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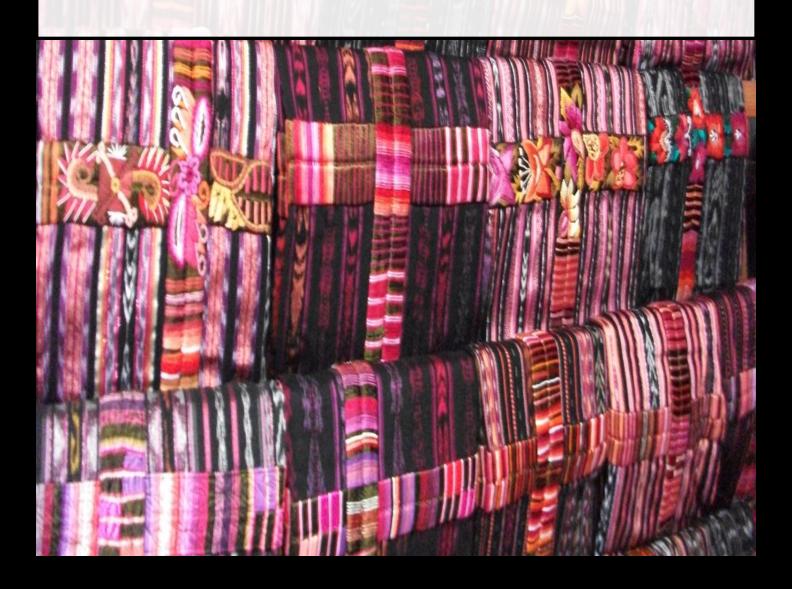
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INTRODUCTION

When Leslye, a Ladino woman from Quetzaltenango, talks about her wedding, her open, friendly face tenses up. Even though Leslye's lips are still curved in a smile, her eyes have turned dark. "My wedding was a bittersweet experience. My mother told me she did not want to see me ever again if I was going to marry Frederico." Leslye and her Maya husband Frederico organized a small and modest wedding reception to which they invited their Ladino and Maya families and friends. Leslye's eyes tear up. In a broken voice, she tells that some cousins, aunts and uncles of Frederico's side of the family came, as well as some mutual friends of theirs. Not many people showed up, she says. Leslye looks down, a teardrop escapes her eye. It slowly makes its way down her cheek. "But of my family," she whispers, "nobody came."

Leslye's painful memories of her wedding show some of the difficulties many Ladinas in Guatemala face when they decide to marry a man of indigenous descent. Guatemala's society is marked by a rigid ethnic division that separates the indigenous Maya population from the Ladinos, the Spanish speaking descendants of both Spaniards and Indígenas. Through years of political, cultural and economic oppression, the Ladino ethnic group has held power over the indigenous half of the population, eventually climaxing in a raging civil war that started in 1960 and ended in 1996. Nowadays, the Indígena and the Ladino half of Guatemalan society officially live together in peace. However, both groups are still separated by strong ethnic boundaries which are marked on either side by bilateral prejudice and discrimination (Fischer 2003: 26). Therefore, the decision to enter into an interethnic marriage is not an easy one to make, neither for an Indígena nor for a Ladino. Though rare, interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas do occur in Guatemala. Remarkably, the majority of these couples take the form of a Ladina wife and an Indígena husband (Smith 1995: 735). That most of the marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas take this shape, clearly shows that not only ethnicity plays a role in interethnic marriages, but that also gender influences the shape of these marriages. Simultaneously, interethnic marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas show how ethnic and gender boundaries are constructed and given meaning to in Guatemalan society. Hence, I chose to focus my research on Ladino women and their marriages with Indígena men, as this type of marriages shows how both ethnic boundaries and gender boundaries counterinfluence one another, giving insight into hegemonies of ethnicity and gender in Guatemala. Relationships like these are boundary breaking in many ways, as both partners struggle to find ways to negotiate the judgment of

their families, their ethnically distinct ways of living, as well as ideas regarding gender roles within their marriages.

The central question that I pose for the purpose of this research, is how Ladinas in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, cross gendered ethnic boundaries in their marriages with Indígena men. In this, I focus on areas of conflict and tension that appear to be the most common in interethnic marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas. The aim of this thesis is to show how Ladinas who are married to Indígena men, negotiate their ethnic and gender identities within their marriages, as Ladinas cross gendered ethnic boundaries while being engaged in an interethnic marriage. Within these gendered ethnic boundaries, sexual codes of conduct are closely linked to group moral. The rules regarding the sexual codes of conduct and moral delimit ethnically specific sexual boundaries which may be crossed by Ladinas in their interethnic marriage. As Nagel puts it, '[…] intermarriage is perhaps the most controversial *ethnosexual* act since it tends to be public, officially recognized, and reproductive' (Nagel 2003: 259). By researching interethnic marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas, I have opted to gain insight in the ethnic landscape of Guatemalan society, shedding light on the existing ethnic and gender hegemonies which shape interethnic relations. The Ladinas that come to the fore in this thesis are as much women as they are *Ladino* women. Through gendered ethnic boundaries they are separated not just from men in general, but more specifically from men of indigenous descent. By entering into marriage with an Indígena, they contest ethnically distinct rules put in place in order to guard the Ladino ethnic group through the purity of the women. Doing so, Ladinas cross gendered ethnic boundaries, often resulting in tension between the partners, as well as between both in-law families. By focusing how Ladinas cross ethnic and gender boundaries through their marriages with Indígena men, hereby shedding light on the most common tension fields that Ladinas face in their interethnic marriages, this research contributes to knowledge on the construction and interpretation of ethnic and gender boundaries in Guatemala, as well as to anthropological theories on intersectionality.

Through two months of anthropological research in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, during the period of March and April 2011, I found several areas of conflict and tension fields that are prominent in all the interethnic marriages of the women I spoke with. I found my respondents through the method of *snowballing*. Starting out on a Spanish language school in Quetzaltenango which is run by an ethnically mixed married couple, I was brought into contact with Ladinas who are married to Indígena men, who in their turn referred me to their Ladina friends and neighbors engaged in the same type of interethnic marriage. With the six Ladino women I eventually encountered, I held regular in-depth interviews, in which they

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were open enough to share with me their life histories, their perspectives on the sexual education and rules of their youth, their choice to marry their indigenous husbands, their often traumatic experiences with regards to their own families or their in-laws, their reflections on their marital problems in which the cultural upbringing of their children and their views and attitudes regarding *machismo* came to the fore, as well as many more subjects of interest. In order to broaden my perspective on the area of Ladino-Indígena mixed marriages, I also had several interviews with a priest of a local church, a wedding official and a notary. Furthermore, my day-to-day experiences living with a Ladino family gave me the opportunity to participate-observe in a setting in which gendered ethnic boundaries were constructed and contested on a daily basis with regards to their teenage Ladina daughter .

The findings of my research shall be discussed subsequently in five empirical chapters starting from Chapter 3, according to the areas of conflict and tension fields that proved to be the most prominent in the interethnic marriages of all the Ladinas who contributed to this research. Before elaborating on these subjects, the following chapter sets out the theories on which this research has been based. Then, the first field of tension is discussed in Chapter 3, in which it becomes clear how Ladinas can be seen as *cultural gatekeepers.* One of the issues that came to the fore in most of the interethnic marriages of the Ladinas in my research, is the planning of their wedding, discussed in Chapter 4. The following chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the subject of prejudice and in-law families in interethnic marriages. As explained previously, prejudice and discrimination often delimit the ethnic boundaries between Ladinos and Indígenas, therefor the in-law families of both partners in an interethnic marriage can bring severe issues into the couple's relationship. Another issue that came to the fore in nearly all the in-depth interviews I had with the Ladinas, is what they referred to as the *machismo* of their Indígena husbands. This area of conflict shall be discussed in Chapter 6. The last, widely shared area of conflict in nearly all the interethnic marriages of the Ladinas I spoke with, is the subject of their children. The children in Ladino and Indígena mixed families often become a battleground for their parents and their families on which ethnically contesting issues are fought out on. The way children become a battleground for their parents in interethnic marriages is a subject that shall be discussed in Chapter 7. Finally, in Chapter 8, I shall pose the conclusions of my research. Here, it becomes clear that there are certain dynamics at play with regards to boundary negotiation within interethnic marriages. This can be seen by how Ladinas maintain, *stretch* or cross over gendered ethnic boundaries in their interethnic marriages. We will find that in the different fields of tension and conflict that come to the fore in this research, ethnic, nor gender boundaries are equal in rigidity. Dependent on the social context, some boundaries are stronger than others. The appendixes,

which can be found at the end of this thesis, entail a personal reflection on the research and fieldwork I carried out, as well as a summary of my work and findings in Spanish.

Starting off, the following chapter entails the theoretical framework on which my research has been based. Here, I set out the theories regarding the most important subjects that come into the fore in my research. The first paragraph discusses the notion of ethnicity and ethnic identity, in which it becomes apparent how ethnicity as meaningful category is based on power structures. Then, the notions of gender and gender identity are set out in their theoretical context, in which it becomes obvious how gender identities are constructed. Lastly, the notion of intersectionality is discussed, clarifying how ethnic and gendered boundaries cross and counterinfluence the way people shape and give meaning to their gender and ethnic identities in interethnic relations, such as marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the theories on which my research has been based are set out. Firstly, the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic identity are discussed within their theoretical context. Here it becomes clear that in all interethnic relations, power structures and hegemonies influence and are influenced by the way different ethnic groups interact. Secondly, the subject of gender is set out within the context of anthropological theory. Here, it becomes obvious how gender provides meaningful categories in society, through which people express dominance of one category over the other, and finally through which gender identities are constructed. Especially important here is the section on women as *cultural gatekeepers*, in which theories come to the fore that signal the cultural safeguarding role of women, especially notable for the case of Ladinas in Guatemala. Also, the subject of sexuality is framed within gender theory, as sexual rules and perspectives on sexual morality are ethnically defined and form a basis along which gender boundaries are constructed. Thirdly, I show how theories of intersections have been conceptualized in the discipline of anthropology. The concept of intersections is applicable to the subject of marriages between Indígenas and Ladinas, as these relationships are in essence intersections of both gendered and ethnic boundaries.

1.1   ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

In order to understand how ethnicity provides meaningful categories, which shape the ethnic gendered boundaries that are crossed by Ladinos and Indígenas involved in interethnic marriages, it is necessary to conceptualize the notions of ethnicity and ethnic identity from an anthropological perspective. In this section anthropological theories on ethnicity and ethnic identity are set out following their chronological development. Both notions have largely followed the same theoretical phases in anthropology, starting from a primordial and essentialist stance on social groups and ethnic identity, to the current relational, constructionist and pluralist view on ethnicity and ethnic identity.

1.1.1   ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY AS STATIC AND HOMOGENOUS

The notion of ethnicity as we know it today underwent a process of development since anthropologists first conducted research on social and cultural groups. During the first half of the 20th century, anthropologists conceptualized ethnicity in an essentialist, primordial view, this was for instance done by Radcliffe-Brown, Branislaw Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard and Clifford Geertz in his early works (Erickson 1999; Eriksen and Nielsen 2001). Ethnicity

in a primordialist view is explained as a given unity of people that has been static and unchanged throughout history. In an essentialist view, the notion of ethnicity was seen not as a social phenomenon, but as a natural unity which ties people together according to homogenous, natural characteristics (Banton 2000: 482).

The conceptualization of ethnic identity largely followed the conceptualization of ethnicity. Ethnic identity was thought to be largely dependent on self-identification and based on a sense of sameness and uniqueness within the group. Ethnic identity was seen as a static, one-sided characteristic inherent to a person in relation to others within the group (Erikson 1972; DeVos and Romanucci-Ross 1975). Ethnic identity was viewed as natural, even genetically owned by people, further reinforced by shared history, religion and traditions. This can be seen in the works of Vogt (1969) and Gossen (1984), who both applied a view of cultural continuity in their studies on Maya groups in Chiapas, Mexico. According to Hervik, their view is applicable to how other scholars conceptualized Maya identity and ethnicity elsewhere, for instance in Guatemala (Hervik 2001: 343). The problem with these conceptualizations of ethnic identity and ethnicity is that internal discrepancies and cultural change due to social action are left insufficiently explained (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001; Erickson 1999).

1.1.2   PARADIGM SHIFT: FREDRIK BARTH

When Barth published his introduction to "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" in 1969, he instigated a change in the line of thought regarding ethnicity and ethnic groups. He argued that ethnicity is for the larger part a social and political phenomenon, rather than a strictly cultural one. He underscored the importance of ethnic boundaries, as he argued that 'the ethnic boundary […] defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses' (Barth 1969: 15). He considered the relationship between groups to give these groups meaning, therefore suggested that ethnic groups could only be constructed in relation to one another. Where previously anthropologists would focus on the idea of ethnic identity as an aspect of a shared culture, history and territory, Barth diverted this view into a more 'processual' concept of boundary maintenance (Barth 1969; Eriksen and Nielsen 2001; Erickson 1999). Barth's view differed from the previously widely acknowledged primordial, essentialist conceptualization of ethnicity in that he argued that ethnic groups are created in relation to others. Therefore ethnic groups are not defined by their content, for instance by shared characteristics of the members of ethnic groups, but by their relation to other groups and the characteristics they are attributed with by others. This conceptualization of ethnicity leaves more room for the

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changeability and discrepancies within ethnic groups than the primordial, essentialist view on ethnicity did.

Cohen too contributed to this discussion, coming from an instrumentalist viewpoint he argued that the development of ethnic groups could also take place regardless of historical or cultural embeddedness (Cohen 1974: 18). In this way, both Barth and Cohen contributed to the currently still widely shared stance that ethnic groups and ethnic identity are not formed in isolation, but in relation to each other. Barth's relational view also influenced scholars who focused on ethnic identity in Maya groups in Latin-America, especially within the historical materialism discussion which entailed the ethnic boundary model in the Latin American context. For instance Friedlander (1975), who in her work argued that ethnicity and ethnic identity in Maya groups are formed in reaction to oppositional relations, firstly with Spanish colonizers, and later with the Ladino population (Hervik 2001: 343).

1.1.3   PARADIGM SHIFT: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

During the first years of the 1980s, postmodernism made its entry into anthropological theory, which caused a paradigm shift on the area of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Scholars like Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) who contributed to the postmodern era in anthropology, instigated the trend of social constructivism and gave way to ideas about the constructedness of the social world. One of the most important works on this subject is 'Imagined Communities' by Benedict Anderson (1983). Anderson claimed nations to be imagined, being created into what they are under particular sets of social and historical conditions (Anderson 1983 in Erickson 1999). Anderson's view on the social construction of nations is also applicable to the construction of ethnic groups. This constructionist approach regarding ethnicity differs from Barth's boundary model in that Barth's model shows how ethnicity is formed through boundary construction and maintenance, but does not explain how ethnicity is expressed and given meaning to, for instance through socially constructed shared memories, traditions and a sense of cohesion.

Ethnic identity in the social constructionist view should then be seen as a culturally constructed, imagined area in which ever changing processes of identification, like self-identification and stereotyping, set meaningful boundaries of identities in relation to others, which are maintained and negotiated over and embedded in history (Hall 1992, 1996; Cohen 1974, 1998; Bray 2004). Even though Barth's boundary model left a clear footprint throughout the relational approach applied to ethnic identity construction, the social constructionist view on ethnicity and ethnic identity puts more focus on their content,

historical embeddedness and meaning. Also, unlike in Barth's conceptualization, the social constructivist view on ethnicity and ethnic identity leaves room for socio-political changes instigated by human action that are insufficiently explained in a relationalist view (Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983: 2).

The social constructivist paradigm shift gave way to ideas regarding multiple identities instead of assuming identity to only encompass ethnicity or nationality. Today, the widespread assumption that scholars like Hall (1992; 1996) , Bray (2004) and Keddell (2009) hold is that identity does not only encompass ethnicity, but holds different facets of human community, including ethnicity, gender, 'race', class and religion, which are all culturally constructed fragments of identity, embedded in their own historical context (Sollars 1989: xiii; Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983: 13). This means that people are virtually situated on different axes of meaning, in which not only ethnicity is a marker of identity but also gender, religion, class, nationality and age. In this view, the concept of identity holds room for change, fluidity and discrepancies within multiple identities. As Keddell puts it: '[…] we as humans negotiate and perform our identities, whether they be based on gender, ethnicity, culture, class, sexuality, occupation, disability or nationality' (Keddell 2009: 222). The meaning that is attributed to these categories is valorised, this accounts for the stratification of people in different hegemonies, which overlap. This overlapping of different identities can create tension fields and give way to social conflicts, as people try to negotiate their identities by maintaining, contesting or crossing their identity boundaries.

This last section has made clear that when different ethnic groups interact, they do so from their stratified positions in axes of meaning, based for instance on ethnicity. In the case of interethnic love relationships, not only ethnic, but also gender boundaries are crossed. Now that we have a clearer picture of how ethnicity as a stratification of categories shapes the way different ethnic groups interrelate, it is necessary to conceptualize the notion of gender as a stratification of meaningful categories, as is done in the following section.

1.2 GENDER – CONSTRUCTING THEORIES ABOUT GENDER

For attaining insight in the way gender structures how Ladinos and Indígenas cross gendered ethnic boundaries in interethnic marriages, and what meaning is connoted to gender identity within these marriages, it is necessary to conceptualize the notion of gender within anthropological theory. This section entails the conceptualization of gender as we know it today, within the development of theoretical trends in anthropology. A thorough understanding of culturally defined gender roles and rules of sexual conduct does not only give insight in the way interethnic relationships between Ladinas and Indígenas are shaped,

but also sheds light onto the way gender and ethnic identities are negotiated in the crossing of gendered ethnic boundaries in ethnically mixed marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas.

1.2.1   WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY

The study of 'gender' in anthropology originates in a trend called 'Feminist Anthropology'. Initially, this trend assumed a universal 'Woman'; a victim of universal female oppression. Eventually, the results of Women's Studies and Feminist Anthropology prove that there is not one universal, homogenous group of oppressed women, and that culturally constructed classifications and ideas influence the position of women and the relations between women and men, not sex in itself (Mascia-Lees, Black 2000).

1.2.2   TOWARDS A STUDY OF GENDER

The insights obtained through Feminist Anthropology caused a shift of focus within the discipline. No longer was the focus put on assumed differences between the categories of men and women and the assumed similarities between women and men around the world, but instead on differences and diversity within men and women, embedded in a historical and cultural context (Moore 1988; Mohanty 1988).

Around the end of the 1980s and the first years of the 1990s, the term 'gender' became widely used and has since been explained as 'culturally constructed categories of man- and womanhood' (free translation of Jansen 1987: 176), embedded in a historical, cultural and political context. This perception of gender came to the fore simultaneously and in relation to the social constructivist approach in relation to ethnicity, as explained in the previous paragraph. We can see gender as a process of culturally constructing the meaning of woman- and manhood and creating power structures between men and women. Gender describes the culturally constructed categories of masculinity and femininity, which divide societies into gendered stratifications. Because these gendered stratifications are attributed with meaning, we can see gender as a category of classification (Ortner 1996; Del Valle 1993; Moore 1994). By attributing meaning to these cultural classifications, which are both based on and simultaneously contribute to existing power and inequality structures, people express dominance of one category over the other.

The distinction that people make between what is considered masculine and feminine, can be divided into symbolic, individual and structural levels (Scott 1986; Harding 1986). The symbolic level is where people link symbols and cultural codes to masculinity and femininity in order to give meaning to these categories. On this level gender boundaries are constructed, within which people attribute cultural codes to the notions of masculinity and femininity, prescribing requirements, sexual rules, ideas, stereotypes and role models, of which the

symbols often display cultural dominance of one category over the other (Jansen 1987; Gullestad in Del Valle 1993). On the individual level, gender identity is constructed, through struggles over inclusion and exclusion of existing, meaningful classifications and through negotiation over what is culturally expected behaviour and the degree of individual agency within existing power structures (Moore 1994: 67-70). According to Moore, gender boundaries are either maintained or crossed on the individual level, as people make individual choices that are either consistent or discrepant to the cultural codes regarding proper gender behaviour. However, this idea leaves room for thought, at it is not unthinkable that gender boundaries can be maintained or crossed on the structural and symbolic level too, as gender specific limitations can also be maintained or contested through laws, governmental campaigns, or by acts of high level institutions. On the structural level meaning is attributed to what is considered masculine and feminine. On this level power relations are expressed, evident for example in legal- and civic rights or generally accepted divisions of masculine and feminine jobs (Ortner 1996: 52; Wilson 1977; McIntosh 1978, 1979 in Moore 1988; Moore 1988: 73-116). In conclusion, gender has been widely accepted as a culturally constructed stratification of categories in which classifications of masculinity and femininity are expressed. These classifications are based on ethnically distinct power relations and are attributed with meaning, therefore these classifications outline gendered boundaries and determine ones place in the pecking order. For interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas, this means that women and men construct ethnically distinct cultural codes and symbols on the symbolic level, including rules regarding love relationships with the ethnic 'Other'. These culturally constructed rules are not only ethnically distinct, they are also gender specific. In effect, as people negotiate their different identities, such as their gender and their ethnic identities, people deal with ethnically distinct and gender specific codes of conduct and sexual rules. These rules delimit the boundaries, which can either be maintained or crossed by abiding or neglecting the gender and ethnically specific rules. By entering into interethnic relationships, Indígenas and Ladinos both cross gender boundaries, be it in different degrees. That the rules which delimit the boundaries are as much ethnically as gender specific, shall become obvious in the following paragraph, where we shall see that morality, sexuality, gender and ethnicity cohere.

1.2.3. SEXUALITY, MORALITY AND GENDER

In order to achieve a full understanding of the construction and meaning of gender boundaries, it is necessary to understand that sexual rules and moral are influenced by gender images and simultaneously construct gender boundaries. For the purpose of this research, the notion of sexuality shall be interpreted as a subject that falls within the category of gender issues. The notion of sexuality entails culturally specific sexual rules, sexual codes of

conduct, sexual moral and sexual images. As Melhuus and Stølen state, '[…] gender values and practices at the level of face-to-face interaction reflect and find support in a wider ordering of notions of femininity and masculinity' (Melhuus and Stølen 1996: 20). In this we see that the way people give meaning to being female or male is practiced in face-to-face interaction, such as sexual behavior. As described above, we can see gender as a culturally constructed stratification of classifications in society, in which meanings of masculinity and femininity have connotations linked to power and dominance. The sexual rules, sexual terms, and sexual images for either gender category signify messages about morality and are constructed correspondingly to gender hegemonies. As we shall see in the following paragraph, ethnicity and gender can and should be linked together in order to understand ethnically specific sexual codes of conduct and the way sexual rules make up gender boundaries. Here it will become clear how sexual rules and sexual imagery are put in place to safeguard group morality. As stated by Melhuus and Stølen, '[…] discourses about gender may simultaneously transmit messages about morality' (Melhuus and Stølen 1996: 27). In other words, gender images, rules and roles that make up for the way men and women are classified according to culturally specific terms of masculinity and femininity, correspond to the way sexual behavior is interpreted within terms of morality. As morality symbolizes the need for group security, ideas regarding morality delimit the way men and women are supposed to behave in sexual terms, according to sexual codes of conduct which differ not only between gender categories, but also between ethnic categories. Often, women can be seen as the bearers of the ethnic identity of the group, and thus are taken responsible for protecting ethnic boundaries and group moral by complying to sexual rules which limit their sexual options and simultaneously signify gender boundaries. In the following paragraph, the notion of *women as cultural gatekeepers* is set out, in which light is shed on sexual codes of conduct and morality specific to the case of women as protectors of ethnic boundaries.

1.2.4   WOMEN AS CULTURAL GATEKEEPERS

What meaning is ascribed to gendered categories in relation to culture and ethnic identity, has been researched extensively different scholars such as Smith (1995), Del Valle (1993) and Ortner (1996). One of the subjects that comes to the fore in their research, is the role women have with regards to the safeguarding of the ethnic group. In other words*:* 'Women are the gates of entry to the group' (Douglas 1966: 126). Because the female body and its reproductive capacity demarcates the social boundaries of ethnic or religious groups, families and nations, women represent the integrity of the group (Smith 1995: 723-724); Robbie Davis-Floyd in Kolenda 1988: 9- 73; Verena Stolcke in Del Valle 1993: 17-37). This means that women mirror the morality of the group, which is measured by the sexual behaviour of the women (Smith 1995: 746; Ortner 1996: 43-45).

Women are often seen as a danger to society and are posited as harmful temptresses who might distort existing boundaries, in reaction to which ideas about pollution come forward in order to defend the existing boundaries (Smith 1995; Robbie Davis-Floyd in Kolenda 1988: 9- 73; Verena Stolcke in Del Valle 1993: 17-37; Douglas 1966: 139). For interethnic love relationships this means that culturally defined gender roles and rules of sexual conduct influence the shape and meaning of sexual and romantic liaisons between partners of different ethnicities. In these relationships, the meaning of both ethnicity and gender become salient, signalling an intersection of ethnicity and gender as categories of categorization. The following chapter will give insight on the concept of intersectionality, and the formation and crossing of gendered ethnic boundaries within interethnic love relationships.

1.3 INTERSECTIONS

In this section it will become clear how both gender and ethnicity boundaries co-construct one another, and create intersections in the form of gendered ethnic boundaries, which are especially salient in interethnic love relationships. In order to understand the concept of intersectionality, it is necessary to describe the development of the concept itself. The idea of intersections should be understood alongside the idea of multiple identities as discussed above. As people are virtually situated on different axes of meaning, in which gender; ethnicity, religion, class, nationality and age are markers of identity, the boundaries of these different facets of identity overlap. In interethnic love relationships, the most prevalent identity boundaries that cross are those of gender and ethnicity.

1.3.1 AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

Around the end of the 1980s and the start of the next decade, feminist anthropologists experienced criticism for offering a too one-sided view regarding the study of women and gender, focused mostly on how White, Western women experienced 'the Other' (Mohanty 1988). The idea of identity as plural and fluid lead to the understanding of people as located on different axes of meaning. In other words, people have different, ever changing identities derived from gender, religion, ethnicity, age, nationalism and other facets of meaning (Flemmen 2008; Di Leonardo 1991; Moore 1994: 93; Nagel 2003: 1-10). All these different categories form different categories of classification, which intersect in social situations.

Different scholars have offered ways to study these intersections, one of the first was Micaela Di Leonardo in her work 'Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge' (Di Leonardo 1991). In this work, the author describes how the category of gender is intertwined and shaped through other factors, such as the state, economy, language and 'race'. Also Henrietta Moore contributed to the acknowledgment of multiple axes of meaning, as she argues that it is

necessary to include the different cultural categories in addition to gender, in order to understand the difference these categories make in how people experience their lives (Moore 1994: 26-27). As Flemmen notes in her study on cross-national marriages: '[…] the meaning of gender changes when related to nationality and […] the meaning of nationality changes when it intersects with gender and class' (2008: 126). Following the notion of intersectionality, all different facets of identity are co-constructions. This signifies that the meanings of categories such as ethnicity, gender and class are not only influenced by one another, but in fact create and recreate one another. The intersections that arise, are based on power structures, allowing people to negotiate over boundaries according to their power positions. As Flemmen notes: 'Power moves through multiple lines of force' (2008: 116). For interethnic love relationships this means that their construction, shape and meaning is dependent on the power positions both partners take in ethnicity and gender as categories of classification (Flemmen 2008: 125). In the following chapter it will become clear why and how some intersections are more powerful than others, as categories of classification are based on power structures which influence the way people interrelate (Flemmen 2008: 126-127; Di Leonardo 1991; Moore 1994; Craske 1999: 10-11).

1.3.2 CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES

Different scholars like Smith (1995), Flemmen (2008), Tsay and Wu (2006), Qian and Lichter (2007) and Nagel (2003) have studied interethnic love relationships, in which different axes of meaning, most notably of gender and ethnicity, intersect. In her work, Nagel defines these intersections as *ethnosexual frontiers* (2003: 15). Nagel uses the term 'sexuality', which is not the same as gender, but can be considered a part of it (Moore 1994: 13-15). Nagel defines sexuality as a set of boundaries that categorizes people according to sexual practices, identities, orientations and needs (Nagel 2003: 8; 46-47).

Because different ethnic groups attribute other ethnic groups with not only ethnic, but also sexual characteristics, the ethnicity of the 'Other' is sexualized (Nagel 2003: 46). Members of ethnic groups have to comply to what is considered appropriate sexual behaviour in order to preserve group morality (Smith 1995: 724-726). These sexual rules differ not only between ethnic groups, but also within ethnic groups, according to classifications of gender. In other words, different rules apply for men and women of different ethnicities. Both gender and ethnicity as categories of classification are interwoven with meanings of power, placing each category of ethnicity and gender within hegemonies. The hegemonies of ethnicity and gender as categories of classification, which are loaded with meaning and power, co-construct one another as people interact, for instance in interethnic marriages. In this way, ideas; perceptions and codes of conduct regarding sexual relations with the ethnic 'Other', reflect

power structures and hegemonies of gender and ethnicity as intersecting categories of classification.

According to Nagel, interethnic marriage is the most controversial act of gendered ethnic boundary crossing, as this type of relationship is typically public and reproductive (Nagel 2003: 259). Also, as interethnic marriages are officially recognized and can often be traced, they offer a view into a society's ethnic landscape, showing which gendered ethnic boundaries are weaker or stronger than others (Nagel 2003: 259). Furthermore, if records are kept of interethnic marriages over an extended time, they give us an idea of when and how certain ethnic boundaries have been more defended or more relaxed in their socio-historical context. As Nagel puts it: '[…] intermarriage reveal[s] a great deal about ethnic relations across space and time, and illustrate[s] the power of sexuality to shape racial and ethnic relations' (Nagel 2003: 259). But, as Nagel notes, even if interethnic marriages may become more common in certain societies in time, ethnic boundaries still maintain their capacity to remain in place. According to her, this can be explained due to the power ethnicity has over sexuality. That is to say, sexual relations with the ethnic 'Other' can be used as an instrument to act out domination or resistance of one ethnic group over the other (Nagel 2003: 261).

In summary, when people do not conform to their ethnically specific sexual codes of conduct by engaging in interethnic love affairs, they cross gendered ethnic boundaries. These boundaries are based on gender and ethnicity as categories of classification, which stratify the partners involved in gendered ethnic hegemonies. In the case of interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas, this means that power differentials between the ethnic groups, as well as gender and ethnic boundaries, determine the shape and meaning of these romantic liaisons.

2. CONTEXT

The fieldwork for this research has been carried out in the city of Quetzaltenango, which lies in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. The city of Quetzaltenango is the second largest in the country, after Guatemala City. The city's population is estimated to be around 160,000 inhabitants, of which approximately 65 percent is of indigenous descent. In this chapter, I describe the subjects that have been of most importance for my research within the context of Guatemala. Firstly, I set out the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic identity within the country of Guatemala. Here, it will become obvious how Guatemalan society is stratified according to an ethnic hegemony, which roughly divides the population into the indigenous half, and the Ladino other half. The boundaries between these groups are fluid, but can be rigid, as we shall see in the following empirical chapters. In the second paragraph in this chapter, attention is centered on the concept of gender within the region of Latin America, in relation to Guatemala. Here, the influence of the Spanish colonization on gender systems in Latin America is discussed, while focus is put especially on the discrepancies within the gender model of *machismo*. The third paragraph again turns to the context of Guatemala, as the concept of *women as cultural gatekeepers* is discussed. Here, it becomes clear how gender is interwoven with perceptions of morality, giving Ladino and Indígena women the responsibility for the safeguarding of their group by means of chastity. In this, we can also find how gender boundaries are ethnically specific, and how some forms of interethnic romantic relationships are more boundary breaking than others. Lastly, the subject of interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas shall be discussed. Here, it shall become clear why most interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas take the shape of a Ladina wife and an Indígena husband, and how marriages like these should be considered as examples of gendered ethnic boundary crossing.

2.1.   ETHNICITY IN GUATEMALA

Guatemala's population of approximately 13,000,000 inhabitants can roughly be divided into two ethnic categories, which account for either the Indígena ethnic group or the Ladino ethnic group (Fischer 2003: xi; 1; 25-26). The Ladino group is what in most other Latin American countries is called *mestizo,* people of mixed indigenous and European heritage (Nelson 1999: 78). Indígena, then, is the term used for those who claim to be of pure indigenous, mostly Mayan, descent (Fischer 2003: 25-28). According to Fischer, (self-) identification of either ethnic category is often contested, as the ethnic boundaries between the two groups are as fluid as they are rigid (Fischer 2003: 25-26). Even though ideas on 'blood purity' and racial division are widely shared among the Guatemalan population, it is hard -if not impossible- to delineate a clear definition of 'an Indígena' or 'a Ladino'. As most

Guatemalans -exceptions taken into account- can be said to be of mixed descent, and because the conditions of belonging into either ethnic group in public opinion rely on visible characteristics such as clothing, which can be altered during a lifetime, the prime way to delimit whether someone is Indígena or Ladino relies on self-identification (Fisher 2003: 26, 27).

The two ethnic groups of Indígenas and Ladinos have been in conflict since the Spanish colonization of Guatemala, resulting in ever prevalent unequal relationships between both groups. The Indígena group, which makes up for approximately half of the population, has generally had a lower class status than the Ladino population and has been subject to deprivation of natural, economic and educational resources, as well as stigmatization and prosecution, coming to a notorious climax during the Guatemalan civil war that raged from 1960 to 1996 (Scull 2009; Smith 1995; Hervik 2001; Nelson 1999: 81). The ethnic dichotomy in Guatemala has been closely linked to class stratification, and has been established on ambiguous determinants, socially defined by either cultural markers such as dress, religion and language, or by 'biological' markers in terms of race and blood purity (Nelson 1999: 79,80; Smith 1995: 732). It is important to realize that both of these ethnic categories are social constructs, since 'Indígena' as a meaningful ethnic identity can only exist in relation to the so-called non-indigenous Ladino ethnic identity, and 'Ladino' as a meaningful ethnic category can only exist in relation to the indigenous category (Nelson 1999; Hervik 2001; Fischer 2003, 1999; Wolf 1986; Wilson 1995; Smith 1995; Scull 2009).

As noted above, the determinants for Indígena- and Ladino-ness are based on culture as well as in terms of blood, which in practice means that Indígenas are able to, and are expected to, achieve the status of Ladino either through cultural transformations such as speaking Spanish and 'dressing up', or through engaging in sexual relations with Ladinos, resulting in less and less Indígena offspring; a practice also known as *blanquemiento* (Nelson 1999: 78-79, Fischer 2003: 26). It should therefore be understood that the meaning of sexual relations between Indígenas and Ladinos is based on the power relations between these ethnic groups and should be considered extremely gendered.

2.2 GENDER IN LATIN AMERICA AND GUATEMALA

The subjects of gender and sexuality within Latin America have been studied extensively by anthropologists since the second half of the previous century. One fascinating aspect of gender within Latin America, is the influence the Spanish colonization has had on current gender systems within the region. One gender model in specific has become particularly widespread in gender discourse amongst anthropological scholars. This model is known as *machismo*, to which later *marianismo* was theorized, and heavily criticized, as its

counterpart (Stevens 1973; Steenbeek 1995). Important to understand regarding gender systems in Latin America, is the rootedness of gender within the colonization and post-colonial state formation. As the Spanish colonizers brought with them gender systems in which women were viewed as legal minors, indigenous gender systems were often forcefully transformed in order to ensure women's subordination to males (Silverblatt 1995). The Spanish colonization induced a transformation and introduction of gender systems and sexual rules which put an emphasis on chastity, virginity, and gender roles for women which delimited their designated area to inside the house. Also, women's negligence or compliance to the sexual rules put in place would determine family honor, leaving Latin American women with great responsibility (Seed 1988). The same rules did not apply to men, as their masculinity was partly dependent on the visibility of their sexuality and virility (Seed 1988). We can find this inequality in Guatemala today as well, where women and men have different responsibilities. As we shall see later in this chapter, women in Guatemala, more so than men, are responsible for the passing down of ethnic identity, through the use of clothes and language (Fischer and Hendrickson, 2003). Furthermore, through reinforcing the importance of legal marriage within post-colonial states such as Guatemala, sexual boundaries are limited more so for women than for men, in order to safeguard and promote legitimate heirs (Sanabria 2007: 151; Smith 1995: 738). These views are often highly inconsistent with the existent indigenous gender systems, resulting in 'anomalous and contradictory structure of gender relations' within Latin American states with large indigenous populations, such as Guatemala (Kuznesof 1992: 269 in Sanabria 2007: 151).

In anthropology, the most often referred to gender model within Latin America is *machismo*. *Machismo* refers to 'ideals and practices that […] purportedly determine male identity and masculinity, and which structures male interactions with women and other men' (Sanabria 2007: 152). In general, the meaning of masculinity within *machismo* is said to describe fearless, honorable men, who are sexually virile and who are expected to publically display their heterosexuality, for instance through extramarital affairs. However, the meaning and expression of masculinity should not be thought of as concurrent to all men in Latin America. Different scholars like Gutmann (1997), Parker (2003) and Nurse (2004), underscore that gender, and thus masculinity are constructed within and between societies and relate to other domains of culture (Sanabria 2007: 161). In this way, in it necessary to understand that the meaning of an idiom such as *machismo*, which is often used as an umbrella for all descriptions of masculinity within Latin America, differs greatly for both men and women in the region, dependent on different facets of identity such as ethnicity and class, as well as on historical context (Gutmann 1996: 222-231). Discrepancies in the meaning of masculinity are especially salient in multiethnic societies, such as Guatemala's – where

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Ladino men and Indígena men have different gender ideals to on which mirror themselves, as well as different responsibilities to abide to.

2.3 WOMEN AS CULTURAL GATEKEEPERS

In Latin America, specifically in Guatemala, ideas regarding morality, gender ideals and sexual codes of conduct are ethnically and gender specific. As stated in the previous chapter, sexual relations with the ethnic 'Other' are always loaded with meaning, and the shape of these relationships are based on existing power structures of ethnicity and gender (Nagel 2003: 44-46). In this paragraph it will come to the fore how ethnic and gendered hegemonies shape interethnic marriages between Ladinos and Indígenas, as different ethnically and gender specific sexual rules apply to both Ladino and Indígena men and women.

When a Ladino man and an Indígena woman engage in sexual liaisons, from the Ladino perspective this means that he theoretically provides the Indígena woman with the potential for a 'whiter' child, which according to Ladino blood purity paradigm, is considered to be an improvement for the Indígena ethnic group (Nelson 1999: 83; Smith 1995: 736). It should however be noted that the only accepted relationship between a Ladino man and an Indígena woman, is an illegitimate, extramarital affair (Nelson 1999: 90-92; Smith 1995: 735; 736; 738; 740, Bachrach Ehlers 1991: 8-9; Craske 1999: 11-12). On the other hand, when an Indígena man enters into a sexual relationship with a Ladino woman, from the Ladino perspective this means a breach of blood purity, as Ladina women are considered to be *cultural gatekeepers.* They are expected to only enter into legitimate, marital relationships with Ladino men because they are held responsible for preserving the ethnic purity of the Ladino group, as well as ensuring the power this group currently holds in Guatemala (Smith 1995: 734; 736, Bachrach Ehlers 1991: 3-4; Craske 1999: 12; Nelson 1999: 84-86). From the Indígena perspective too, Indígena women are considered *cultural gatekeepers*, as they are responsible for culturally and biologically reproducing and preserving the community, by marrying Indígena men and avoiding unnecessary contact with Ladino men (Smith 1995: 739-740).

As Smith (1995) argues, 'race', class and gender are conjoined systems of belief about identity and inequality, especially visible in contemporary Guatemala (Smith 1995: 724). According to her, the dominant 'race-class-gender'-ideologies about descent and identity in Guatemala, ensures that high class Ladino women and Indígena women are, unlike men, restricted in their sexual behaviour, fitting into the *women as cultural gatekeepers*-theory as described above (Smith 1995: 726; 730; 735; 738; Nelson 1999: 81-85). Complying to which, both Indígena and Ladino women perpetuate the dominant Ladino gender-class-'race' system that maintains a hegemony in which the Indígena group is at the bottom (Smith 1995: 738;

742-745). This puts Indígena men in the ambiguous position of a perceived danger to the purity of Ladino women, and as protectors of Indígena women, who are their only accepted sexual partner but are also wanted 'preys' for Ladino men. In this we see how both the ethnic hegemony and gender inequality construct gendered ethnic boundaries which are fundamental in the shape and meaning of interethnic love relationships between Ladinos and Indígenas.

2.4 INTERETHNIC MARRIAGES IN GUATEMALA

Even though the members of both ethnic categories usually do not venture outside of their groups in romantic terms, interethnic love relationships between Indígenas and Ladinos do occur (Cabrera Pérez-Armiña 2004: 6; Smith 1995: 738). In practice, we see that public interethnic love relationships between Indígenas and Ladinos such as marriages, often take the shape of Ladino women entering into liaisons with Indígena men (Smith 1995: 735-736). This could theoretically be explained by the hierarchical ethnic power structures between Ladinos and Indígenas, in which the Ladino ethnic group ranks higher with regards to economic and educational resources, as well as social status. The same goes to say for ethnically specific gender stratifications, in which Ladino men rank higher than Ladino women, while Indígena men and women maintain a less hierarchical gender stratification (Nelson 1999: 84). In other words, would a Ladino man marry an Indígena woman, the barrier would be higher and the relationship more boundary breaking than it would be if a Ladino woman would marry an Indígena man. Another possible explanation for the shape interethnic marriages between Indígenas and Ladinos take, could be the perseverance of the role Indígena women have as *cultural gatekeepers.* Their role accounts for the visibility of their ethnicity, for instance through the wearing of *traje,* and also because they are not accepted as legitimate partners for Ladino men. Furthermore, Indígena men usually do not visibly act out their ethnic identity and can thus appear as Ladinos. Also they are culturally less constrained to endogenous relationships, despite the Ladino imposed sexual restrictions with regards to relationships between Indígena men and Ladinas.

In this way, we can explain why the majority of interethnic marriages exist of Ladinas who are married to Indígena men. By entering into marriage with Indígena men, Ladinas as *cultural gatekeepers* and socially ranking higher than their Indígena spouse, break their gendered ethnic boundaries which are put into place in the form of sexual codes of conduct, gender roles, gender appropriate behaviour and ideas regarding group moral, in order to limit their choice of partner for the safeguarding of the ethnic and class purity of the Ladino group.

3. LADINAS AS CULTURAL GATEKEEPERS

"*When I reached puberty, I felt like a prisoner in my own house. I could only go outside*

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together with my brother or one of my parents, but never alone. They always told me to remain a virgin, remain a virgin.. Nobody told me what that meant. Then I got pregnant, and of course I had to marry, even though he was an Indígena." Carmen, April 12th 2011.

Ladinas in Guatemala generally face a protective upbringing, in which their parents aim to guard them off promiscuous behavior in order to secure their chastity, and with that, the honor of their families. The focus on this chapter is firstly put on which sexual rules Ladinas have to abide to. This will illustrate the sexual codes of conduct for Ladinas, as well as the gender ideals and group moral that delimit the boundaries which Ladinas are supposed to protect through their sexual behavior. Further along in this chapter I will address the importance of virginity before marriage, and monogamy after marriage. Then, the stories of Carmen and Ruth reveal how pregnancy before marriage can morally be resolved through marriage, and giving birth in wedlock. Here we see that in most cases, parents would rather have their pregnant daughters marry Indígena men, than let them become unmarried mothers to bastard children. Through this we find that often, family moral and the sexual codes of conduct are valued more highly than ethnic boundaries. However, through Leslye's story we will see that sometimes, family members protect ethnic boundaries with such effort that disobedience to sexual rules and moral disgrace is preferred over marriage to an Indígena man.

3.1 STAYING IN SIGHT

As a door slams shut in the cramped, three-floor house, Luki gets up from her chair and hurries up the flight of stairs. Luki, a Ladina mother, is in the middle of a fierce discussion with her thirteen year old daughter Andrea. Andrea didn't come home after school, resulting in a three-hour long search through the city. Eventually, Andrea is found in the Central Park with a group of friends. She's wearing make-up. For the next month, Luki tells Andrea, she is not allowed to use her cellphone. From now on, Luki will get her from school every day. Later, Andrea sneaks out of her room, comes up and asks me if she can borrow my cellphone to call her boyfriend. She has to be careful, she says. 'If my father finds out, he's going to hurt me, and my boyfriend too!' Later that night, when dinner is finished and the children are getting ready for bed, Luki sighs. 'She's still a little girl. She doesn't know about what men can do to her. We need to keep her inside the house as much as we can.' [1]

When Luki talks about her daughter Andrea, a worrisome glance comes over her face. She explains that she has no other choice but to be strict for her thirteen year old, otherwise

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1   Participation-observation on 29-3-2011

there is a good chance she'll get into trouble[2]. By trouble she means behavior that is inappropriate for a young Ladina, such as wearing make-up, smoking or messing around with boys. Luki makes a gesture towards the street, and explains that in this city, everybody knows everybody. Therefore, it is necessary that Andrea behaves herself well, or else the family reputation is at stake. Luki also has a sixteen year old son, Marvin. "He's a good boy," she says. She doesn't need to know where Marvin is at all times, because she trusts that he'll behave when he's away from home. She's quite sure Marvin has a girlfriend, and that's fine by her, because as she says, "Boys don't get pregnant, girls do". Luki's story illustrates very clearly how Ladinas, especially young women, are expected to behave according to gender and ethnically specific sexual codes of conduct. Young Ladina's need to be protected by their families, in order for them not to get side-tracked on a promiscuous path and endanger family moral. All of the Ladinas I spoke with recognize situations like these from their youth.

Carmen, a Ladina in her mid-fifties, chuckles and shakes her head when asked about the house rules she used to have growing up[3]. "Absolutely," Carmen says, there was an abundance of rules in her house when she was a child, as especially her father was very strict. She remembers she always had to report back home immediately after school and wasn't allowed to go out alone on the streets. Looking back on her youth, Carmen is sure the house rules she had to abide to became stricter as soon as she reached the age of fifteen. At that age, Carmen says, she always felt like her parents, especially her father, were trying to control her life completely. Her parents always demanded to know where she was, with whom, and what they did. Also, if she didn't come home immediately after school, they would mistrust her and suspect her of having boyfriends. Nodding slowly, Carmen says she felt so suffocated at times that she rebelled in many ways. Also Leslye, a Ladina in her early forties, remembers her youth vividly. When asked about the rules she used to have at home with her mother, Leslye grins[4]. She tells me that there were more than she can remember. She does know her mother became a lot stricter as she entered puberty. For instance, Leslye says, her mother would always want to know where she went with whom. On schooldays, either her mother herself or some male cousin would come pick her up from school. If they ever saw her talking to a boy, she would be in big problems, she says.

3.2 NO BOYS ALLOWED

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2   In-depth interview with Luki, date: 18-4-2011
3   In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 12-4-2011
4   In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 6-4-2011

'Boyfriends?!' Carmen shouts[5]. She starts laughing, 'That wasn't allowed, no.' She tells me that she had two boyfriends before her current husband, the first one she had when she was very young, maybe fifteen years old. But of course, she says, her parents couldn't know about him. It had to remain a secret. Carmen chuckles and says she remembers the times when it was an adventure to find places where she and her boyfriends could be together in private, and how her parents sometimes even saw them together and she had to lie to them. 'Yes', Carmen sighs. 'That's how it goes. Tell children that they are absolutely not allowed to do one thing, they will do it the next minute. Before you know it they're pregnant!'

Leslye too, remembers that boyfriends were out of the question. When I ask if Leslye had boyfriends regardless, Leslye starts laughing, 'Of course I had boyfriends!'[6] She had her first one when she was fourteen, she says, and then all through to high school she had some more. She tells me how difficult it was to keep her boyfriends hidden, as they would always have to find places to be together without getting caught, like the park or some market. I ask her how she felt about this when she was younger, and Leslye answers me that she found it very difficult that she was unable to talk to her mother about boys and love. She feels this created a barrier between the two of them, as boys were a no-go subject and Leslye was forced to lie about her boyfriends. If Leslye's mother would have found out she had been somewhere with a boy, she would get punished.

Striking in these women's stories, is how their families set up rules in order to keep them in their sight. All women remember they were never allowed to go out on the streets alone, nor allowed to talk to boys, let alone have relationships with them. In this we see how these Ladinas sexuality is curtailed, as described accurately by Smith in her work 'Race-Class-Gender - Ideology in Guatemala' (1995). Smith explains us how in Guatemalan society, Ladinas are able to obtain three statuses of womanhood, based on their sexual activity (Smith 1995: 735). Firstly, she can be labeled 'virgin', which is the proper status for a young, unmarried woman, who is chaste and remains a virgin until marriage. Secondly, she is supposed to achieve the status of 'legitimate wife', as the only allowed sexual relationships she is allowed to have, lie within marriage. These two statuses of ideal gender behavior can be achieved through compliance to the sexual rules put in place. If a girl or woman fails to comply to the rules and engages in sexual relationships either before marriage or extramarital, she achieves the status of 'prostitute' (Smith 1995: 735). Achieving the status of 'prostitute' brings shame on the family, therefor all unchaste sexual behavior is to be curtailed, reserving a Ladina's sexuality solely for her legitimate husband. Furthermore, as Smith notes, as Ladinas' proper sexual behavior includes marriage to Ladino men, this allows for a

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5 In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 12-4-2011
6 In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 6-4-2011

safeguarding what she calls the 'race-class-gender'- system, which ensures that Ladinas only bring forth legitimate heirs of the same ethnicity and 'class' (Smith 1995: 376). When breaking the sexual codes of conduct, not all hope is immediately lost for the Ladinas to whom this is concerned. In the next paragraph, Carmen, Ruth and Leslye share their stories on how they, often guided by their parents, saved family moral by marrying their boyfriends.

3.3 SEX AND PREGNANCY BEFORE MARRIAGE

Most of the Ladinas I spoke with, broke the sexual codes of conduct which required them to remain virgins until marriage. Carmen and Leslye both remember very strongly that sex and sexuality were a taboo in their homes when they were younger. '*Dios mio, no!'* Carmen exclaims, when asked about the subject[7]. She tells me that the subject of sex never, ever came up in her parent's house. It was a taboo. Also in school, there was absolutely no talk about sex, nor even the body's reproductive organs. 'Sex', Carmen says, 'was always referred to as a sin. But they always told us to remain virgins, remain virgins.. I didn't know what that meant!' Carmen says she had learned nothing about sex or how to avoid pregnancy, but she definitely knew she was pregnant when she was. In Leslye's home too, the subject of sexuality was always a taboo[8]. She says that during those times, most girls had no idea about their body functions nor about sex. When she went to school, she says, the nuns at her school would tell about the body's different reproductive organs, but it was all so vague that it remained a taboo. Luckily she didn't get pregnant, Leslye sighs, like so many of her friends did.

The Ladinas I interviewed who became pregnant out of wedlock, all faced the moment when they had to tell their parents. For Carmen, it wasn't even a question, she says[9]. Even though she was very young, she and her Indígena boyfriend needed to get married because their parents said so. Carmen's parents were not too pleased with her future husband being Indígena, but anything was better than letting Carmen have a baby without being married. According to Carmen, this situation is very common. Parents arrange weddings in a whim to make sure the baby is born in wedlock. Carmen's daughter Ruth got pregnant at age seventeen and felt she had no other choice but to marry her Indígena boyfriend[10]. She says getting married was the only option. 'I'd rather have kept on studying, believe me. But an unmarried, young mother is worth less than I don't know what, here in the city'.[11]

Carmen's and Ruth's stories, but also those of other women I interviewed, reveal that

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7   In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 12-4-2011
8   In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 6-4-2011
9   In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 12-4-2011
10 In-depth interview with Ruth, date: 29-3-2011
11 In-depth interview with Ruth, date: 29-3-2011

immoral behavior and disobedience of sexual rules, such as getting pregnant before marriage, may be resolved through immediate marriage to the father of the unborn baby. Interesting here, is that the instigators of these instant marriages are often the parents of the pregnant Ladinas. Naturally, by getting married, the daughter's reputation is mended and family honor is restored, as the sexual codes are conduct are lived up to. Strikingly, most of the Ladinas' parents expressed that they would rather have their daughters marry Indígena men, than to let them befoul their reputation and violate family honor by giving birth to a bastard child. This signals that in most cases, sexual moral and family honor is valued more highly than the protection of the ethnic boundaries between Ladinos and Indígenas. However, this scenario is not true for all women. Sometimes, the ethnic boundaries are so rigid and so heavily defended that parents, and sometimes whole families, are so against their Ladina family member marrying an Indígena, that they forbid her to do so. Leslye recognizes this type of situation.

When Leslye got pregnant of her Indígena boyfriend Frederico in her thirties, her mother threatened to disown her if she decided to get married to him[12]. According to Leslye, her mother had always had strong racist sentiments regarding Indígenas. She felt them to be worth less than Ladinos, and would regularly refer to Indígenas as stupid, dirty and useless. Leslye's mother always made an effort to make sure her daughter steered far away from contact with Indígenas, for instance by sending her to a private Catholic school that many Indígenas couldn't afford. Needless to say, Leslye kept her relationship with Frederico quiet for as long as she could, until she discovered she was pregnant from him. When Leslye shared the news with her mother, the latter expressed her disgust by calling both Leslye and Frederico insulting names. She told her daughter Leslye that she was a disgrace, being impregnated by a dirty *indio* [disrespectful name, Indian]. When Leslye told her mother that she wanted to get married to Frederico, her mother told her that if she went through with it, she would never talk to her daughter again. Also, she promised to make sure no one in the family would get into contact with Leslye anymore. Despite all the threats and hurtful words, Leslye and Frederico went through with the wedding.

3.4 NEGOTIATING OVER BOUNDARIES

All Ladinas I spoke with, including Leslye, Carmen and Ruth, share similar memories of their youth and the rules they had to abide to. As illustrated by Luki's way to curtail her daughter Andrea's movements out of the house, sexuality and moral are closely linked. If a Ladina is seen as she breaks her ethnically specific sexual codes of conduct, for instance by having a boyfriend, family honor is at stake. Also, sexual codes of conduct appear to be

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12 In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 11-3-2011, 16-11-2011, 6-4-2011,

heavily gendered, as becomes apparent for instance through Luki's positive stance on her son Marvin having a girlfriend. Ladinas' sexuality is thus heavily protected, as Ladinas clearly hold responsibility for group moral through their sexual behavior. The sexual boundaries, which are delimited by sexual codes of conduct, are in most cases protected more strongly than are the ethnic boundaries, as we learned from Carmen's and Ruth's stories. This is not to say that ethnic boundaries are of minor importance, as Leslye's story shows us how rigid the ethnic cleft between Indígenas and Ladinos can be. However, generally speaking, getting married to a man regardless of his ethnicity is preferred over Ladinas giving birth out of wedlock. This doesn't mean that the ethnicity of their future spouses is not an issue, as we shall see in the next chapter.

4. THE WEDDING

Nearly all of the Ladinas I spoke with during my research, remembered their weddings to be one of the most difficult affairs of their marriages to their Indígena husbands. Especially during the planning of the wedding, ethnic boundaries become salient as differences in tradition are negotiated not in the first place by both partners, but by their families. In so doing, the planning of the wedding often brings the Ladino and Indígena families involved, to clash. In this chapter, Carmen, her daughter Ruth and Leslye recount the events of their weddings and the problems they and their families faced while arranging the ceremonies. We will see how the preferred Ladino and Indígena types of wedding ceremonies differ in tradition and in meaning. Hereby it will become obvious that interethnic weddings form a battleground on which ethnic boundaries are defended, as both families try to act out their distinct traditions. Also these ethnic boundaries are gendered, as both Ladino and Indígena customs differ for women and men. In arranging the wedding ceremonies, choices are made in which Ladinas either cross or stay within their gendered ethnic boundaries.

4.1 MAYA WEDDING IN A LADINO DRESS

A few differences in wedding ceremony tradition are especially salient, and came to the fore in most interviews with the Ladinas. In general, most Ladinas commented on how Indígenas invite their whole community for maintaining social ties, whereas Ladinos typically keep their weddings small and humble. Also, the Ladinas underscored that Indígena weddings typically last a few days, in order to perform all the required ceremonies. Carmen remembers the difficulties in organizing her wedding clear as day. She refers to this period of her relationship with her Indígena husband as one of the moments in which their cultural differences were the clearest[13]. First of all, Carmen's Ladino family was quite poor, whereas her Indígena family-in-law was better off in that respect. Because her family was so poor, they hardly had any influence in the wedding plans. For this reason, Carmen's family had no other choice than to adapt to the customs of the her future family-in-law. According to Carmen, Indígena weddings take a completely different shape than Ladino weddings. For Ladino weddings, the bride-to-be typically organizes the *fiesta civil,* which is a small affair involving a notary and some family members. Additionally, the Ladino broom typically organizes the religious ceremony. In Carmen's family, this was usually done in a rather modest style, with only a few guests and a small ceremony. But, as Carmen's family hardly had a say in the arranging of the festivities, her wedding ceremony ended up completely to the

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[13] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 03-032011

wishes of her Indígena family-in-law[14]. Carmen remembers her husband's family arranged everything, from the invitees, to the food, to the music, to the ceremonies. Carmen recalls her wedding to be an enormous festivity including 800 guests, at which food like *pepian* was served and marimba music was played. Even though Carmen wanted to marry in a traditional Maya wedding dress, as she had always found these dresses to be very beautiful, her husband's family wouldn't let her because they felt it would be a masquerade. *'Eres Ladina!'* [You are Ladina!] they would respond to her request. As it proved to be too much trouble to arrange for a traditional Maya wedding dress, Carmen eventually married in a white dress, typical for Ladino brides.

4.2 INTERETHNIC LADINO WEDDING

Carmen's daughter Ruth, who in her turn married an Indígena husband at age eighteen, is proud to say one of the terms on which she agreed to marry her boyfriend was that they would not have a Maya wedding[15]. For Ruth, Maya weddings are too much of a time consuming hassle, with ceremonies and traditions she doesn't identify with. First, she notes, all of the boy's family goes to the girl's house, in a sort of procession in which the Indígena women carry huge baskets of food on their head, and the men carry some sort of religious image. Then, a representative of the boy's family enters the girl's house to ask for permission for the boy to marry the girl in a ceremony called the *Pedimiento*. Then, the girl has to walk to the boy's house, followed by all of her family, also carrying big baskets filled with presents on their heads. Then, the boy's family is supposed to organize a big *fiesta* with Maya foods like *pepian*, *frijoles* and meat, and there is marimba music too. "But, the most horrible of all is the dance that they do. The *Son*.. It's horribly slow and boring!"[16] "*Gracias a Dios* I made sure we had a normal, Ladino wedding." For Ruth, a normal, Ladino wedding is a small festivity in which you go to the church, get blessed, then go back to the house to celebrate your marriage with friends and family, like she did. When asked if her husband's family didn't mind that their son's wedding was going to be a Ladino one, Ruth tells me that they did mind a bit. However, she notes, as her husband's family hardly had any money to spend on the wedding, it wasn't their choice to make. Just like any other 'normal' wedding, she says, her husband's family helped to pay for the food and drinks.[17]

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[14] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 03-03-2011
[15] In-depth interview with Ruth, date: 29-03-2011
[16] In-depth interview with Ruth, date: 29-03-2011
[17] In-depth interview with Ruth, date: 29-03-2011

4.3 WHO PAYS, DECIDES.

Through the memories that Carmen and Ruth have of the planning of their weddings, it becomes obvious that in the perception of the Ladinas, Indígena and Ladino weddings take a different shape and have different meanings. For both types of weddings, women and men have different gender specific responsibilities. For Ladinos, the bride's family typically organizes the legal side of the wedding, for instance by paying for a notary. The broom's family is then responsible for organizing the celebration afterwards. Usually, the broom's family spends more money than the bride's on the festivities, but on the other hand the bride's family spends a lot of money on the bride's dress[18]. In so doing, the costs for the wedding are more or less equally shared between both families. For Indígenas, the costs of the wedding are for the utmost part made by the family of the broom, as they are supposed to organize multiple festivities and provide for the bride afterwards. Even though the bride's family does offer gifts to the broom's family before the marriage is sealed, the organization and costs of the wedding falls mostly in the hands of the broom's family[19].

In organizing her wedding, Ruth defended her ethnic boundaries by ensuring that her marriage was celebrated in a completely Ladino manner, and by letting her family provide for the wedding almost completely. For Indígenas, this signals a contradiction to the ethnically specific gender roles, which denounce that the broom's family is responsible for most of the costs of the wedding. As Ruth put it, her family had more money than did her husband's family, and so her family paid for the wedding to be organized on their terms. In Carmen's case, it was her own Ladino family which had less money than her Indígena husband's family to spend on the wedding. Therefore, her husband's Indígena family provided for the wedding and organized it according to their customs. Carmen thus had a wedding contradictory to her own ethnically and gender specific customs, as her husband's family defended their gendered ethnic boundaries by providing for the wedding, and by making sure Carmen stood out on her own wedding as a Ladina, wearing a white dress instead of *traje*. Carmen's and Ruth's stories show that the families' financial positions determine their respective bargaining position in the planning of the wedding. In other words, money makes a difference in determining to what extent both families organize the wedding. When providing for the wedding, the family organizes the wedding according to their ethnically and gender specific customs. In so doing, the family defends their gendered ethnic boundaries, creating a field of tension in which the future in-law-family of the other ethnicity tries to negotiate to which extent they go along with customs that are contradictory to their own.

Sometimes, the ethnic boundaries between the couple's families are so rigid, that

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[18] In-depth interviews with Carmen, Leslye and Ruth, dates: 03-03-2011; 6-4-2011; 29-03-2011
[19] In-depth interviews with Carmen, Frederico, Leslye and Ruth, dates: 03-03-2011; 31-03-2011; 6-04-2011; 29-03-2011

negotiation is out of the question. Leslye, for instance, found her mother and the rest of her Ladino family to be so severely against her marriage to her Indígena husband Frederico, that she didn't have the chance to celebrate her marriage as she would have liked to. In the following paragraph, I have chosen to show a fragment of an interview I had with Leslye. In this interview, it becomes salient how deep the ethnic boundaries between Indígenas and Ladinos may run. Through Leslye's emotional story, we are able to see what effect the ingrained patterns of ethnicity related prejudice and discrimination can have on the lives of Ladinas who marry Indígena men.

4.4 A LONELY WEDDING
In-depth interview with Leslye, April 6th, 2011

Leslye's office is still full of movement, as people come wandering in and out, at times asking questions to Leslye or someone else. I have moved my chair a bit closer towards the desk while Leslye and I were talking, as I feel we are discussing subjects that Leslye might consider sensitive.[20] All the time Leslye has been smiling, answering my questions without hesitation. Then, I decide to ask Leslye whether or not she married Frederico in a church. Leslye looks down at her hands on the table, and shakes her head. I know Leslye was raised Catholic, so I would expect the church to mean a lot to her. Leslye says that in Guatemala, you can either marry in a Church before God and later register your marriage in the *Municipalidad*, or you can visit a *notario* who fills out some forms and marries you before the Law.

I ask Leslye if that is what they did - marry before the Law, and Leslye nods. In a quiet voice she asks me if I remember her mother's opinion about her choice of spouse, and I say that of course, I remember. Even though Leslye's lips are still curved in a smile, her eyes have turned dark as she looks back up at me. She tells me that her marriage was a bittersweet experience, as her mother had told her that she did not want to have anything to do with her if she would go on with her plans to marry Frederico. In this way, the situation just wasn't appropriate for a big wedding in a church, she says. I notice how Leslye's mood has changed, as we are discussing a sensitive issue which apparently carries a lot of painful memories for Leslye. I stay quiet for a moment, but continue to look Leslye in the eyes, as I want to assure her that I'm still listening. After some time, I ask Leslye if she didn't have some sort of party after Frederico and she signed their marital papers. 'Oh yes,' says Leslye while she nods, sure they had a *fiesta pequeña*.[21] They rented a closed-off area in a restaurant in the city, where they had some disco-music, a small evening dinner and there was dancing too. Then Leslye is

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[20] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 06-04-2011
[21] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 06-04-2011

silent again. Quietly, I ask Leslye who attended their wedding party. I can see Leslye swallowing, and her eyes tear up. She smiles and mutters a '*Disculpe'*. In a broken voice, she tells me that some cousins, aunts and uncles of Frederico's side of the family came, as well as some mutual friends of theirs. Not many people, she says. I am silent. Leslye looks down; I can see a teardrop escaping her eye, rolling down her cheek. She wipes it away with her sleeve. 'But of my family..' she whispers, 'nobody came.' [22]

Leslye received the ultimate rejection of her family due to the ethnicity of her future spouse. Her story illustrates how rigid ethnic boundaries can be, especially in an ethnically stratified society such as Guatemala's. Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination between Ladinos and Indígenas are very salient, although it has to be kept in mind that the Indígena ethnic group remains the group of lower status in the ethnic hegemony. The following chapter continues on the subject of prejudice, with regards to the families of the interethnic couples. Here it will come to the fore how the families-in-law's preconceived ideas and opinions regarding the other ethnic group can shape the lives of Ladina wives and Indígena husbands in interethnic marriages.

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[22] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 06-04-2011

5. FAMILY-IN-LAW

In an ethnically stratified society such as Guatemala's, prejudice and discrimination often delimit the ethnic boundaries between Ladinos and Indígenas; therefore the in-law families of both partners in an interethnic marriage can bring severe issues into the couple's relationship. In this chapter, Leslye, her husband Frederico, Carmen, Laura and María reflect on their often traumatizing experiences with their prejudiced families and families-in-law. Exemplified by the reactions of their families to their interethnic marriages, their experiences give insight into how gendered ethnic boundaries are actively guarded. In this chapter, the first issue that will be discussed is the question of where to live after the wedding. One of the problems all Ladinas faced early in their marriages to their Indígena husbands, was that their Indígena families-in-law assumed they would move in with them after the wedding, according to their customs. The stories of Laura and Carmen, highlighted in the first paragraph, show that the extent to which Ladinas try to adapt to the customs of their families-in-law may influence the extent to which they are accepted by their in-laws. Next, the subject of exclusion comes to fore. In the second paragraph light is shed on how Ladinas can be excluded from their in-law-families by the use of language and dress as markers of ethnic identity. Also, the other side of this issue is highlighted, as Frederico, Leslye's Indígena husband, reflects on how the use of his native language among his children is thwarted by his Ladina mother-in-law. Thirdly, María's story shows us how prejudices regarding the higher stratified category of Ladinos may be used by Indígena families-in-law to exclude Ladina wives. Through these issues, it will become apparent how both Indígena and Ladino families-in-law can defend their ethnic boundaries through either exclusion through prejudice, the use of language, or by enforcing Indígena or Ladino customs onto the partner of the other ethnicity living with the in-laws.

5.1 DECIDING WHERE TO LIVE

After the wedding, a choice has to be made about where the couple is going to live. According to all the Ladinas I spoke with, their Indígena husbands' traditions require newly-wed brides to move in with their extended families-in-law[23]. In Quetzaltenango, a lot of Indígena families live in wide set residential areas, often consisting of multiple rooms adjacent to each other surrounding a courtyard. This type of housing typically accommodates one extended family. As Carmen notes on this subject, this accounts for very big and full

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[23] In-depth interviews with Carmen, Leslye, María, Laura and Frederico, dates: 03-03-2011; 11-03-2011; 23-02-2011; 13-04-2011.

houses with many residents.[24] Carmen herself wasn't attracted to the idea of living with her family-in-law, but when she became pregnant, she felt she would need help. Carmen's mother-in-law then offered her and her husband a place in their family home, where they would live together with the whole extended family. Because there was no other option at hand, they eventually moved in. During the years that Carmen lived there, she always felt she was trying to adapt to the customs to her family-in-law.[25] Especially during the first years of her marriage, Carmen felt her attempts were made in vain. Carmen underscores that certain cultural differences, such as the type of cooking or ways of dressing, always stayed an issue between her and her family-in-law. She recalls that even though she always tried to copy her mother-in-law's style of cooking, she would get comments from her in-laws on not getting it right completely. Nevertheless, as the years went by and Carmen knew what her family-in-law expected of her, she felt more and more accepted by her in-laws. As she notes, it took some adjusting and quite some time before she was fully accepted as a member of the family, but eventually Carmen says she benefited greatly from the help with childrearing she received from her female in-laws.[26]

Also Laura, a young Ladina in her twenties who married her Indígena husband because she was pregnant, remembers the trouble she had while living with her in-laws.[27] Immediately after her wedding, Laura moved in with her in-law extended family, where she had great difficulties to settle in. When I spoke to Laura, I noticed her hostility regarding Indígenas and what she called, their 'backwards culture'.[28] According to her, she had no other choice than to live with her in-laws, as she didn't have any money and she needed help with her baby. She notes how the female members of her family-in-law would make rude comments regarding her style of clothing, which they considered too explicit for a married woman. According to Laura, she and her baby barely ate when they lived in the home of her in-laws, as she was sure 'their vile food' was poisonous.[29] When asked if she ever spent time together with her in-laws, Laura shrugs and tells me that she and her in-laws avoided contact as much as they could. Eventually Laura and her husband experienced severe marital problems, which made Laura decide to move out of the home of her in-laws.

Leslye and her husband Frederico faced a different kind of experience after they married. As described in the previous paragraph, Leslye's mother had always held racist sentiments regarding Indígenas, which led to absolute disapproval of her daughter's choice of spouse.[30]

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[24] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 03-03-2011
[25] In-depth interviews with Carmen, date: 03-03-2011; 24-03-2011
[26] In-depth interviews with Carmen, dates: 03-03-2011; 24-03-2011
[27] In-depth interview with Laura, date: 13-04-2011
[28] In-depth interview with Laura, date: 13-04-2011
[29] In-depth interview with Laura, date; 13-04-2011
[30] In-depth interviews with Leslye, dates: 11-03-2011; 16-03-2011; 06-04-2011

However, as Leslye had always been an only child, and as her mother lived alone, Leslye felt she was responsible for taking care of her aging mother. Keeping Leslye's mother's position regarding Indígenas in mind, the choice of whether or not to move in with her was an exceptionally difficult one to make for Leslye and Frederico.[31] The decision was made when Leslye and Frederico had their first child, as according to Leslye, her mother finally realized that her only child had just given birth to her only chance at grandchildren.[32] Eventually, Leslye and Frederico moved in with Leslye's mother, where they still live. Frederico and Leslye's mother regularly have their differences, as Leslye tells me that her mother is not shy to share her opinion regarding the ethnicity of her son-in-law. However, outbursts rarely occur, which according to Leslye is the doing of her husband, who has always done his best to understand the way his mother-in-law thinks, and has always tried to adjust to her way of living.[33]

Through the stories of Laura and Carmen we see how Ladinas may differ in strategies regarding their lives living with their extended in-law families. When living with their Indígena in-laws, Ladinas are confronted with cultural differences between themselves and their husbands' families, which mark their ethnic boundaries. Ladinas struggle to negotiate these boundaries, as they already stand out from the family they can choose to either disregard or adjust to the customs of their families-in-law. The extent to which Ladinas eventually adapt to the ways of living of their in-laws, affects how the Ladinas are regarded by their family-in-laws. When Carmen insisted on learning how to cook like her mother-in-law, her in-laws gave her a chance and accepted her as part of the family. Laura on the other hand, is not shy to admit that she regarded her in-laws' way of living as 'backwards', and that she never made an attempt to adjust her manners to those of the extended in-law family she lived with. Laura, thus, was never accepted as a member of the family. Leslye's and Frederico's experiences too, show us a scenario in which Frederico has adjusted his ways of life in order to avoid outbursts between himself and his mother-in-law who has racist sentiments regarding Indígenas. However, as we shall see in the next paragraphs, irrespective of his adjustments, Frederico is still subject to exclusion of his in-law-family. In the following paragraph, light is shed on how Ladinas might be excluded from being considered a part of their husband's family through the use of language and dress. Also Frederico's story shows us how an Indígena husband might be excluded by his family-in-law through curtailing the use of his mother language.

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[31] In-depth interviews with Leslye, Frederico, dates: 11-03-2011; 06-04-2011; 21-03-2011
[32] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 11-03-2011
[33] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 11-03-2011

5.2 EXCLUSION THROUGH PREJUDICE, DRESS AND LANGUAGE

All of the Ladinas I spoke with during my research, expressed that the two most prominent ethnic identity markers of their Indígena families-in-law are firstly, their traditional dress, and secondly, their mother language. In all cases the mother language of the Indígena families-in-law is K'iche, which most of the Ladinas had made an attempt to learn. Leslye too, made an effort to understand and speak her husband's mother language, as she took a K'iche language course for a year.[34] Unfortunately, none of the words stuck to her, and so she doesn't understand any K'iche. In one of our interviews, Leslye shared with me that at times, the fact that she doesn't speak nor understand any K'iche can be quite painful.[35] Especially at her husband's family events, which frustrate her at times. I asked her why she perceives those events to be so difficult, and Leslye explained to me that especially during their Sunday family dinners, she often feels left out. Even though most members of her direct family-in-law speak Spanish, they always speak K'iche at the table. She then finds herself eating in solace, feeling uncomfortable and ignored.

I also interviewed Leslye's husband Frederico on this subject, shedding light on the other side of this story. For Frederico, it has always been of great importance to teach his three young children his mother language; K'iche.[36] Especially because his children are being raised within a Ladino household, Frederico finds it necessary to give them some understanding of their Indígena background. However, teaching the children K'iche has formed a problem in Frederico and Leslye's household. As underscored before, the family lives with Leslye's mother, who has racist ideas regarding Indígenas and their culture. Using strong and abusive words, Leslye's mother has made it clear that she does not approve of Frederico; their Indígena maid; nor the children speaking K'iche.[37] The children know this, and as they too try to avoid a confrontation between their father and their grandmother, they are scared to speak K'iche. For Frederico this situation is very painful, as he feels like an unwelcome guest in his own house and also his children are now indirectly being taught that their Indígena heritage is a bad thing.

Having discussed the subject of exclusion through language, another marker of ethnic identity that has to be addressed regarding this theme, is the subject of dress. The opinions regarding whether or not to wear the Indígena *traje* when attending family events, vary greatly among the Ladinas I interviewed. According to my findings when staying in Quetzaltenango, the most prominent identifier of ethnicity of Indígena women, is their dress, or *traje*. In Quetzaltenango more than half of the population is Indígena, which means that it

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[34] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011
[35] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011
[36] In-depth interviews with Frederico, dates: 31-03-2011; 13-04-2011
[37] In-depth interviews with Leslye, Frederico, dates: 11-03-2011; 16-03-2011; 31-03-2011; 13-04-2011

is virtually impossible to ignore the colorful patterns of the traditional dress most Indígena women wear. As *traje* is such a prominent cultural marker for Indígena women, the choice of whether or not to wear *traje* is a meaningful choice for Ladinas to make in negotiating their ethnic identities in their interethnic marriages. Leslye for instance, has made clear that she never considered the idea of wearing *traje*.[38] For her, *traje* has no meaning at all. As she says, 'If I would start wearing *traje,* I would deny my own heritage. *Traje* is not mine.'[39] When I asked her once if she also never considered wearing *traje* when she attends to family events of her husband's side of the family, Leslye answered that she feels like an outsider in these events anyway, wearing *traje* would make her feel even more ridiculous. Leslye recalls her first few visits to her husband's family, who live outside of the city. She remembers that especially the women would stare at her, and gossip about her. They never really made an effort to talk to her on her visits, and Leslye strongly believes this is because she looks so different from them.

Carmen on the other hand, enjoys wearing *traje*.[40] When I ask Carmen what it's like for her to join in on her husband's family events, she tells me that after all those years of marriage, she has gotten used to the stares of her husbands extended family, but when she was younger she perceived these events to be quite difficult and sometimes painful.[41] To my question if she ever wears *traje* to these events, Carmen nods vigorously. She wears *traje* at every special event, but as the clothes are so expensive, she doesn't have many outfits. Carmen tells me that she loves the way the bright colors contrast with her whitish skin. When I ask her how she feels when she wears *traje* around her husband's extended family, Carmen replies that her closest in-laws think it's fine, but the others do stare at her with disrespect and express hostility in their attitude towards her. According to Carmen, her looks are obviously that of a Ladina, pointing out her brown hair, green eyes and whitish skin.[42] Some of her husbands extended family told her that she's a fake, and also her husband has a strong dislike for Carmen wearing *traje*. They had many conflicts over Carmen wearing *traje*, in some of which Carmen's husband would tell her that he's ashamed of her at his family events as his wife, a Ladina, ridicules his cultural heritage by wearing *traje*.[43]

Through the experiences of Leslye and Carmen we see that the wearing of *traje* by Ladino wives carries a lot of meaning. For Leslye, *traje* delimits the ethnic boundaries between herself and her husband's family, of which she doesn't feel part of. She chooses not to wear *traje*, because she doesn't identify with this part of her husband's heritage, and also

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[38] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011
[39] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011
[40] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 24-03-2011
[41] In-depth interviews with Carmen, dates: 24-03-2011; 28-03-2011
[42] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 28-03-2011
[43] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 28-03-2011

because she feels she would draw attention to herself even more. Carmen, who tried to adapt to her customs of her husband's family ever since she got married, loves wearing *traje* but is rejected by her husband and his family for doing so. Apparently, *traje* for them too, delimits the ethnic boundaries between them, and her. Carmen's indigenous family-in-law thus protect their ethnic boundaries by scolding Carmen for being a fraud, who according to them tries to copy or even ridicule their custom of wearing *traje*.

5.3 PREJUDICE AND EXCLUSION

In interethnic marriages between Indígenas and Ladinas, the prejudices the in-law families have regarding the "Other" ethnicity can bring issues into the couples' marriages. In this paragraph, María's story shows us how prejudices regarding Ladinos can work to disrupt an interethnic relationship.

María, a Ladina in her forties, remembers that the stereotypical images her indigenous mother-in-law had of her as a Ladina, brought severe problems into her marriage with her Indígena husband.[44] According to María, her husband's family was very happy to have her as a daughter-in-law at first. According to them, she as a Ladina ranked higher than them in the ethnic stratification of Guatemalan society.[45] Also, her husband's family strongly believed María, as a Ladina, came from a wealthy family. María tells me that there were times when she felt like 'the Queen of England' amongst her husband's relatives. She recalls that on family events, her husband's family treated her with great respect, but nevertheless María felt like an outsider of the family. However, especially the attitude of María's indigenous mother-in-law caused difficulties in María's marriage. According to María, her indigenous mother-in-law looked up to María and her Ladino family so much, that her marriage eventually turned out to be a competition between both families.[46]

María remembers one event in which it became very clear that she not only grew up with different customs than her husband and his family, but also that she herself was subject to prejudices about her ethnicity, and her family's assumed wealth.[47] María tells me that she and her husband once went out to have breakfast at the home her husband's family. There, she noticed that her breakfast habits were very different than those of her in-laws. Her family-in-law ate *tamalas de papas* [potato dumplings] with coffee for breakfast, which María didn't like to eat. María's husband asked his mother if they maybe had some eggs and some milk. María then got served scrambled eggs and a glass of milk for breakfast, but as soon as she finished eating, she noticed her husband and her mother-in-law having a hushed discussion.

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[44] In-depth interviews with María, dates: 23-02-2011; 02-03-2011
[45] In-depth interview with María, date: 02-03-2011
[46] In-depth interviews with María, dates: 23-02-2011; 02-03-2011
[47] In-depth interview with María, date: 23-02-2011

Shortly after, her husband gave his mother some money. Later, María's husband explained to her that if she wanted to eat a more expensive 'Ladino' breakfast, she should pay for it herself. This was the start of many ethnicity related conflicts, which eventually worked out to the separation of María and her husband.

Many of my Ladina respondents recognized the situation María described. Carmen, Leslye and Laura too, felt that prejudices regarding their ethnicity limited their acceptance into their husbands' families.[48] The prejudices they spoke about entailed presumptions about wealth, as well as images that depict Ladinos as lazy and lacking backbone. In this way, we can say that the expression of prejudice by both in-law families signals a protection of the ethnic boundaries between Indígenas and Ladinos. In sum, most of the Ladinas I spoke with experienced trouble deciding where to live after their wedding, as following the customs of their husbands, newly-wed brides move in with their families-in-law. More than half of my respondents did live with their Indígena extended in-law families for some time, during which all of the women experienced trouble fitting in. Through adaption and adjustments on the part of the Ladinas, prejudices their in-law families had about them could be over won. However, even though most of the Ladinas were eventually accepted as their husbands' wives, they would always stand out from their Indígena families-in-law, through dress, language and customs. The following chapter entails a subject that came to the fore in nearly all the interviews I had with my Ladina respondents. According to the Ladina wives, the one aspect which they regard as ultimately 'Indígena' and which they never could get used to within their marriages, is *machismo*.

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[48] In-depth interviews with Carmen, Leslye and Laura, dates: 28-03-2011; 16-03-2011; 14-03-2011

6. MACHISMO

One source of conflict nearly all Ladinas pointed out as one of the biggest obstacles in their relationships with their Indígena husbands, is what they referred to as *machismo*. Carmen, María and Laura all state that *machismo* had been the greatest issue in their marriages with their Indígena husbands. As Carmen stated once, '*From the moment I gave birth to our first child, I knew I had married a machista. Suddenly he started treating me as his servant, exactly like they treat their own women..* '[49] In this chapter we will see that Ladinas believe that ideas regarding gender roles and appropriate gender behavior are ethnically dependent, and thus different for Ladino and Indígena men. As the Ladinas project these differences on their marriages with Indígena men, the Ladinas themselves delimit gendered ethnic boundaries which they can either cross or stay within, according to how they manage their issues in this area of conflict. The first paragraph of this chapter entails the issue of having a job, as most Ladinas I spoke with expressed that their Indígena husbands preferred them to stay at home daily to take care of the house and children. The second paragraph sheds light on *machismo* regarding the upbringing of children. In this paragraph, Carmen relates to the difficulties she and her Indígena husband had in the upbringing of their daughters as typically *machista* issues. In the last paragraph, through the stories of Leslye, Laura and Frederico, I reflect on what the denunciation of *machismo* as an issue intrinsically related to Indígena men says about the perseverance and protection of ethnic boundaries between Ladinas and their husbands.

6.1 BEING A GOOD WIFE

On my first meeting with Carmen, she is adamant to tell me all about her experiences with her Indígena husband.[50] In a very excited and lively manner, she counts up all the cultural differences she can think of on her fingers. The first difference, and the one that had the biggest influence on her life with her husband, is *machismo*. As *machismo* is a very broad subject, I ask Carmen to specify what *machismo* means to her. '*Bueno*', she says, 'For me, and from what I have seen in my life, the Maya man has a lot of power. More power than the Maya woman. The men have the power over the money, the house, and over everything else the women and the children do.'[51]

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[49] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 14-04-2011
[50] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 03-03-2011
[51] In-depth interviews with Carmen, dates: 03-03-2011; 14-04-2011

During the interview, Carmen tells me that she has always been a very active woman, and that she has been working since she was young.[52] However, as Carmen tells me, when she and her husband got married, he made it clear to her that he expected her to become a housewife, to stop working, to care for the children, to cook food and to clean the house. When Carmen reflects on her own childhood, she tells me that she did not grow up with the idea that women should be serving men – an idea she believes to be intrinsic to Indígena culture. When she was little, her Ladino father would help out her mother wherever he could, Carmen explains. Then she laughs, 'Although he would never pick up a spoon to cook!' [53]

María too, pointed out *machismo* to be one of the biggest issues in her marriage. She knew her husband was a dominant man before she married him, but after they married, she felt things had changed. María recounts several arguments in which her husband forcefully expressed his expectations towards her.[54] He expected María to quit her job so that she could stay at home to cook and clean. 'In my family,' she says, 'the women are responsible for cooking and taking care of the children too. But it's not by force! The men help out as well.' Sometimes when María and her husband fought over these gender related issues, María's husband would tell her he had no time for such a disrespectful woman, and then he would leave to spend the night at his mother's house. On one fatal night, María tells me, her husband did not come back the day after their argument.[55] They had been fighting again, because María had started her job as a Spanish teacher again without her husband's approval, and after some very harsh words, her husband mounted his motorcycle and drove to his mother's house. It was a rainy night, and as María found out later, her husband slipped and crashed with his motorcycle. He died instantly. The days after were horrific for María, not in the last place because she felt guilty having fought with her husband such a short time before his death. On the funeral, María's mother-in-law came towards her and told her that she blamed her for her son's death. As María recalls; 'She told me that if only I had listened to my husband like a good wife should, he would still be alive. Why did I have to be so rebellious, she shouted at me. She really hated me for being white.'[56]

6.2 BEING A GOOD MOTHER

Most of my Ladina respondents who are or have been married to Indígena men, expressed that they have had several arguments with their husbands regarding the correct upbringing of their children. Often, they referred to their differences in opinion as *machismo* related.[57] In

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[52] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 03-03-2011
[53] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 14-04-2011
[54] In-depth interviews with María, dates: 02-03-2011; 15-04-2011
[55] In-depth interview with María, date: 02-03-2011
[56] In-depth interview with María, date: 02-03-2011
[57] In-depth interviews with Carmen, María and Laura dates: 13-04-2011; 14-04-2011; 13-03-2011

other words, they felt that their husbands tried to control not only them as their wives, but also their children, and especially their daughters, through strict rules and a harsh approach towards the children. In one of our interviews, Carmen elaborated on why she and her husband separated for no less than twelve years. The ultimate issue they could not get over with, and which according to Carmen was *machismo* related, was the upbringing of their three daughters.

'Do you know how many years we were separated, Irene?' Carmen asks me.[58] I shake my head. 'Twelve years,' Carmen whispers to me, nodding. She tells me that her husband was very strict, not only with her, but also with the children. Regarding the children, Carmen explains that her husband thought she was 'too flexible'. Carmen didn't mind if her daughters went out to play somewhere else after school, her husband did. When Carmen suspected her daughters to have boyfriends, she decided to tolerate it and invite them over to meet them. Carmen's husband certainly didn't agree with this, which according to Carmen resulted in many fights. She tells me how difficult it was for her – but mostly for the children, that she and her husband maintained different house rules. When Carmen's first two daughters got pregnant, her husband was adamant for them to get married because if they didn't, they were committing a sin. 'Typically Maya,' Carmen says. 'This was like he always was, no room for flexibility, everything was always so black and white. He was always so strict! I didn't want that for my children, I tried to raise them Ladino."[59] When I ask Carmen what made her decide to get back together with her husband, she tells me that they both felt that having no children in the house anymore, would mean less issues to fight about. 'But,' she says, 'some things will never change. Once a *machista*, always a *machista*.' Although, she says, it's a lot better now. Back in the day, her husband would come home from work, walk straight to the table and demand his food. 'It's not like that anymore,' Carmen says. 'We enjoy life now'.[60]

From Carmen's story we learn that ideas about the upbringing of the children, and about what it means to be a good mother may be different for partners in interethnic marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas. Carmen believes this difference can be explained by the *machismo* of her Indígena husband, who put up strict rules for her and her daughters. By setting up her own, different house rules regarding the upbringing of the children, Carmen aimed to raise her children to become Ladinos. Hereby she strengthened the ethnic boundaries not only between herself and her husband, but also between her children and their father. The fact that Carmen stated *machismo* to be the main reason for the separation of her and her husband, signifies the extent to which Carmen distances herself ethnically from the behavior

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[58] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 13-04-2011
[59] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 13-04-2011
[60] In-depth interview with Carmen, date: 13-04-2011

of her husband. The fact that they eventually continued their relationship, is explained by Carmen as she points out that the children had moved out, thus giving way to less provocation of conflicts. However, from Carmen's statement that 'a *machista* will always be a *machista*', we can clearly see that she deems *machismo* to be intrinsic to her husband's ethnicity – which can never change. Hereby, Carmen ultimately delimits and maintains the ethnic boundaries between her, her children and her husband through the projection of ethnically specific gender images of her Indígena husband.

6.3 TYPICALLY INDÍGENA?

When I meet Laura, she has just ended her relationship with her Indígena husband. Notably still full of rage, she tells me she should have never gotten involved with an Indígena. 'So aggressive!' she says.[61] After her wedding, she moved in with her Indígena in-laws, who she says, treated her violently. 'They expected me to cook and clean while I still had a small baby.. But my husband was the worst. He was a *machista*.' I ask her what he did, if he was so bad to her, and Laura utters a joyless laugh. 'He almost killed me, that's what he did!' she yells. It started out right after their wedding, she tells me. He demanded that Laura stayed at home all day, helping his female relatives with taking care of the house and the children. If she refused, he would shout names at her and call her a *una Ladina sin respeto* [disrespectful Ladina]. According to Laura, it became worse when her female in-law relatives told her husband they thought Laura dressed herself in too revealing clothes. When Laura's husband confronted her with this, Laura rejected his comments. In reaction to this, Laura's husband started to physically assault her. The abuse carried on until Laura moved back in with her parents. When I ask Laura what her parents said when she moved back in with them, she shrugs and says: 'They told me they had expected this from the day I told them I was pregnant from an Indígena. They were not surprised, because everybody knows Indígenas are aggressive savages, all of them'.[62]

Quite clearly, Laura and her family are convinced that *machismo* entails the aggressive controlling of a husband over his wife and children, and that it is intrinsically Indígena. This stance is widely shared by my Ladina respondents. Leslye too, believes Indígenas do have a somewhat stronger form of *machismo* than do Ladinos, but her ideas differ slightly from the rest of the women I spoke with. Different from the other Ladinas I spoke with, Leslye deems Indígena *machismo* to be dependent on the location of where Indígena families live. For example, Indígena girls who live in the countryside often don't get the chance to go to school. Boys do go to school, but just for a few years, as they are expected to work from the youngest

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[61] In-depth interview with Laura, date: 13-04-2011
[62] In-depth interview with Laura, date: 13-04-2011

age as possible in order to support their families. The girls help their mothers in and around the house, marry young, and then start taking care of their own families. 'But we cannot call this *machismo*, it's as much about opportunities as it is about tradition'.[63] As Leslye comments, it doesn't have much use for an Indígena girl in the countryside to have a lot of education, as there are so very little opportunities for them. In the city it's different, she says. In Quetzaltenango, she explains, Indígenas lead a very different life than Indígenas in the countryside. They have more opportunities, and so girls too receive good education and get the chance to go to university. However, as Leslye states, Indígena girls in the city, who have received good education, are still more likely than Ladino girls to marry young and become *amas de la casa* [housewives]. According to Leslye, this means that Indígenas in the city are more traditional than Ladinos, meaning that gender roles too are more strictly held on too by Indígenas than by Ladinos.

Talking to Leslye's Indígena husband Frederico, I am very curious on his stance on *machismo* related to Indígenas. Indígena men, Frederico explains, are typically expected to work hard and to have mostly physical jobs.[64] Also, they never cook nor clean. Women are the ones responsible for getting water, preparing the food and caring for the children. In general, girls are not supposed to study or work. Frederico says that in his community, it is considered very important to show respect to older men. As Frederico is the oldest son in his family, his vote counts stronger than that of his younger brothers, but also than that of his older sisters. Frederico nods and says that indeed, he feels being a man in his family has made him more privileged than his sisters. Even now, he says, he has noticed that when his family eats together, his mother barely speaks. She only answers questions when she is spoken to. 'But,' he comments, 'have you noticed that the word *machismo* is Spanish? It's not something we recognize. We divide the responsibilities of life between men and women, so no one has too much. On the countryside, there is no use in women having an office job, or girls going to university. If people are poor, like most Indígenas are, the most important thing is survival. Men don't have time worrying about if they are *machista* enough.'[65]

What we can learn from the experiences and thoughts of the Ladinas I spoke with, as well as from Frederico's stance on the issue, is that most ideas about what *machismo* entails are similar to each other, although they do differ slightly. Some Ladinas are convinced *machismo* means violent behavior; others believe it to mean that men express power and control over women. All of the Ladinas I talked with believed *machismo* to be stronger in Indígena men than in Ladino men. It is impossible to decide whether or not a subject as wide and

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[63] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011
[64] In-depth interview with Frederico, date: 31-03-2011
[65] In-depth interview with Frederico, date: 31-03-2011

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inconsistent as *machismo* is more or less salient in the gender relations of one ethnic group over the other. What matters is that the perspectives of the Ladinas show us that images regarding Indígenas depict them as more traditional, less modern and more violent than Ladinos. Even though this might not be true, it shows us that the ethnic stratification in which Ladinos occupy a more powerful position than Indígenas, can be expressed through ethnically specific gender images of *machista* Indígena men. Regardless of the 'amount' of *machismo* in either ethnic group, Ladinas believe Indígena men have more *machismo* than Ladino men. Because they are sure that this Indígena *machismo* has caused great issues in their interethnic marriages, their ideas regarding this subject should be regarded as 'true'. In other words, the issue is not whether or not Indígenas be more *machista* than Ladinos, but the issue is what the perspectives of Ladinos on Indígena *machismo* tells us about ethnic stratification and ethnic boundaries in Guatemalan society.

7. CHILDREN AS A BATTLEGROUND

The children that spring from marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas and their upbringing often become a battleground for their parents and families, on which ethnically contesting issues are fought out on. The way children become a battleground for their parents in interethnic marriages is the subject that shall be discussed in this chapter. This area of conflict is especially salient in Leslye and Frederico's family, as Frederico is adamant for their young daughter to start wearing *traje*, while Leslye is fiercely against it. In this, it is obvious that ethnic boundaries are intrinsically gendered, as specific expressions of ethnic identity, like the wearing of *traje*, is gender dependent. As children become a battleground, both partners and their families delimit and protect gendered ethnic boundaries by aiming to make sure their offspring is raised within either his or her culture. Even though most Ladinas I interviewed shared with me the experiences and difficulties they had in raising their children with regards to differences in ethnicity and culture, I choose to put the focus in this chapter on the case of Leslye and Frederico. Their situation clearly shows how ethnic boundaries might be defended through the upbringing of children in ethnically mixed families. Both Leslye's side of the story as well as Frederico's stance on the issue come to the fore, as I interviewed them both on the subject of their children. I choose to show both Leslye's and Frederico's stance on the issue through their actual words, as expressed in the different interviews I had with both of them. Throughout the following paragraphs, we should keep in mind that Frederico, Leslye and their three children live in the home of Leslye's mother. Leslye's mother has always had racist sentiments regarding Indígenas, and initially broke off all contact with her daughter as the latter decided to marry Frederico.

7.1 LESLYE

"Frederico and I have three children.[66] We have two sons and one young daughter, she is only three years old. They know they are part Indígena, because Frederico has made a lot of effort to ensure his children know where they come from. He tries to teach them K'iche, they visit his family in Uspantán. The oldest one is definitely aware of this heritage, the two younger ones are still too little, I think. For my sons it's all fun and games, they like visiting their Indígena cousins who live in the countryside, they like playing outside. Sure, they understand a little K'iche, but they rarely get the chance to use it. They go to a good school, which quite honestly is too expensive for most Indígenas, therefore most days they only play with Ladino children.

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[66] In-depth interview with Leslye, date: 16-03-2011

Thank God my daughter is still so young, because for her it will become more difficult, the whole ethnicity thing. You see, Frederico really wants her to start wearing *traje* when she's older. I don't know why he feels so strongly about it, I don't want it to happen. We always fight over this issue, I'll tell you that. Sure, on special occasions I'll put her in *traje*, no problem. But I don't want her to wear *traje* in her daily life. *Traje* is not my custom; I don't feel anything for it. Imagine me dressing my own daughter in *traje!* Fair enough, she is half Indígena, but she's also half me. If she would wear *traje* nobody would realize she's half-half. Also, you have to realize that nowadays there is still a lot of discrimination going on against Indígenas. Wearing *traje* is the most visible sign of your *identidad indígena* [indigenous identity], I don't want to risk my daughter being hurt because of her Indígena dress. Then there is my mother, too. It's best to keep the situation in our home peacefully, keeping my mother's opinion about Frederico's culture in mind. I'm very, very sure she is not going to appreciate it if she sees her granddaughter wearing *traje* inside her own house!"

7.2 FREDERICO

"My daughter is very important to me, she's my pride.[67] To be honest, she also has the most responsibility, because she's a girl and Indígena girls wear *traje*. Leslye and I always fight about this issue. She doesn't want it, for our daughter to wear *traje*. But for me, it's a big thing. My sons actually have an easy life, in this respect, they don't have to show their ethnicity through their clothes. Each day, when they go to school dressed neatly in their blue school uniforms, I look at them and think they could be Ladino children. For my daughter it is different. When she's old enough, she can show her pride of her indigenous heritage by wearing *traje*. Also, it's an acknowledgement to my family.

You see, I already live so far away from them, I am married to a Ladina, my children and I live in a Ladino household that belongs to a prejudiced, old Ladina *señora*. If my daughter wears *traje*, that communicates that not only she, but also I and my other children feel a connection with our roots. My mother is already accusing me of forgetting my roots, she says I don't teach my children to be proud of where they are from. My family wants my daughter to openly come out for her heritage and her family ties. It's my responsibility to make sure she is going to wear *traje*. My family tells me that they want our children to openly demonstrate their Indígena roots, as if they were a hundred percent Indígena, and *traje* is the most visible sign of being Indígena.

I know they are only half Indígena, Leslye says this too. I tried to explain to Leslye many

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[67] In-depth interview with Frederico, date: 13-04-2011

times why it is so important for our daughter to wear *traje*, but she doesn't understand. Do I fear for discrimination against my daughter if she wears *traje?* Well, not really. She already has an indigenous surname, if people wanted to discriminate against her they would have already done it. We'll see what it will be like in a few years, maybe our daughter should choose for herself if she wants to wear *traje*."

7.3 PASSING DOWN ETHNIC IDENTITY, NEGOTIATING OVER BOUNDARIES

Through the words of Frederico it becomes clear why he finds it so important for their daughter to starts wearing *traje*. As Leslye and Frederico both stated, *traje* is the most visible marker of Indígena ethnic identity, and in most places in Guatemala, *traje* is only worn by Indígena women. Like Frederico says, this means that their daughter has most responsibility in expressing ethnic identity, because she is a girl. Therefore, we should regard the wearing of *traje* as a gender specific marker of the ethnic boundary between Indígenas and Ladinos, which shows us how ethnic boundaries can be intrinsically gendered. As Leslye notes, their children are half Ladinos, half Indígenas, but if their daughter wears *traje,* from outside perspectives she will be seen as a full Indígena – which is exactly what Leslye fears and Frederico aims for. Leslye does not identify with her husband's ethnicity nor with his customs, dressing her daughter in *traje* would thus distance herself from her daughter through the wearing of a very salient indigenous cultural marker. As much as Leslye and Frederico try to find a balance in the raising of their children with regards to the children's mixed heritage, it proves to be very difficult to mark an even distribution of both Leslye's Ladino, and Frederico's Indígena cultural input. When keeping in mind that the family lives in a Ladino home, which belongs to Leslye's mother who has a very negative opinion regarding Indígenas, it is not difficult to image that Frederico feels like his ethnicity and his culture are being pushed to the side. As Frederico underscored, his family is putting him under pressure as they accuse him of denying his Indígena roots, being married to a Ladina and living in a Ladino home. The only way for him to make up for the distance that has risen between him and his family, is through the public acknowledgement and appreciation of Indígena heritage, by their children. The gendered ethnic boundaries that shape Leslye's and Frederico's marriage and family life, are negotiated over by means of their children. In this way, we can view their children as a battleground, as it is their children on which parents pass down their traditions, customs and ethnic identification.

8. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I opted to answer the question of how Ladinas in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, cross gendered ethnic boundaries in their interethnic marriages with Indígena men. Doing so, I have put the focus of my research on the different fields of tension and conflict that were salient in most interethnic marriages that I came across during my research. Hereby, light is shed on the existing gender and ethnic hegemonies within Guatemalan society. Overall, I aimed to show how Ladinas, who are married to Indígena men, negotiate their ethnic and gender identities within their interethnic marriages.

In the first chapter, I set out the theoretical framework on which my research has been based. Here, we were able to see that ethnicity and gender are social constructs, through which ethnic and gender identities are formed. The ethnic and gender boundaries which delimit these identities, are formed in co-construction of one another. These boundaries can be protected, negotiated over, or crossed by the members of the concurrent gender or ethnic categories. The meanings of categories of gender and ethnicity are based on power structures, this accounts for the stratification of these categories in hegemonies. In this, we find that as people are situated on different axes of meaning, some intersections of boundaries are more powerful than others. The fields of tension that arise from this, give way to social conflicts as people try to negotiate their different identities by maintaining, negotiating, or crossing the boundaries. Also, we learned that gender, ideas about femininity and masculinity, sexual codes of conduct and perspectives on morality are loaded with meaning regarding ethnicity. This sheds light on the notion of women as cultural gatekeepers, which shows us that gendered ethnic boundaries can be protected through the compliance to, or breaking of ethnically and gender specific sexual rules.

It is in this light that we should place the fieldwork I carried out in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Looking back at the central research question I posed, which questions how Ladinas negotiate their ethnic and gender identities while crossing gendered ethnic boundaries within their interethnic marriages with Indígena men, several conclusions can be drawn. The overall message we can derive from both the literature research as well as the fieldwork I have done, is that there are certain dynamics to the maintaining, crossing and protection of ethnic and gender boundaries which come to the fore in different social contexts. According to the social context, ethnic and gender boundaries differ in rigidity as they intersect in social situations. As previously stated, some intersections of boundaries are more powerful than

others. People develop strategies in which they may aim to protect certain boundaries by *stretching* others, as for instance we were able to see clearly in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, we learned that Ladinas should be viewed as the cultural gatekeepers of their ethnic group, as ethnically specific sexual codes of conduct curtail their sexual activity and choice of spouse in order to protect family honor, moral and ethnic purity. However, contrary to the expectations I derived from the literature, I found that for Ladinas and their families, the protection of family honor and women's chastity is considered more important than the perseverance of ethnic boundaries between Ladinos and Indígenas. The families of nearly all of the women I spoke with, were more concerned with mending the Ladinas' reputation by avoiding their children being born out of wedlock by making sure they entered into marriage quickly, than that their future husbands would be Indígenas. From this we learn that, at least for the Ladinas and their families whom I spoke with, ethnic and gender boundaries are not equal in rigidity. Dependent on the context and the situation, ethnic boundaries can be negotiated over in order to protect gender and sexual boundaries. Do Ladinas then cross ethnic boundaries by marrying Indígena men? I would say Ladinas instead *stretch* the ethnic boundaries by marrying Indígena men, in order to protect gender boundaries. In this we see how the rigidity of ethnic and gender boundaries may vary in different social situations.

This is not to say that ethnic boundaries are of no meaning in interethnic marriages between Ladinas and Indígenas. As we have read in the third chapter of this thesis, ethnic boundaries can become salient through cultural differences in wedding customs, which often result in tension between the ethnically differing families-in-law. Weddings thus become a battleground on which ethnic boundaries are protected and fought over, through the compliance to or disregarding of ethnically and gender specific customs. Contrary to my expectations, even though the Ladino ethnic group trumps the Indígena ethnic group in terms of power, conform the ethnic hegemony of Guatemala; the weddings of my Ladina informants were mostly celebrated according to the customs of the Indígena families. In all the cases I came across during my research, ethnic boundaries were crossed during the wedding. This happened most often for the Ladinas, who had no other choice than to comply with the Indígena customs of their families-in-law. Sometimes, the ethnic boundaries between both partners were protected with such vigor, that Ladinas faced ultimate exclusion from their own families, in reaction to the ethnicity of their choice of spouse. According to what I learned, which family eventually organizes the wedding is dependent on which family has most financial means to spend. From this we see clearly that ethnic boundaries can be of great rigidity, as families protect them by fighting over which ethnically specific customs to use. However, the final decision of which family gets to organize the wedding is strongly

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influenced by the rigidity of another boundary – *class.* However, the research I carried out was not extensive enough to shed sufficient light on this issue, therefore I would recommend other anthropologists to investigate this subject further in the future.

The subject of families-in-law forms a field of tension in all the interethnic marriages I came across during my research. I found that the more the Ladinas try and conform to the customs of their in-laws, the more those same in-laws aim to elucidate their ethnic differences, hereby protecting their ethnic boundaries. In this too, we are able to see how the dynamics of boundary crossing and maintenance work out in different social contexts. Ladinas develop different strategies to deal with the ethnic boundaries between them and their Indígena in-laws. Some adopt markers of ethnic identity such as language and dress, or try to prove wrong the prejudices against them, in an attempt to overcome the exclusion from their in-laws. Other Ladinas reject these markers and hereby maintain the ethnic boundaries between them and their Indígena in-law families. Despite that most Ladinas try to blend in with their Indígena in-law families, their attempts largely end in vain. The ethnic boundaries between them and their in-laws are continually being reinforced as their Indígena in-laws magnify the ethnic differences between them, and hereby exclude the Ladinas. All in all, ethnically and gender specific markers such as language and dress, and the expression prejudice, mark the ethnic boundaries between the Ladinas and their Indígena families-in-law. Dependent on the social situation and the strategies the Ladinas take on, the ethnic boundaries between them and their in-law families may be maintained, negotiated over, or crossed.

All the Ladinas I spoke with pointed out *machismo* as a very prominent gender related ethnic difference between themselves and their husbands. An important analysis to be made here, is that Ladinas delimit the ethnic boundaries between themselves and their Indígena husbands by ascribing gender images to their husbands, which depict them as overtly *machista*. Inspired by literature read on this subject and according to my own insight, the descriptions of the Ladinas regarding this subject tell us more about the gender and ethnic hegemonies in Guatemalan society, than they do about their husbands' actual behavior in comparison to Ladino men. That Ladinas and their families are adamant that Indígena men have more *machismo* than do Ladino men, signals that they see them as less modern and less 'enlightened' than Ladino men. This fits in well with the ethnic stratification of Indígenas, as less being powerful and having less socio-economic status than Ladinos. The protection and negotiation over gendered ethnic boundaries is especially salient in the upbringing of the children of the interethnic couples. As we learned previously, children become a battleground for their parents to protect their ethnic boundaries on. Leslye's and Frederico's stories regarding the wearing of *traje* by their daughter, shows how ethnic boundaries are gendered. What we can conclude from the issues experienced by the Ladinas and their Indígena

husbands regarding the upbringing of their children, is that both parents – and their families, are adamant to reinforce their ethnic identity onto their children in a way that leaves no room for negotiation over ethnic boundaries. We can thus say that the children are either raised to become Ladinos or Indígenas, which signals how rigid the ethnic boundaries between both partners in interethnic marriages can be in this specific social context.

In conclusion, with regards to the central question I posed for this thesis, there is no definite answer to give which specifies how Ladinas cross gendered ethnic boundaries in their marriages to Indígena men. The ways in which Ladinas negotiate their ethnic and gender identities within their interethnic marriages, vary greatly and are dependent on the social context. What should become clear from this research, is that there are certain dynamics at play as can be seen by the different ways of Ladinas maintain, *stretch* or cross over gendered ethnic boundaries in their interethnic marriages. As we learned from the different fields of tension and conflict that came to the fore in this research, ethnic, nor gender boundaries are equal in rigidity. Dependent on the social context, and influenced by different social factors, some boundaries may be strengthened while others are weakened; some boundaries may be *stretched* for others to maintain in place – as illustrated by the Ladinas who shared with me their experiences in their interethnic marriages with their Indígena husbands.

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I. APPENDIX - SELF REFLECTION

During these last few weeks while finishing this thesis, and rereading all the interviews I had with my respondents, I often found myself daydreaming of the time I spent in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. When I first arrived in Guatemala early February 2011, I had the slightest idea of what to expect of the country and of the people. The literature research I had done previous to my fieldwork had only painted a vague picture of Guatemalan society, as seen through the eyes of many anthropologists. I had read the words 'Ladinos' and 'Indígenas' so many times in relation to anthropological theories regarding inclusion and exclusion; cultural traumas; identity politics and the like, that I had not fully realized that all these academic studies were about actual people. Eventually, after spending some days in Quetzaltenango, it became clear to me that the people whom I had so extensively read about were in fact the individuals I saw on the streets; whom I talked with during language courses; whom I lived with. They turned out to be real people with faces, families and stories to share, people who laughed at me when I asked them if they were Indígena or Ladino. What I'm trying to express, is the difference I felt between being a student of anthropology in the safe haven of university, and being a student of anthropology *in the field*. Even though I had successfully concluded two and a half years of studying anthropology when I commenced my fieldwork, I felt like I knew absolutely nothing. My Spanish was mediocre at first, but after finishing three weeks of intensive language courses, I had mastered the courage to speak out loud in Spanish. During these three weeks, my Spanish instructor María and I had developed a friendly relationship over long, deep talks on Guatemalan history and politics, but more importantly, we talked about our personal lives. It was during these talks I made a start in learning which questions to ask, how to listen attentively, how to share my own experiences in return and how to stay quiet when the moment calls for it. Eventually, María became my first respondent. Getting to know María, and listening to her stories about her experiences with her Indígena husband made me realize that my subject of research was worthwhile, that the subject *was alive* in society. I had finally gathered enough courage to go through and search for more respondents.

Initially, my plan was to find six to seven Ladino-Indígena couples, of which I would then interview both partners, men as well as women. Things worked out differently, as I ended up having eight respondents, seven of which were Ladinas, one of which was an Indígena man. Even though my research population turned out to be relatively small, I aimed to establish a good rapport with my respondents in order to deepen our talks to the furthest extent. In general, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being an anthropological

researcher. Prior to my first few interviews I experienced some nervousness, as I was in doubt if any of my respondents would be willing to share their stories with me. Because my research required me to pose rather personal questions to my respondents, regarding their pasts; their love life; their sexual upbringing and their thoughts regarding their spouses' ethnicity, I wondered why my respondents would be up for telling a young, foreign girl all about themselves. Who was I to pry into these people's lives, their memories? In reality, I found myself surprised about the openness of my respondents. There were occasions in which a certain question prompted my respondents to reflect back on such hurtful events, that they became overtaken by emotion. It was on these moments I realized that one of the greatest difficulties of anthropological research, is to find a balance between being a friend, and being an objective researcher. I struggled with a feeling of guilt regarding the raking up of the hurtful memories of my respondents until the end of my research. While saying goodbye to my respondents, I remember that Leslye embraced me and said: *'I'm sad to see you leave. It was good to talk to you. You and me talked about things in my life I never talked about, because no one listened. But you listened.'* Impressed by Leslye's message, I came to realize that anthropological research is not a case of one way traffic, it's a two way relationship. Apparently, because I showed interest in the lives, the memories, the emotions of my respondents and took from them their words to use for my thesis, I gave my respondents a chance to be listened to. Many of them had never been able to talk about their life histories, about their sexual education, about how they felt when they needed to tell their parents they were pregnant of an Indígena man. And, as my respondents all have to deal with a biased society in which their interethnic marriages are not fully accepted, most of them felt relieved that they could share their thoughts, their spites, their worries and their hopes with an outsider.

In the role of anthropological researcher, I felt being an outsider had dual sides. Even though foreigners are not unseen in Quetzaltenango, I always stood out from the petite, brunette and olive skinned population. At times, regardless how far I was into my research period, I felt suffocated by all the stares, the catcalls and all the attention in general. This had not been my first experience with physically standing out from the population of a certain country, but what made my experience in Guatemala different, was that I spoke the language. Language really does connects you to people, which I realized while becoming more fluent in Spanish. Language gives way to making yourself familiar with and to the people around you, to showing respect to your hosts, to making friends. Speaking the local language in essence, made me feel less like an outsider. However, being an outsider had its perks, as I pointed out previously. Being an outsider means you supposedly are a blank slate, free of prejudice and bias, which invites people to explain from scratch certain aspects of their lives that they

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consider given facts. In sum, I enjoyed the experience of doing anthropological research and would do it again in an instance. Next time, I would worry less about whether people would be willing to talk to me or not, and put more effort into increasing my research population. However, regarding the relatively short amount of time my research lasted, I am rather pleased I found my - though small, very open and interesting group of respondents, as they shared with me some very touching and beautiful stories.

The photograph displayed below, shows my respondent Ruth and I sitting on a sofa during an interview. This image describes my interpretation of the role of anthropological researcher well, as I derived most of my data from in-depth interviews taken on this sofa, in the position as shown. My note block is present, lying on the coffee table, but is not being used during the interview, as I aimed to give full attention to my respondent's words.

II.   APPENDIX   -   RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

En esta tesis, la pregunta central que estudié se trata de como Ladinas en Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, cruzan las fronteras etnicas de género en sus matromonios con hombres Indígenas. En este, me centré en zonas de conflicto y tensión que aparecen los más comunes en los matromonios entre Indígenas y Ladinas. El objetivo de esta tesis es mostrar cómo Ladinas que están casadas con hombres Indígena, negocian sus identidades étnicas y de género dentro de sus matrimonios, mientras Ladinas cruzan las fronteras étnicas de género en su ocupación en un matrimonio interétnico.

El primer capítulo, supone el marco teórico en el que ha sido mi investigación basada. El primer apartado aborda la noción de etnicidad y la identidad étnica, en el que se pone de manifiesto cómo la etnicidad como categoría significativa se basa en las estructuras de poder. Estas estructuras de poder influyen y son influidos para cuando las personas con diferentes identidades étnicas interactuan, por ejemplo en los matrimonios entre Ladinas e Indígenas. Entonces, las nociones de género y la identidad de género figuran en su contexto teórico, en el que se hace evidente cómo las identidades de género se construyen. Género como una categoría significativa delimita las fronteras del género étnico específico, en el que los hombres o las mujeres expresan el dominio sobre el otro. Por último, la noción de intersectorialidad se trata, la aclaración de cómo el cruzar de las fronteras étnicas y de género influye la forma y da sentido a las identidades étnicas y de género en las relaciones interétnicas, como los matrimonios entre Ladinas e Indígenas.

Entonces, en el capítulo segundo, se describen los temas que han sido de mayor importancia para mi investigación en el contexto de Guatemala. En primer lugar, me puse los temas de la etnicidad y la identidad étnica en el país de Guatemala. Aqui, se hace evidente cómo la sociedad guatemalteca está estratificada en una hegemonía étnica, que aproximadamente se divide la población entre el grupo Indígena, y el grupo Ladino. Los límites entre estos grupos son fluidos, pero sin embargo muy rígido. En el segundo párrafo, la atención se centra en el concepto de género dentro de la región de América Latina. En el tercer párrafo se trata el concepto de las mujeres como guardianes de la cultura. Aquí, se pone de manifiesto cómo el género se entrecruza con la percepción de la moral, dando a la mujer Ladina e Indígena la responsabilidad de la salvaguarda de su grupo por medio de la castidad. Por último, el tema de los matrimonios interétnicos entre Ladinos e Indígenas deberán ser discutidos. En este caso, queda claro por qué la mayoría de los matrimonios interétnicos entre Ladinos e Indígenas tienen la forma de una mujer Ladina y un

marido Indígena, y cómo los matrimonios son ejemplos de cruzar los límites étnicos de género.

Los resultados de mi investigación se analizan posteriormente en los próximos cinco capítulos empíricos, de acuerdo con las zonas de conflicto y los campos de tensión que resultaron ser los más prominente en los matrimonios interétnicos. El primero campo de tensión se discute en el capítulo 3, en el que se pone de manifiesto cómo Ladinas pueden ser vistos como guardianes de la cultura. A través de las historias de Leslye, Carmen, Ruth y Luki, queda claro que Ladinas llevan gran responsabilidad en sus familias, así como de su grupo étnico, que sólo puede preservar a través de moral y conducta sexual casta. El próximo y cuarto capítulo se trata de la planificación de las bodas, que es uno de los temas que salieron a la luz en la mayoría de los matrimonios interétnicos de las Ladinas en mi investigación. En este capitulo, las historias de Carmen, Ruth y Leslye muestran lo difícil la planificación de una boda interétnica puede ser. Como se explicó anteriormente, el prejuicio y la discriminación suelen delimitar las fronteras étnicas entre Ladinos e Indígenas, debido a esto, las ambas familias suegras traer serios problemas en la relación de las parejas interetnicas. Esto es ilustrado por las historias de Leslye, Frederico, Carmen y Laura. Otro tema que salió a la luz en casi todas las entrevistas en profundidad que tenía con las Ladinas, es lo que se refiere como el *machismo* de sus esposos Indígenas. Esta zona de conflicto se discutió en el capítulo 6. La última área,ampliamente compartida de los conflictos en casi todos los matrimonios interétnicos, es el tema de los hijos. Los niños y las familias de una mezcla Ladino-Indígena a menudo se convierten en campo de batalla para sus padres y sus familias en las que los problemas étnicos estan impugnado. La forma en que los niños se conviertan en un campo de batalla para sus padres en los matrimonios interétnicoses es la tema que se discute en el capítulo 7, por las historias de Frederico y Leslye.

En el último capítulo, varias cosas se puede concluir. En conclusión, en respecta a la cuestión central que plantea esta tesis, no hay una respuesta definitiva que podemos dar para especificar cómo las Ladinas cruzan las fronteras étnicas de género en el matrimonio a los hombres Indígena. Las formas en las que ladinas negocian sus identidades étnicas y de género dentro de los matrimonios interétnicos, son muy variables y dependen del contexto social. Hay una cierta dinámica como se puede ver por las diferentes formas de mantener de las Ladinas, como las estiran o cruzan las fronteras étnicas de género en sus matrimonios interétnicos. Como hemos aprendido de los diferentes campos de tensión y conflicto que empezó a destacar en esta investigación, ni las fronteras étnicas ni las del género son iguales en la rigidez.