people, focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. A FGD guide was developed. It included open-ended questions on the expected behavior for young men and women when going out to cafes and bars, participants' attitudes towards traditional divisions of housework, and their opinions of a gender-equitable division of household labor. Two pilot focus groups were conducted in Banja Luka in June 2015 with separate groups of young men and women. Following these pilot tests, the FGD guide was revised. The final set of questions is included at the end of the report.

Eligible focus group participants included young men and women between the ages of 14 and 18 living in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka. The local youth organization responsible for implementing YMI activities in each city recruited participants.[iv] Recruitment was generally carried out through in-person invitations, and attendance was often confirmed through social media messages. Young people attending schools in which 'Be a Man' workshops were held and/or participants of the *Budi Muško* clubs were invited to participate. Participants were also allowed to invite other peers; participation in *Budi Muško* clubs was not required to join the FGD. Separate FGDs were held for young men and young women in each city. The distribution of focus groups by city and gender is displayed below in Figure 1. Focus groups were held in a private area within each partner organization's office. Prior to the start of the FGD, participants provided written consent to participate. Participants also provided verbal consent for the FGD to be audio recorded. Participants were not compensated but received refreshments or lunch following the discussion. A list of local, confidential services was available if participants wished to discuss any sensitive topics further.

[iv] These include Youth Power in Mostar, Association XY in Sarajevo, and Perpetuum Mobile in Banja Luka

A graduate student from Columbia University facilitated each FGD in English. A staff member of the partner organization acted as a co-facilitator and provided translation services for both the facilitator and the participants. Each co-facilitator had provided informal translation services in the past. The facilitator emphasized that participants were free to speak in the language (English or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) of their choice.

Each focus group lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Focus groups were audio recorded, and the proceedings were transcribed and translated (when necessary). The transcriptions were uploaded to Dedoose version 6.2.21, an online platform for data analysis.[10] Following the focus groups, the graduate student undertook a qualitative analysis of the data. Briefly, this analysis process involved reading each transcript, developing codes, and applying the codes to the transcripts. Emerging themes were identified, described, and incorporated into a framework. The results were compared to existing research on these topics.

The majority of participants in the focus groups had previous engagement with the Young Men Initiative through school workshops or extracurricular activities. These experiences likely influenced their responses and attitudes. As such, the focus group findings should not be applied to the general adolescent population of BiH. This limitation is discussed further in the Discussion section.

The focus group discussion guide, consent form, and research protocol were approved by the Columbia University Medical Center Institutional Review Board (CUMC IRB). The IRB waived the requirement to obtain parental permission for adolescents' participation. Within BiH, CARE has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Ministries of Education in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. MOUs are also signed with each secondary school in which YMI workshops are held. These MOUs allow the Young Men Initiative to conduct quantitative and qualitative research with young people in order to evaluate the program. In the absence of a BiH IRB system, these MOUs provided local approval for this qualitative investigation.

Figure 1
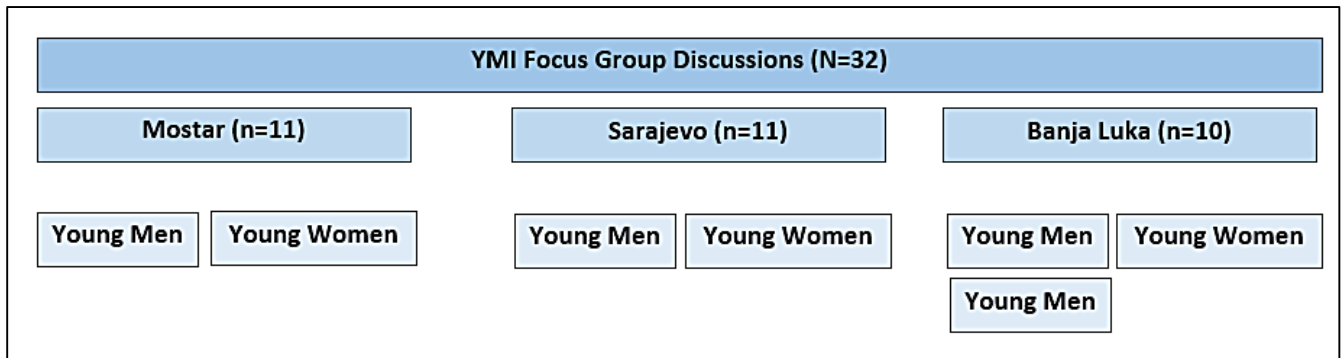
Structure of focus group discussions. There were 32 total participants; 11 in Mostar, 11 in Sarajevo, and 10 in Banja Luka. Within each city, one focus group discussion (FGD) was held with young men, and one was held with young women. Two FGDs for young men were held in Banja Luka, due to low attendance numbers.

III. Results

In total, seven focus group discussions were held between June 15 and July 13, 2015 in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka. There were four FGDs with young men and three FGDs with young women. Eighteen young men and 14 young women participated in these discussion, for a total of 32 participants. Given the small number of participants in each city, individuals quoted in this report will not be identified by their location. No other demographic information was collected on participants. Four focus groups were held predominantly in English, one group was conducted entirely in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, and two groups consisted of both languages. If participants spoke in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, their original statement and an English translation will be presented in this report. All other quotations were originally spoken in English.

Gender Roles

Attitudes about Young Women

Participants described how young men and women are expected to act when visiting cafes or other venues on a Saturday night. Based on participants' opinions and attitudes, behaviors were coded as either appropriate or inappropriate. In discussing young women, adolescent women in the focus groups proposed that simple clothing (jeans and shirts) and moderate drinking in the company of friends was appropriate. Revealing clothing (short skirts

and high heels), visiting clubs, and drinking a large quantity of alcohol to become drunk were seen as inappropriate:

Well, that's one, that's one of things I don't like in this city. Girls who are two years younger than me go out and stay until 3 am, or 4 am, and they get drunk and they wear big heels and they are, they are just like, I, when I was their age I wasn't like that (Young woman)

Similarly, young men expressed the opinion that heavy drinking, drug use, and flirting were unacceptable behaviors for young women. Additionally, young men felt that women's choice of male partners was often motivated by money, and that the desire for money led to other inappropriate choices:

I mean for many girls here, if you see me that I drink coffee from three or four Mark, she'll said "Oh, he has money, let's meet him." And, that's the pretty big problem here. (Young man)

Young men and women used different language and guidelines to describe women's consumption of alcohol. Overall, women held more permissive attitudes. They drew a distinction between drinking to become drunk and drinking to have a good time. Drinking to get drunk was an embarrassing behavior associated with staying out late and visiting clubs. Drinking to have a good time was related to moderate drinking with friends, conditions that were seen as safe and appropriate:

Po meni je u redu da se, ne znam, pije, na primjer, ne znam, čaša, dvije vina, jer, ne znam, u redu je i svi imaju potrebu neku za tim da budu malo samo opušteniji [It is OK to, I don't know, to drink, for example, I don't know, a glass of wine or two, because, I don't know, it is OK and we all have a need to get a little bit relaxed] (Young woman)

However, young women were aware that drinking was not an entirely acceptable behavior in their community, especially when young women drank too much. This pattern was especially apparent when comparing an intoxicated woman to an intoxicated man:

No one will point a finger in a guy and say "He went out and he's even drunk", because for a guy who's at normal age, he, no one will point finger at him because it's worst to see a girl who got drunk, younger girl, than a guy to get drunk. (Young woman)

Young men also described how young women's alcohol consumption would lead to negative attention within the community. Specifically, they stated that drunk women would be called inappropriate names. Among the young men themselves, participants were divided in opinion. Some felt that drunk women were engaging in degrading behavior. Consuming alcohol was

connected to other inappropriate behaviors such as flirting and using drugs. Others stated that it was normal for women to consume alcohol. Unlike the female participants, young men did not make a strong distinction between the intentions of young women when drinking (i.e., to have fun or become drunk.)

Attitudes about Young Men

Young men's behavior also ranged between appropriate and inappropriate actions. According to male focus group participants, it would be acceptable for a young man to go out with friends, enjoy himself, drink moderately, and meet women. Alcohol was not a priority for some participants, who stated that a man could enjoy himself and have a good time with friends without drinking. In contrast, inappropriate behavior included disrespectful advances towards women, fighting with other men, and heavy drinking. Participants explained that drinking large quantities of alcohol led many men to fight:

Što je najgore što neke osobe, na primjer, koje nisu pili, na primjer, kada popiju oni misle da su neka sad faca, oni se moraju dokazati sad, na primjer. [The worst thing is that some persons, for example, who did not drink, for example, when they drink they thing that they are some tough guys, that they have to prove themselves.] (Young man)

As with young women, drinking alcohol was related to other problematic behavior. Additionally, young men felt that it was inappropriate for older men to continue to visit clubs; these types of activities were reserved for a younger generation.

According to young women, young men should be respectful and polite. Inappropriate behavior included disrespectful or aggressive behavior towards women. Female participants focused almost exclusively on how young men interacted with young women.

It was relatively common and acceptable for young men to consume alcohol. Many male participants stated that their peers expected them to drink. Unlike young women, young men did not focus on the amount of alcohol consumed or a person's intentions in drinking. Instead, they compared men's behavior after consuming alcohol. Inappropriate behavior, as described above, occurred when young men became agitated and fought to "prove themselves." Appropriate behavior occurred if young men remained calm and non-violent after drinking:

Pa većinom, otiđi i 90% sportista će ti izaći napolje pa će se napiti, ali će otići kući normalno. Ali, razlika je samo u tome kako ih gleda, mislim, kako, kako ko to prihvata kad je pijan, kako se

ponašaju kad su pijani. [Well mostly, you go out and 90% of athletes will go out and get drunk, but they will go home normally. But, the difference is how they are perceived. I mean, how, how people act when they are drunk, how to they behave when they are drunk.] (Young man)

While alcohol use was, overall, acceptable for young men, heavy drinking and violent behavior were characteristics of inappropriate behavior.

Peer Pressure

While acceptable behavior varied between young women and men, the internal and external factors that motivated behavior were quite similar. Peer pressure, the influence of friends, classmates, and others on actions and beliefs, was more often identified with negative behaviors than positive behaviors. Participants stated that peer pressure led individuals to engage in inappropriate behaviors (dressing in a certain way, wearing makeup, drinking excessively):

Friends are also a huge influence. And school. So, if your whole class is wearing high heels, then you don't want to be an outsider. (Young woman)

Through this mechanism, these types of behaviors were handed down from an older peer group to a younger group.

Popularity

Participants stated that the desire to be well-known and have a high social status led young people to frequent clubs and drink. Engaging in these kinds of behaviors could make someone more popular. If popular individuals were seen drinking or dressing in a certain way, these behaviors were also passed down to a younger generation:

The popular girls create a kind of standard for the younger generations to come (Young man)

Popularity and peer pressure were closely linked to the use of the Internet and social media. Social media sites, particularly Facebook, were venues where peers shared information about going out to clubs and drinking. Popularity was also created on social media sites; individuals with a greater online presence were more highly regarded in person:

Oh, my God, she has 1,000 Likes [on Facebook] *and I have to meet her because I'm going to get popular if we get one picture.* (Young man)

Overall, participants identified peer pressure, the desire for popularity, and social media sites as external influences on behavior and gender roles.

Family Influence

In contrast, for young people in the focus groups, family relationships and upbringing motivated both positive and negative behaviors. If a family was experiencing problems (divorce, parents' drug use, violence), participants stated that a young person might copy these actions or be more susceptible to peer pressure. Therefore, a difficult family background would lead a person to engage in inappropriate behaviors:

Znači, ako je djevojka iz neke loše porodice, znači ako je, ako joj se roditelji drogiraju, rade, svađaju, piju, ona normalno da neće biti, ona normalno da neće biti fina nego će biti luda k'o i mi i stalno će, ostajaće puno napolju, flertovaće sa drugim momcima, radiće svašta nešto, drogiraće se, normalno. [If the girl comes from a bad family, you know, if her parents do drugs, fight, drink, it is normal that she will not be, that she will not be nice, but she will be crazy like us and she will always stay out late, she will flirt with other boys, she will do all sort of things, she will do drugs, of course] (Young man)

However, in a supportive family environment, a young person would be taught about appropriate behaviors. Furthermore, the family would equip the individual with the long-term skills needed to withstand peer pressure and make his or her own decisions:

Po meni je to stvar odgoja, od malih nogu, kako porodica te odgaja da budeš, da znaš reći da nećeš, da ne možeš, onda će te to pratiti kroz čitav život. To je nešto što se stiče, nisi rođen sa tim. [In my opinion it is the matter of upbringing, from early childhood, the way your family raise you to be, to learn how to say "No", how to say "I cannot", and then those things will follow you throughout your entire life.] (Young woman)

Family extended beyond parents; young people also described the positive influence of siblings and grandparents.

Safety

Among young women, discussions about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors were strongly influenced by a concern for physical safety. Drinking large quantities of alcohol, drinking alcohol amongst strangers, visiting clubs, and staying out late were associated with sexual violence, abductions, and inadvertent consumption of 'date rape' drugs. In one focus group, drunk men were also seen as a danger to young women, with a female participant stating "If you see a man drunk you just run away. You don't want to be near them." In response to

these dangers, young women discussed altering their behavior by drinking with a group of friends, visiting safe bars and clubs, and dressing modestly:

So, if you want to go out in [city], you don't go out alone. Girls should think about that and girls should think about that and girls should think how, what they wear. (Young woman)

Beyond these modifications, participants also discussed more substantial behavior changes, such as going home early or being driven home by parents.

Concerns about safety almost exclusively focused on young women and were discussed primarily by young woman. While young men were seen as capable of defending themselves, young women were more vulnerable. Comparisons between young men and young women illustrated the perceived risk to women:

A guy can kind of take care of himself, and girl's a girl, she can raped, she can fall somewhere on the street, she can get in many troubles. (Young woman)

Participant 1: Because if I'm male, my sister is two years older than me, and her go out at night is at 10:30 and my it's 11, because I'm a male. And that's same problem in the whole country because males are more…

Participant 2: A man won't get raped. (Young men)

Discussions of violence and crime extended beyond general descriptions. In one focus groups, a participant referred to a young woman from Serbia who was kidnapped and killed in July 2014, approximately a year before the focus group. Safety was a consistent issue for young women across the focus groups and had a direct, specific impact on behaviors and gender roles.

Independent Thinking

Finally, both young men and young women emphasized the importance of developing their own opinions and standing up for their beliefs. This characteristic was described as having your own personality, having a strong personality, or having a strong will. The quality was also described using a Bosnian phrase:

You need to have that, we say in Bosnia, "moje ja" (my own self). (Young woman)

A strong personality allowed a young person to withstand peer pressure, gossip, and the negative attention that often came from acting differently. Since peer pressure and popularity were most

often associated with negative behaviors, a strong will was a positive, internal quality that allowed a young person to resist inappropriate actions:

It also depends if you have a strong personality. There's nothing and no one who can put you to do something you don't want to. (Young woman)

Pa, mnoga iskušenja su tu, od tuča, ne znam, cigara, alkohola, droge. Ne znam, na mnogo toga društvo može da navuče ako nisi, ako nemaš dovoljno svog ja i pogotovo [There are many temptations, from fightings, cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. The company can talk you into many things if you're not, if you don't have your own personality] (Young man)

An independent personality strengthened a young person's ability to resist external pressure and make their own decisions.

Traditional and Non-Traditional Divisions of Household Labor

Shared Responsibilities in the Home

Following the discussion on gender roles, the FGD moved to participants' attitudes and beliefs about the tasks that men and women should perform in the home. Adolescents were asked to imagine how responsibilities like housework and childcare would be distributed between themselves and their future partner in the future. Overall, young men and young women stated that household and childcare tasks would be shared by both a husband and a wife. While descriptions of this arrangement differed between individuals, participants expressed support for men's involvement in household work. Sharing household tasks between a husband and wife was considered non-traditional in this analysis. For young women, sharing responsibilities was described as relatively normal and realistic; young women expected their husbands to contribute to cleaning, cooking, and childcare:

If I wash dishes one day it doesn't mean I will wash dishes every day. Because if we live together we have to have some kind of deal. Because it can't be, like one is lying down and another is cleaning, cooking and everything. (Young woman)

He expects me to help him and I expect him to help me. (Young woman)

While this was a widely-shared expectation, young women differed in how they described negotiating this division of labor. Some stated that they hoped their husband would participate in these tasks, while others said that their husband would need to share in the routine household tasks.

In general, young men also expected to help their wives and participate in housework and childcare. Many stated that, in the future, their wives would expect them to help and that husbands should assist their wives. Young men expressed their support for shared work in the home while simultaneously acknowledging that this arrangement differed from tradition:

I don't think that every chore should be women's chore. We should split but not 50:50, let's not 100% but let's help each other, so we would work together and clean at the same time, do the chores which women before did alone. (Young man)

Ali, meni to ništa nije čudno, na primjer zašto muškarac ne bi pomogao ženi, svojoj supruzi. [It is not strange for me, for example why a man should not help a woman, his wife.] (Young man)

Male participants related their participation in housework to specific features of marriage, such as collaboration, mutual agreement, and communication. Unlike the young women, they often had specific explanations for how men and women would split household tasks. For example, they described how a husband and wife could complete a task together, switch on different days, or split tasks based upon individual preference.

Young men and women discussed a variety of reasons for sharing responsibilities in the home. Among both groups, the most common explanation focused on fairness. To young women, sharing tasks was fair in both principle and practice. Young women stated that sharing was an integral aspect of marriage and living together. Therefore, it followed that both partners should contribute to household work:

When you live with somebody, you should share. We share the place we live, we share the bed, why shouldn't we share the jobs. (Young woman)

Similarly, young women argued that, because a child belonged to both a mother and a father, both parents should be involved in caring for him or her. Young women also focused on the practical nature of housework and childcare. Sharing tasks was a reasonable response to busy schedules. Men's involvement was necessary because it was not feasible for women to accomplish everything:

I think we just need to accept the fact that women can't do all the things in the house, and men can't do all the work outside and pay the bills and stuff. It's just not possible. (Young woman)

To young men, fairness was related to a man's obligations to others. If a man's wife was pregnant or had just given birth, it was only fair that a husband should help with housework and

childcare. Furthermore, some participants stated that, because they had been cared for as children, they should also assist in raising their sons and daughters:

Well, I would help her because someone actually fed me when I was little, someone changed my diapers and I don't see the reason why all that should the wife do. (Young man)

To young men, this sense of obligation could also be extended to the entire family. In one focus group, sharing responsibilities was seen as an extension of working together as a family.

Young women supported shared household tasks when both the man and woman were working outside the home. If men and women spent equal amounts of time working for a salary, it was argued that they should share in the unpaid tasks at home:

I'll be probably working as much as my husband from my job, so we have the time, the same amount of time spending home, so then we should share what we have to do. (Young woman)

Young men did not describe how responsibilities would shift if their wives also held full-time jobs outside the home.

Beyond a sense of fairness, both young men and women stated that there were benefits to men's engagement in household work. This was more commonly discussed in regards to childcare than household tasks like cleaning or cooking. Both groups argued that children would benefit if fathers were actively involved in their lives. Young men, in particular, argued that fathers, rather than mothers, could teach their sons important lessons and prepare them to be adults.

Finally, participants explained that husbands and wives would share household responsibilities if they had observed this pattern in their own childhood. In describing their expectations for the future, both young men and women stated that, because their parents had shared tasks, this was a normal and familiar division of labor:

I have my parents as like a role model of marriage. And I want that kind of marriage. The love and the man helping his wife. (Young woman)

Overall, participants expressed strong support for household and childcare responsibilities to be shared between a husband and wife.

Separate Responsibilities in the Home

Alternatively, some young women and men stated that they expected certain household tasks, like cooking, cleaning, and childcare, to only be performed by a husband or a wife in the future. This could be described as more traditional, separate divisions of labor. Overall, young women were less inclined than young men to express this belief. Young women did discuss how their mothers, grandmothers, or aunts were largely responsible for the household tasks, and that this was the norm within their community:

Moja mama i tata rade isti maltene posao, ali mama, podrazumijeva se da će doći kući, skuvati ručak i spremiti kuću a da će tata biti umoran i odmarati. I tako je, mislim u većini porodica. [My mother and father have almost the same work, but my mother, it is expected that she would come home, make lunch and clean the house and that my father will be tired and he will rest. And this is the way it is, I believe, in most families.] (Young woman)

At times, young women stated that certain tasks (laundry, chopping wood) would only be completed by either a woman or a man. Young men made similar comments. They discussed how, currently, women are responsible for the majority of household tasks. Chopping wood, home repairs, and heavy labor were identified as tasks that only men should complete. Additionally, some men stated that, in the future, they would expect their wives to clean their home, cook, or take care of the children.

Three reasons for separate household tasks emerged from the focus groups. First, men and women who diverged from a traditional division of labor often faced criticism or social stigma. If a woman worked outside the home and spent less time caring for her children, participants stated that she would be labeled as "unmotherly". Members of the community would question her affection for her children and state that she was more masculine than her husband. If a woman was seen completing a traditionally masculine task (chopping wood, completing home repairs), it would reflect negatively on her husband. Neighbors would assume that she completed all of the tasks at home, while her husband neglected his responsibilities:

If a shelf is broken, of course, if there's a guy in the house he needs to fix that, or do some heavy lifting, it's very shameful for the man if he's in the house and the wife does all the heavy lifting and repairing. I think that's very degrading. (Young man)

In this circumstance, a man's masculinity could be compromised. Finally, men who undertook traditionally female tasks within the home were judged and labeled as feminine:

Being womanly is, usually an insult for men, and if they do like stuff around the house they always get insulted by that. (Young woman)

It's very unlikely that they do the same chores because most of the men think that they'll be less masculine if they do the cleaning around the house. (Young man)

Participants stated that social stigma, especially the judgment directed at men, could lead to separate responsibilities in the home.

Secondly, separate household tasks were related to the belief that either men or women had greater skills for a particular task. This was a less common attitude among young women than among young men. In regards to childcare, some young women and young men felt that women were more caring and capable of supervising children. As a result, they supported an arrangement where women spent more time with children. In regards to housework, some young men felt that women were naturally better at cleaning and cooking. Two explanations were given for this skill. First, throughout time, women have traditionally cooked. Secondly, because girls, but not boys, are taught to cook, women are better prepared to cook for a family:

Pa zato što su, uvijek su žene kuvale, i to je ostalo logično na njima i uvijek ženu od 15-te godine, tj. djevojku od 15-te godine uči da kuva a u 0,01% slučajeva uče sina da, da kuva [Because women have always cooked, and it remained logically for them to do so, so always a girl at the age of 15 is taught to cook, and in 0.001% of case a son is taught to cook]
(Young man)

At times, women's perceived skills in housework and childcare led participants to support separate responsibilities for men and women.

Finally, participants stated that separate responsibilities in the home had always existed and were expected in the community. This was the tradition that they and their families had been raised within:

Mi smo odgajani tako, mislim naša generacija i naši roditelji da, da postoje muški i ženski poslovi [We were raised in such a way, I mean our generation and our parents that, that there are male and female jobs] (Young woman)

These traditions were difficult to change. However, young men and women also discussed instances when traditions had been different. One participant stated that his grandparents had shared responsibility for working on the land and had completed tasks together.

Additional Concerns

The focus group discussions revealed that many other topics were priorities for adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These issues affected their day-to-day lives and plans for the future. Economic issues were a primary concern for participants. Adolescents were unable to find part-time or summer jobs, which prevented them from earning spending money. Without money of their own, adolescents had fewer opportunities, and conflicts broke out between those who had money and those who did not. Jobs were also valued for the experience they provided:

Like summer job, just like for a small money, everything counts. It's giving, it can give us experience, working experience for the future. Maybe a small, but everything counts, everything helps. (Young woman)

Looking into the future, participants were not confident that they would secure a job. Many expected to leave the country and travel abroad for employment:

Nije dovoljno perspektivan grad da imamo, da znamo da ćemo imati posao, da znamo da, da imamo svijetlu budućnost ovdje i onda svi teže ka tome da odu odavde. [This city is not perspective enough for us to have, to know that we will have jobs, to know that, that we have a bright future here and because of that everyone is trying to leave.] (Young woman)

Economic concerns were common among the focus group participants.

Many young women and men also expressed frustration with the lack of cultural opportunities for adolescents. Existing institutions, such as the theater, were poorly advertised and did not attract young people. Other cultural opportunities were outdated (for example, a museum exhibition) or too expensive for young people. Furthermore, the lack of reliable public transportation prevented young people from traveling to the city center for activities. Participants stated that the lack of cultural opportunities led their peers to frequent cafes and watch television, rather than visiting the theater, going to a gallery, or joining an organization.

Adolescents' participation in reckless and dangerous activities was another common concern for participants. Dangerous behaviors included drunk driving, reckless driving, drug use, unprotected sex and teenage pregnancy, crime, and physical fights. Young men were particularly concerned with the threat posed by violence on the streets and in schools. In response to risky sexual behaviors, a focus group of young women expressed the need for parents to speak to their

teenage children about sexual activity. They suggested that parents receive training on how to provide sexual education to adolescents:

There is nothing to be ashamed of. It's just talking about it. It doesn't mean your child will go and have sex the next day, it just means that when the day comes they will be informed enough not to get some kind of disease or to get pregnant (Young woman)

In this circumstance, participants stated that a lack of knowledge among adolescents and discomfort among parents led to teenage pregnancy and unprotected sex.

Corruption emerged as a primary concern in one focus group. Participants explained that family relationships, personal connections, or payments were necessary to enroll in a school, earn grades, obtain an academic diploma, or secure a job. This process led to unqualified individuals in positions, and participants highlighted the hypothetical negative health consequences for patients who visited an unqualified physician. Individuals who did not use personal connections or pay extra money were unable to study or find jobs. Some participants explained that corruption would lead them to travel abroad for employment.

Finally, young people discussed how intolerance and judgment impacted their lives. In general, intolerance included bullying in schools, online harassment, gossip, and the pressure to act like everyone else. Young people were teased about their appearance and struggled to make their own decisions:

It's hard to be, like a young person here because there's so many prejudice about everything, so many cultures and stuff, and it's really hard to be who you want to be and who you are (Young woman)

Everybody thinks that what they do is the best thing that could be done and they do not, like respect what you do and the, the way you're living. That's their problem, that's the biggest problem. (Young woman)

Furthermore, some focus group participants stated that tensions between different national groups have continued in society. Fights and spontaneous rallies were mentioned as examples of distrust and prejudice between groups. Other events, like musical concerts, were seen as stoking tensions. In one focus group, a concert featuring a musician singing songs about the war and other national groups had potential long-term consequences:

He…forcing on hates to, for the other, one nation to another. That's one of the biggest problems, cause that can erupt war later, in five years, ten years, in the future. (Young man)

While the discussions focused on gender roles and household responsibilities, it was clear that, for young people, there were many other priorities in their daily lives.

IV. Discussion

In focus group discussions in Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, young men and women discussed their attitudes and beliefs concerning gender roles and the division of household labor. While young people's expectations for young men and young women differed considerably, external and internal forces such as peer pressure, family relationships, and a strong will influenced both men and women. Overall, young people supported an arrangement where both men and women completed household labor and cared for children. Young people were motivated by a sense of fairness, their own family's tradition of sharing tasks, and a belief in the value of men's participation in childcare. Participants stated that traditional arrangements continued in their communities. These arrangements were motivated by the stigma from non-traditional divisions of labor, women's unique skill in childcare and housework, and tradition. Finally, focus group participants were concerned with the lack of economic opportunities in Bosnia, corruption and prejudice, the shortage of cultural outlets, and adolescents' dangerous and reckless behavior.

Gender Roles

In regards to behavior in cafes and bars, the consumption of alcohol and safety concerns comprised the most significant differences between men's and women's gender roles. While acknowledging current norms, young women frequently disagreed with expectations and stated that occasional, moderate alcohol use was acceptable. Their distinction between drinking to have a good time and drinking to get drunk may be an attempt to mediate between a norm (abstinence from alcohol) and reality (young women consuming alcohol). It is interesting to note that young men did not refer to this distinction when discussing their own alcohol use or young women's use. For young men, it appeared that drinking was more common and acceptable. Appropriate behavior for men was defined as acting 'normally' and non-violently after drinking.

Discussions of safety were also different between young men and women. Among the female participants, safety emerged as a frequent, unprompted concern. Concern for safety often had wide-ranging consequences for young women's behavior and led them to act differently from young men. Overall, young men did not reflect to the same degree upon threats to young women's safety or their own safety. While young men also encountered crime and violence, it was suggested that they would be better able to handle these threats.

Household Labor

Discussions on childcare led to debate about men and women's ability to care for young children. Some young men and women felt that mothers were naturally more caring and capable of looking after children. They were also said to have closer relationships with their children. In one focus group, young men stated that fathers were important because they played games with their children and helped them to mature. In this instance, fathers were valued for their masculine skills (sport, roughhousing). In contrast, some young women argued that gender was not related to parenting skills. Instead, they stated that close relationships would develop if a parent spent time with a child and demonstrated his or her love for the child. These different views on parenting skills are also found in the published literature. Traditionally, it has been argued that fathers contribute to their children's lives through play and discipline, while mothers supply care and comfort. A different viewpoint argues that fathers' presence as a caregiver, rather than specific masculine activities, contributes to children's well-being.[1]

As young people described men's involvement in housework, an important distinction emerged between obligations and choices. On one side, many young women expected their husband to help within the home, creating an obligation. However, other conversations suggested that men could decide if they would participate in housework. Participants stated that, before a man became involved in housework, his wife would need to broach the conversation, and the man would need to choose to go against tradition. Declining to carry out certain tasks in the future (for example, changing diapers) also reflected men's ability to choose. Some young women stated that they hoped their husbands would help within the home, suggesting that the final decision rested with men. As a pertinent example, a young man explained that a family friend, a man, enjoyed cooking. Having this hobby was normal and acceptable. However, in other conversations, participants stated that men's involvement in household tasks would be

labeled as un-masculine by the community. The difference may lie in whether the man chooses to engage in the behavior or is obligated to perform the task. The power distribution between a husband and a wife is hypothesized to relate to the distribution of household tasks.[11] Power may come from economic resources or typical gender roles. As an example, similar findings to these focus groups were observed in a qualitative study among Australian couples. While men were involved in housework, women retained the ultimate responsibility for planning and carrying out the tasks, and men were often designated as helpers.[12]

Young men and women offered many explanations for the involvement of men in housework and childcare. Many of these reasons share similarities with theories that describe how household tasks are distributed. First, participants frequently observed that it was fair for men and women to jointly participate in household tasks. In the literature, researchers hypothesize that men and women divide tasks according to what they perceive to be fair. Theories state that the definition of 'fairness' is socially constructed, leading to different interpretations of what is 'fair' within a household.[13] In the focus groups, there were often two different descriptions of fairness. Some participants stated that it was fair for a husband and wife to share tasks equally. Other participants defined fairness as one partner serving as the primary breadwinner, while the other worked within the home.

Secondly, in the focus groups, participants stated that work could be shared if couples communicated, negotiated, and arrived at a satisfactory solution. This explanation appears to be similar to bargaining theories, which state that couples debate and negotiate before settling on a division of labor. In these theories, the individual with greater financial resources (employment, salary) has more power and will likely perform fewer household tasks. [14] Young women's discussions about working outside the home are similar to the time availability argument. In this theory, responsibility for household tasks rests upon the individual who spends the greatest amount of time at home. As women spend more time in the labor market, the theory states that household tasks should become more equitable.[15] Finally, young people were especially adamant about the importance of fathers' and mothers' shared involvement in childcare. This was seen as a fair division of labor, since the child was the product of the husband and wife. Compared to childcare, participants had fewer specific arguments for sharing cleaning or cooking responsibilities. Interestingly, researchers studying couples in Germany hypothesized that it may

be more acceptable for housework, rather than childcare, to be divided equitably. The authors observed that the arrival of children often led to more traditional arrangements.[16] However, in contrast to this research, the BiH focus group participants expressed more motivation to share tasks that were related to children.

Research conducted outside the Balkans has observed similar explanations for traditional divisions of household labor. Around the world, traditional female tasks are typically routine, everyday activities (such as cooking and cleaning), while traditional male tasks are less frequent (home repairs, yard care).[13,15] Beyond tradition, participants in these focus groups stated that social stigma and women's unique skills led to a gender-specific division of labor. Research conducted within Indian tea plantations, where women are the primary breadwinners, revealed that men assisted with cooking and cleaning. However, clothes washing was viewed strictly as a female task, and men who washed clothes were stigmatized. Few men reported washing clothes. The authors stated that the social interpretation of this task prevented women from bargaining for more equal task sharing.[17] This research also documents instances where women's superior skills were associated with greater household responsibilities. Within the tea plantations, men stated that women naturally knew how to wash clothes and performed this task better than men.[17] Qualitative research in Australia found that, when household tasks were unevenly distributed between a couple, men defended the arrangement by stating that their housework skills were poorer than their wife's skills.[12]

Finally, while this research focused upon attitudes and beliefs, there is disagreement on how strongly attitudes affect behavior. Research has found an association between men's favorable attitudes towards sharing work and their participation in household tasks.[11] However, at the same time, "research consistently finds that couples who express egalitarian attitudes do not necessarily translate their values into behavior."[11] In particular, behaviors may change over time. As an example, research in western Germany found that while adults began with an equitable division of labor, over time women performed more labor and men performed less. This pattern was especially noticeable once a couple had children.[16] While attitudes are important, they may not be the final determinant for the division of household labor. Instead, scholars have suggested that the division of labor is also impacted by cultural and structural factors.[13,15] These factors may include employment legislation, family leave and child care

policies, educational opportunities, conceptions of gender roles, and the government's general approach to paid and unpaid labor. Scholars continue to debate how specific government policies impact the division of household labor. In seeking to increase men's caregiving role, the State of the World's Fathers report recommends implementing "equal, paid, and non-transferrable parental leave policies", gender-transformative programs for boys and girls, and programs that promote active fatherhood through the education, health, and social service sectors.[1]

Limitations

Several important limitations must be considered when interpreting this data. First, this data cannot be generalized to all adolescents within Mostar, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. This study used a convenience sample to recruit young adults and participation was voluntary. The young men and women who participated were interested in the topic, had free time during the day, and were able to travel to a partner organization office. Most importantly, almost all participants had some type of previous contact with the Young Men Initiative or the *Budi Muško* club. Some had attended workshops in their secondary schools, and others were members of the club. Participation in activities related to non-violence and gender equity may have influenced participants' attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, in at least one city, posters depicting positive father-child interactions had recently been displayed in public areas. Different groups of young people, with different levels of engagement in the program, were consulted for the quantitative and qualitative portions of this research. Therefore, young people in the focus groups are not directly comparable to the baseline survey respondents.

Focus group participants may also differ from other young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Focus group participants were enrolled or had graduated from a secondary school. Across the country, drop-out rates increase as students progress through school. According to the 2011-2012 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 97% of BiH primary students transitioned to secondary school, and 92% of children ages 15-18 were attending secondary school.[18]

Future Research

Future research into these topics may focus on several areas. First, explorations of gender roles and household responsibilities should be undertaken among young people who have not been involved in YMI or *Budi Muško* activities, in order to mirror the adolescents who

completed the baseline survey. Qualitative research among rural residents would also be useful, as their attitudes and beliefs may differ from urban residents. Research with recently-married couples and couples with young children could examine how the division of labor in the household changes over time. While longitudinal research in this field is rare, it can provide extremely valuable data.

Conclusion

Qualitative research with young men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina examined young people's attitudes and beliefs concerning gender roles and household responsibilities and the internal and external factors influencing these behaviors. The focus groups revealed strong support for men's involvement in childcare and household tasks. At the same time, there were barriers to men's engagement, including negative attention from others and perceived poorer skills. Men's participation did not always appear to be automatic but required a husband and wife to discuss and compromise. Regarding gender roles, young men and women often described different behaviors for each group, specifically in regards to alcohol consumption and safety concerns. However, factors like peer pressure and popularity influenced both men and women, and both groups highlighted the importance of having a strong, independent will. In addition to assisting the Young Men Initiative with its programming, it is hoped that this research will prove useful to other programs in the Balkans focused on peer violence, gender-based violence, and the division of unpaid labor.

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Appendix: Focus Group Discussion Questions

1) I'd like to begin by learning about the things that young men and women are expected to do and the ways they are expected to behave. What is it like for young people living in [city]?

2) Could you tell me what happens when young people go out on a Saturday night? For example:

    a. How are girls (around your age) in this community supposed to act when they go out on the weekend?

    b. How are boys (around your age) in this community supposed to act when they go out on the weekend?

3) There are a lot of different reasons why young people may act a certain way when they go out on the weekend- maybe they saw their older sister or brother acting a certain way or their parents told them what they should do. Maybe they saw a character on television or in a movie, and this really influenced them.

    a. In your experience, who taught you about the way that [young men/young women] should act when they are out during the weekend?

4) Let me ask you a question that is a little different. Imagine that it is 5 or 10 years in the future and that you have just gotten married.

    a. GIRLS: When you get married, what kind of activities will you expect your husband to do around the house? What will he expect you to do around the house?

    b. BOYS: When you get married, what will your wife expect you to do around the house? What will you expect her to do around the house?

    c. Now, imagine that you have children. Someone will need to feed the children, to change their diapers, and give them a bath each day. In your mind, who will do this every day in your family?

5) This next questions is related to the responsibilities that men and women have in the house. Some people think that women and men should have the same responsibilities and opportunities. They don't mean that women and men are the same, but that their responsibilities aren't determined by whether they're men or women. For example, both women and men cook, take care of children, pay bills, and make important decisions for the family.

    a. What is your first impression of this description?

    b. In your opinion, how likely or unlikely would it be for men and women to have the same responsibilities? For example, how likely or unlikely would it be that men and women had the same responsibility to feed and bathe children?

    c. What would have to change in the community for men and women to have equal responsibilities?

6) Thank you. Those are the end of my questions, but I want to know if I've missed anything related to the roles that men and women have. What other thoughts would you like to share?